

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY
CITIZENS ECONOMY AND EFFICIENCY COMMITTEE**

ROOM 139, HALL OF ADMINISTRATION/500 WEST TEMPLE/LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90012/625-3611, Ext. 64605

M I N U T E S

FULL COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: Wednesday, May 20, 1970
TIME: 9:30 a.m.
PLACE: Hall of Administration, Room 739

Robert Mitchell,
Chairman

Raymond Arbuthnot
Dr. John C. Bollens
Davis Brabant
John D. Byork
Maurice Rene Chez
Roc Cutri
Dr. Warren S. Jones
Mrs. Ray Kidd
Harlan G. Loud
P. S. Magruder
Kiyoshi Maruyama
Irvin Mazzei
L. E. McKee
Ferdinand Mendenhall
Louis Rogers
George Shellenberger
Mrs. Benjamin Erick Smith
William Torrance
Gus A. Walker
Burke Roche,
Executive Secretary

Members Present:

Robert Mitchell, Chairman
Ray Arbuthnot
Joseph Bishop
Davis Brabant
Maurice Rene Chez
Dr. Warren Jones
Mrs. Ray Kidd
Harlan Loud
Ferdinand Mendenhall
Louis Rogers
George Shellenberger
William Torrance

Members Absent:

Dr. John C. Bollens
John D. Byork
Roc Cutri
P. S. Magruder
Kiyoshi Maruyama
Irvin Mazzei
Mrs. Benjamin Erick Smith

GUEST SPEAKER: Robert Aragon, Executive Secretary
Urban Coalition

Mr. Mitchell called the meeting to order at 9:37 a.m. He introduced Mr. Aragon, who he said would present the position of the Urban Coalition on the charter study issues.

Mr. Aragon said that his remarks would be addressed to one of the three issues which the committee is studying, the expansion of the Board of Supervisors. The Urban Coalition has not taken a position on the other questions before the committee.

Mr. Aragon then read a prepared statement to the committee. The statement explained that the Urban Coalition reflects no single special interest or goal. It seeks to have membership from all sides of the city's leadership spectrum. Its Board of Directors includes Mayor Samuel Yorty; Councilman Thomas Bradley; Rabbi Paul Dubin of the Jewish Federation Council; Father Charles S. Casassa, Chancellor of Loyola University; John McCone, Chairman of the Board of Joshua Hendy Corporation; and Louis Lundborg, Chairman of the Board, Bank of America.

The purpose of the Coalition is to identify urban problems and to act as a catalyst and coordinator to obtain necessary corrective action through private and public organizations. With this in mind, on May 12, the Board of Directors of the Coalition voted to support the proposed expansion of the Board of Supervisors from five to seven members. The Directors were convinced by these reasons:

Membership of the Board of Supervisors has remained at five ever since it was initiated 100 years ago. In those days the County contained approximately 15,000 people, giving each supervisor a constituency of about 3,000. Today each supervisor represents about 1½ million people, which in effect means the individual has no real representation at all. This problem is magnified in the case of the minority communities. Not only is the black and Chicano individual only one member of a vast constituency, but he has never seen his own minority represented on the Board. The directors of the Coalition feel that an expansion of at least two more supervisors is necessary to insure that minorities are no longer ignored.

The responsibility of the Board of Supervisors is increasing, not diminishing. The proposed County budget now totals close to \$2 billion. Not only is the Board of Supervisors an important, powerful body today, but there are indications that, if we are to survive the current urban crisis, it will have to become even more central. The Committee for Economic Development, a research organization composed of some of the most consequential leaders in the American business establishment, said in a report on local government, "If . . . governments are to govern effectively in metropolitan areas, they must have sufficient size and authority to plan, administrate and provide significant financial support for solutions to area wide problems."

Thus the Coalition sees an increasingly important role for County government as a key, perhaps, to solving many of the problems of confused management that beset the city today. It is in this role as an area wide body, in which in many ways it is already, that the County Board of Supervisors can be of real help to minority communities which tend to be economically isolated under localized governments.

However, before the Board can be fully effective in aiding minority communities, those communities must be represented. The Coalition believes that the only way these communities can be assured a fair chance of electing their own representatives is for the Board to be expanded.

Mr. Aragon said this completed his prepared statement. He said the Board of Directors had discussed the new districting system that would be required if the Board were expanded. They concluded, however, that it would be premature to become involved in this question at this time. If the expansion question is submitted to the voters and approved, the Coalition would then be interested in this question.

In answer to questions from Mr. Mitchell and Mr. Arbuthnot, Mr. Aragon explained that of the 75 members on the Board of Directors, approximately 30 participated in the May 12th meeting.

Mr. Loud asked what was the total membership of the Urban Coalition and in what area was it contained. Mr. Aragon explained that there was no official membership or membership fee. The Coalition consists of a Board of Directors of 75 members and an Executive Committee of approximately 25, selected from these

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directors. The makeup of the Board of Directors is approximately one-third business community, 25% - 30% minority community and the remainder government, labor, and religious communities and general citizenry.

