

# For consideration by the City Council Wednesday March 16, 2016: Options related to potential litigation

*Many communities have at-large elections; others have district-based elections.*



## What Happened



- Rancho Cucamonga received a letter warning that it may be in violation of the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA)



- Fight potential lawsuit
- Put the decision to voters

## Why this is Important

Due to the threat of potential lawsuits, dozens of cities, counties and school districts are evaluating the CVRA and its requirements.

**If the City Council votes to proceed:** The City of Rancho Cucamonga will develop criteria to guide drawing Council district lines, then create a draft map of proposed Council districts for voter consideration. The mayor would continue to be elected citywide. Public meetings would be scheduled to inform residents and solicit public comment. The measure would be placed on the November 2016 ballot for voters to decide

**If the City Council votes not to proceed:** The City of Rancho Cucamonga would likely be vulnerable to a CVRA lawsuit. As of February 2016, no local agency has prevailed in a lawsuit brought under the CVRA. One local example: In 2007 the California State Supreme Court upheld the CVRA in *Sanchez v. The City of Modesto*. The city settled and was responsible for paying \$4.7 million in attorney fees.



## What is the CVRA?

*The California Voting Rights Act of 2001 (CVRA) seeks to ensure that every community has an opportunity to elect candidates of their choice in local elections.*

## Key Terms

### **Protected class:**

A class of voters who are members of a race, color, or language minority group, as referenced and defined in the federal Voting Rights Act.

### **At-large election: (currently used)**

Voters elect city council members that provide city-wide representation.

**District election:** Voters elect city council members to represent a specific district within the city.