

## Voter Turnout: Odd-year vs. Even-year Elections in Los Angeles

Claiming Our Democracy Program | November 2013

### When are Los Angeles elections held?

The elected city government of Los Angeles consists of a 15-member city council and mayor. City council seats are elected by district and the mayor is elected at-large, but all of them are elected during odd-numbered years. Meanwhile, the county of Los Angeles and several cities within the county hold their elections during even-numbered years and consolidated with state elections in June and November.

### Why does election timing matter?

Our analysis strongly suggests that holding local elections in odd years greatly reduces voter turnout, and almost certainly skews the makeup of the electorate (see voter turnout comparisons to the left). Past research tells us that the electorate in low-turnout elections tends to be older, whiter and more affluent. Cities holding off-cycle elections in odd years have also been found to spend 4-5 times more per ballot cast than similar sized cities holding even-year elections. Cities could save taxpayer dollars and increase voter turnout by consolidating elections with state elections, and better ensure the turnout universe is more reflective of the community.

### What can be done to increase voter turnout?

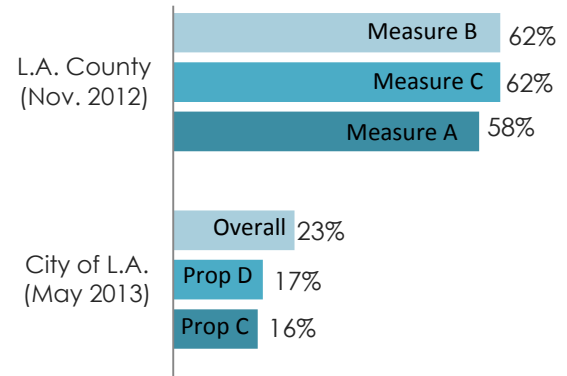
We encourage cities to conduct their own cost-benefit analysis and factor in other local considerations when assessing whether consolidation makes sense in their city. Part of that analysis should include an evaluation of the racial/ethnic representation among voters who turn out and whether those demographics fairly represent the general population. Jurisdictions whose off-year elections effectively skew the electorate and minimize the voice of people of color should consolidate their elections immediately to avoid voting rights violations.

### Where Can I Learn More?

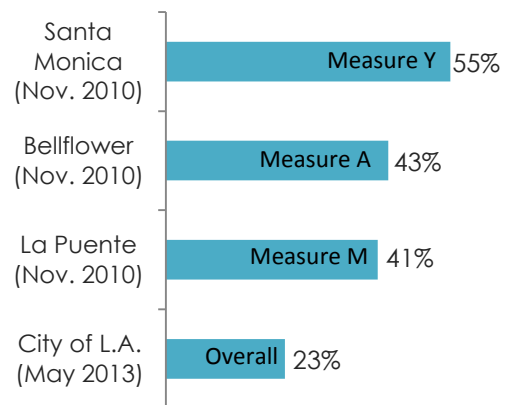
To learn more about the implications of odd-year elections, download our full report at <http://goo.gl/zuGP0u> or call Michelle Romero, Program Director at 510-926-4014.

## VOTER TURNOUT

City of L.A. Compared to L.A. County



City of L.A. Compared to Other Cities in L.A. County



City of L.A. Compared to Other Large City