Mr. Rogers asked how the Coalition concluded that expansion of two members would provide adequate representation for 7½ million people. Mr. Aragon replied that the adequacy of representation was certainly in question. However, the specific proposal is to expand the Board to seven, and the coalition confined itself to this question.

Mr. Rogers asked if the minority communities want to be represented, why can't they go to the present supervisors today and ask for more representation on each supervisor's staff. Mr. Aragon agreed that additional staff identified with minority communities may bring a supervisor closer to his constituency. But additional staff is probably not an adequate substitute for elected representation.

Dr. Jones asked if Mr. Aragon advocated that the seven member board should have some racial qualifications. Mr. Aragon said absolutely not. What they were saying was that if the Board were expanded from five to seven, the chances of achieving representation of more of the major forces in this community would be increased.

Mr. Brabant asked if the Coalition had investigated specific problems resulting from lack of adequate representation. Mr. Aragon said that the Coalition had not closely examined the operation of County government and could not therefore cite specific operating problems which could be associated with representation. The Coalition, he said, had made an assumption about citizen participation and what it ought to be. It had also made another assumption about what kinds of qualities the representative body should have. The assumption is that the real quality of a representative body is to some extent determined by how well it represents the major forces in that community. One of the tests of the quality of a representative body, not the exclusive test but one of the tests, will be its ability to achieve the participation at all levels of the major forces in a given community.

In answer to a question from Mr. Torrence about how the new districts would be drawn, Mr. Aragon said that the purpose of expansion was not automatically to insure black and brown representation but rather to increase their opportunity to achieve representation now and in the future. He said he felt one of the principal problems facing the country today is to phase our institutions, like County government, into a changing environment.

Mr. Aragon said that if the Board was expanded and the optimum district was achieved from the point of view of the Chicano, the Chicano voter registration would still be only 25% of the registration in the district. However, the present districting system reduces the chances of the Chicano electing a representative. He said he did not think that the decisive test for determining

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whether the expansion achieved its goals was to guarantee the election of a black and a Chicano supervisor the first time around. But if the chances of these groups achieving representation is increased, then the major goal is accomplished.

Mr. Rogers asked if Mr. Aragon could name one item on which the black and Chicano communities are not getting adequate representation. Mr. Aragon replied one item was active and full participation in the decision-making process which determines how \$2 billion should be spent.

Mr. Brabant asked if the purpose in expanding the Board is to get minority representation, how are you going to achieve it by districting when the trend in society is toward integration. The question is then how can you accomplish representation for minorities by districting over a period of time? Mr. Aragon replied that two years ago he had participated in a study involving voter registration related to City Council districts. A committee of the City Council had made the official statement that no matter how the districts were drawn, you could not achieve more than 15% representation for Mexican-Americans. He said that he and others on a volunteer basis conducted a study of the precinct boundaries and the voter registration. They then made a Spanish surname count precinct by precinct involving 3,000 precincts. They came up with an area that met all the requirements for an appropriate council district which was almost entirely Mexican-American. However, at that time 40% of the people in this area were in Gilbert Lindsay's district, 35% were in Arthur Snyder's district, and 15% were in Lamport's district. In other words they had discovered that there was a natural Mexican-American community, but to some extent it had been gerrymandered among the three districts.

Mr. Arbuthnot asked why there is a need for a separate Chicano society. He asked why couldn't we all simply be Americans? Mr. Aragon replied that this separateness is related to housing patterns and migration patterns. To some extent it is the result of the concentration of a group which shares common problems.

Mr. Loud asked why there is a need for additional representation considering the progress which has been made toward integration in the last few years. Mr. Aragon said that ten years ago the Mexican-Americans had no representation in the State Senate, none in the State Assembly, and none on the Board of Education. They had one City Councilman, but no one on the Board of Supervisors and no one in Congress. Thus, among the six major elected bodies, they had one representative. Ten years later they have Alex Garcia in the State Assembly, but he is facing defeat because of redistricting. There are also Ed Roybal and Julian Nava. Mr. Aragon said, if that is normal progress, these are abnormal times. Conceivably, with reapportionment, the Chicano community in 1972 could find itself without any congressman, State senator, City councilman, Board of Education member, or supervisor - nothing.

In answer to a question from Mr. Rogers on representation, Mr. Aragon said that the test for a legislative body was not only that it function effectively, but that it also be representative of the major forces in the community. One of

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the ways, he said, in which we are going to come together as a society is by integrating through full participation in the decision-making bodies of our society.

Mr. Roche said that the black speakers who addressed the committee, and particularly the Mexican-American speakers, made the point that an Anglo could not effectively represent their communities because he wasn't raised in the community and could not know its problems. He, therefore, could not address himself as a decision maker to an effective solution of the problems. Is it a question of actual fact that an Anglo cannot represent the Mexican-American or black communities or is it more a question of psychology and racial or community pride? Mr. Aragon replied that he thought it was undeniably 90% a psychological phenomena. It is very widely believed in these two communities that they cannot be adequately represented by someone that is not identified with their community. Whether that is factual or not is another matter, but it is very widely believed in the communities.

Mr. Mitchell thanked Mr. Aragon for his presentation and adjourned the meeting at 10:45 a.m.