

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

A RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA ENDORSING THE CONVENING OF A SUMMIT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT LEADERS ON REFORMING THE GOVERNANCE OF CALIFORNIA

Resolution No. _____

WHEREAS, forty years ago California was renowned for its outstanding schools, excellent infrastructure, quality health and human services, outstanding public parks and safe communities. At about that time, however, laws began being passed that have substantially stripped politically accountable community governments of discretion over the priority and funding of community services; and

WHEREAS, today in California our state government is increasingly seen as broken. Record state deficits, late budgets, the inability to address the critical issues of the day--energy, water, education, health services, and more--all contribute to a dysfunction that has tangible outcomes: lost jobs, reduced services, and inadequate resources to educate our children; and

WHEREAS, late and inadequate state budgets seriously disrupt the ability of local governments to deliver vital services. New state mandates are often imposed before the prior reforms have had a chance to work, and they typically give the state control over the details of services delivered at the community level; and

WHEREAS, while state leaders are in the early stages of adopting some widely accepted practices such as multi-year budgeting and increasing reserves for times of fiscal uncertainty, we believe the state governance crisis is due in large measure to a more fundamental problem of over-concentrating decision making at the state level at the expense of true community priority setting and spending decisions; and

WHEREAS, this top-down, centralized governance system is at the root of many of our problems as a state. Community government leaders no longer have the tools to set and fund community priorities and be held accountable to the voters for them. Moreover, the state provides neither adequate funding nor the flexibility in using state funding for effective community service delivery; and

WHEREAS, the distinction between what decisions should be made at the state versus the local levels has not just been blurred, but in virtually every case the default position has become that the state and not community governments should decide. This has given a much less accountable and now financially precarious state government authority to address more and more community needs; and

WHEREAS, in 2004, cities, counties, special districts, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and hundreds of other community leaders and organizations joined together to sponsor a statewide ballot measure, Proposition 1A, to provide substantial constitutional protection of the local revenues from being diverted or borrowed by state government. That measure was overwhelmingly approved by the voters by an 84% margin; and

WHEREAS, as local elected and appointed leaders we believe we have a responsibility to debate and support key reforms to provide greater autonomy, flexibility and fiscal tools to local governments so they can deliver the highest quality local services and other reforms that would aid the state in executing its important statewide responsibilities in a stable, predictable, and accountable manner.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara hereby invites its city and school partners in the City-County-School (CCS) Partnership to jointly sponsor a statewide summit meeting on state governance reform to address and debate the above-described problems and to develop proposed solutions and reforms to strengthen the governance of our great state, including to consider the advisability of convening a statewide constitutional convention to implement any reforms; and

RESOLVED FURTHER, that the Summit on State Governance Reform be held at the earliest practical date and that the memberships of the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the League of California Cities and the California School Boards Association (CSBA) and be invited to participate in the Summit to the fullest extent possible; and

RESOLVED FURTHER, that we, the members of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara, do hereby pledge our support and efforts to achieve not only a successful Summit but to the development and adoption by the voters of reforms that will improve the governance of California, increase local control and responsiveness to the critical issues we face as a state, and rebuild the public's trust in government.

PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara, State of California this 16th day of June, 2009, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Chair, Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

County of Santa Barbara

MICHAEL F. BROWN

CLERK OF THE BOARD

By _____

Deputy Clerk

Approved as to Form:

DENNIS MARSHALL

COUNTY COUNSEL

By: _____

Rachel Van Mullem

Deputy County Counsel