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August 3, 2020

TO: Mayor Darrell Steinberg & Members of the City Council

FR: Nolice Edwards, Chair, Sacramento Women & Girls Advancement Coalition (SWAC)  
Leadership Council: Wendy Hoyt, Rosanna Herber, Anya Woods, Megan Fidell, Tamika L'Ecluse, Glenda Marsh, Rachelanne Vander Werf, and Kate Karpilow

RE: *Additional Comments: Sacramento Mayoral Accountability & Community Equity Act of 2020*

The Leadership Council and many members of the Sacramento Women & Girls Advancement Coalition watched all four hours of last week's City Council meeting to listen to the community comments and Council discussion related to the Sacramento Mayoral Accountability & Community Equity Act of 2020.

At the close, we were disappointed for several reasons.

**Councilmembers only gave cursory attention to the concerns raised by the opposing public.**

Apart from the Act's coalition members who testified in support, nearly all members of the *public* strongly opposed the Act, citing concerns, as we have, about introducing a major change in government structure during a pandemic and election year, limited opportunity for public input and vetting, lack of transparency, and the opportunistic coupling of the strong mayor and equity measures.

**Emotional rationale for the Act not good enough.**

We are being told that the Act is necessary to "meet the moment," which, while emotionally resonant, is only a vague -- not a sturdy rationale for the proposed far-reaching changes. For many in the community, we are no longer in a *moment*. We are in a *movement* that calls for sustainable community investment.

Similarly, we heard Councilmembers echo the phrase that their decision would be justified if it were in the best interests of their constituents and positively impact their daily lives. Again, this is another vague phrase that, of course, should be a guiding principle, but doesn't help anchor the discussion in the specific strengths and weaknesses of the proposal. Indeed, *hundreds* of residents have voiced their opposition to the Act in the short time they've had the opportunity to do so.

### **Inadequate time to address thorny questions.**

We saw numerous questions raised – by the public and by Councilmember’s Carr, Harris, Ashby, and Guerra, in particular – that we do not see being resolved in less than a week’s time. What are the implications of using ballot box budgeting to commit 40 million dollars? How long will it take to restructure the government, and what are the costs involved? Who will have final appointing authority to boards and commissions?

While it is possible that these questions and more will have draft responses prepared for the August 4 Council meeting, it is logistically impossible for the broader public to then be invited, briefed, and engaged in dialogue if the Council votes on the Act on August 4.

### **Equity proposals as window dressing.**

*Why not implement equity proposals and participatory budgeting immediately?*

We have come to see the equity proposals as mere window dressing. They are vague and nothing prevents the Council from drafting and implementing more specific proposals **now**.

**We remain strongly opposed to the Act** and encourage the Mayor and City Council to stop and examine your actions and approach.

The process to develop and unveil the Act contradicts the good government principles that we should adhere to out of respect for our residents and commitment to our participatory democracy.