



## Kriss Worthington

Councilmember, City of Berkeley District 7  
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### ACTION CALENDAR

November 15, 2005

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Councilmember Kriss Worthington

Subject: Support Commission Diversity

#### RECOMMENDATION:

That the Berkeley City Council adopts a resolution to encourage City Councilmembers to actively seek to fill vacant positions with consideration of the needs and benefits of a more representative and diverse commission roster. The Berkeley City Council shall also implement semi-annual reviews of its progress to determine if additional steps should be taken to ensure that these goals are met.

#### BACKGROUND:

At the April 23, 2002, Council voted to approve a resolution titled Students Voicing Opportunity & Increasing Commission Equity (Students VOICE). This resolution asked for an active effort in filling of vacant commission appointments and recruitment of potential commissioners from any and all ethnic/racial backgrounds, including Chicanos/Latinos, Asian and Pacific Islanders, Black and African Americans, and students in general.

Since then, while the City has seen little improvement in the diversity of its commissions, one cannot ignore the inconvenient fact that some Councilmembers' appointments continue to lack representation of diversity that is reflective of the city. This resolution would reaffirm the spirit of the prior vote by Council and help to add encouragement for Councilmembers to more accurately reflect the city's diverse population through its commission appointments.

#### FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

NONE

#### CONTACT PERSON:

Councilmember Kriss Worthington 981-7170.

- WHEREAS, a preliminary review of student representation in Berkeley Mayor and City Council commission appointments appears to reveal shocking statistics on underrepresentation of students, Chicanos/Latinos, and Asian and Pacific Islanders (API) as well as a slight underrepresentation of African Americans; and
- WHEREAS, students compose about 20% to 25% of Berkeley's population yet only account for approximately 8.1% commissioner positions; and
- WHEREAS, according to Census 2000, Asians and Pacific Islanders (API) make up 17.6% of Berkeley's population, yet only account for approximately 5.2% commission spots; and
- WHEREAS, according to Census 2000 Chicanos/Latinos make up 9.5% of Berkeley's population, yet only account for approximately 4.2% commission spots; and
- WHEREAS, according to Census 2000 African Americans make up 12.3% of Berkeley's population yet only account for approximately 10.3% commission spots; and
- WHEREAS, Berkeley has a complex network of 34 Board and Commissions to which the Mayor and each district City Council member appoint a representative; and
- WHEREAS, there are routinely dozens of vacant commission positions; and
- WHEREAS, students in general are actively involved in the community and thus it is vital that they be represented in decision-making bodies of the city of Berkeley; and
- WHEREAS, vacancies are not an indication of good government since vacancies may lead to absence of quorum and inability to take action in a timely manner; and
- WHEREAS, nearly three years ago, the Berkeley City Council passed a resolution calling for the active appointment and invitation of Berkeley residents to commissions. Since then, while the City has seen little improvement in the diversity of its commissions, one cannot ignore the convenient fact that many Councilmembers' appointments continue to lack representation of diversity that is reflective of the city.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley will actively seek to fill vacant positions and attempt to send a clear invitation to residents that Berkeley welcomes commissioners from any and all ethnic/racial backgrounds, including Chicanos/Latinos, Asian and Pacific Islanders, Black and African Americans, and students in general.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Berkeley shall hold a semi-annual review of progress in appointing new commissioners as well as establishing goals and a plan of action of recruiting and reviewing new commission applicants.