

Newport Beach, it's time to say "no" again

NO! That's the only answer to Measure B. Don't vote before reading the fine print. We residents are in the same situation as in 2014, when we were told Measure Y would "reduce traffic" even though we knew it would have the opposite effect: the data was skewed and the measure would in fact have brought large scale development and traffic to Newport Center.

This was the catalyst for our formation of Line in the Sand, to educate and protect the public interest.

In the case of Measure B, the only answer, again, is to just say NO. Again, we feel betrayed – not because the idea of an elected mayor is bad in itself – but because when you read and understand the fine print, you see that, as written, the measure would seriously erode democratic representation for the voters and load the power into the hands of one person, the Mayor.

Some things to think about:

Who's behind it? The mega dollars behind Measure B are mostly out-of-town dollars except for a \$5,000 loan from Will O'Neill. What's that all about?

Why is it? If Measure B passes, the Mayor would have an incredible amount of power, more than any one representative has ever had in our City. Agenda decisions would be made by the Mayor, and voter representation would be decreased by having one less district. The ability of the City Manager and other Councilmembers to drive Council discussions would be drastically reduced. How could that possibly be a good thing for our city?

What is it? The charter change we are voting on was initiated by one person – Will O'Neill – without review or discussion or community input at the Council meetings. It allows an elected Mayor to buy a seat with mega dollars and capture the bulk of the power in decision-making discussions among the Council. It allows a Mayor to stay in place for eight years even immediately after two four- year terms on the City Council. The big bucks could more easily prevail and the number of districts would be reduced to six. Why would decreasing our representation and lumping it more into one hand be a good thing for our city?

Where is this happening? This is Newport Beach. Our system of leadership through seven equally represented Districts has worked well for many decades even though big money and the cost of elections can have an undue and unfair influence. But – Measure B not only erodes the fairness and representation but allows big money to more likely drive the Mayoral election. Who thinks making matters worse is a good thing for our City?

NO! The only answer to Measure B is just plain no. If you're someone who's frustrated by one-party rule in Sacramento, just wait until you see one-person rule in Newport Beach. That's what Measure B would result in.

Dennis Baker, Board President

Line in the Sand

Newport Beach