



**kenneth
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LA CITY CONTROLLER

Politicians should not be paid if they're not working. This is common sense and an essential part of accountability.

Councilmember Ridley-Thomas was indicted on Federal corruption charges in October of 2021. Shortly after, the City Council barred him from performing any Council duties and appointed a replacement to govern in his stead. My predecessor, then-Controller Ron Galperin, followed suit and suspended Ridley-Thomas's city pay and benefits. Controller Galperin did the same for past council members, including José Huizar, after he was barred by City Council from performing his duties.

Under the City Charter, it is the City Council who determines whether a Councilmember is allowed to perform their duties, not the Controller. However, once a Councilmember is barred from performing their duties, it is the Controller's responsibility under the City Charter to stop paying them if they are not working.

After Ridley-Thomas sued, the City Council nullified the Controller's decision and settled earlier this month. The settlement amount which I am legally required to pay consists of \$254,058.65 in back pay, \$1,552.50 in healthcare cash-in-lieu payments, and \$99,500 to his attorneys. In addition, Ridley-Thomas has resumed drawing his annual salary of \$229,137.12 (effective December 4th) despite not performing any work.

With this settlement, the City Council overrode the checks and balances the City Charter put into place to protect the people of Los Angeles from having to pay the salaries of elected officials whom the City Council itself prohibited from doing their jobs.

While the Council has the legal authority to make this settlement, I believe it is important to reassert the fundamental principle that the taxpayers of Los Angeles shouldn't have to pay someone for work they are legally prohibited from doing. The Controller plays an essential function in giving this principle life.

Under Section 260 of the City Charter, the Controller "shall exercise a general supervision over the accounts of all offices, departments, boards and employees of the City charged in any manner with the receipt, collection or disbursement of the money of the City" and under Section 262, the Controller "shall, prior to approval of any demand, make inspection as to the quality, quantity and condition of services, labor, materials, supplies or equipment received by any office or department of the City, and approve before payment all demands drawn upon the Treasury if the Controller has adequate evidence that . . . the goods or services have been provided."

Like previous City Controllers, I intend to use my office to ensure that the people of Los Angeles are getting what they pay for.

TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

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