



# Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission 2019 Annual Report

# 2019 Commissioners

## Commission Chair

Mike Gomez

First District

## Commission Vice Chair

Joan Patsy Ostroy

Third District

### First District

Farrell J. Chiles

Mark Ramos

### Second District

Gregory Gorman

Ronnie Jayne

Dennis Arguelles (Served Until April 2019)

Kisheen Wayne Tullos (Served Until August 2019)

### Third District

Eugene Willis Jr.

Ross Viselman

### Fourth District

Charline Sistrunk

Marcel Rodarte

Patrick Wilson (Served Until November 2019)

### Fifth District

Daniel Deng

Harry Leon

Vivian Chan

# Los Angeles County

## Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission

### **History of the Commission**

The Los Angeles County Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission (CAAC) was established in 1980 and has continued to function pursuant to Board Order by Chapter 3.13 of the Los Angeles County Code. The Commission is a non-regulatory body, the purpose of which is to represent the interests of the consumers they serve to the Director of the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA) and to the Board of Supervisors.

The Commission has provided valuable linkages between the Board of Supervisors, DCBA, and various community groups and organizations invested in consumer issues. The Commissioner's collective experience as consumers, members of the business community, and leaders in their own communities has been a valuable resource that provides vital assistance to the Department.

### **The Duties of the Commission**

The Commission plays a valuable role by ensuring that DCBA maintains its mission of "creating a fair vibrant marketplace for consumers and businesses" through the utilization of their services and assistance programs. The duties of the Commission include:

- Ascertaining the needs of consumers and advising the Director of its findings as appropriate
- Advising the Director concerning the protection and promotion of consumer interests
- Advising the Director regarding the need for changes in procedures, programs or legislation in order to further the interests of consumers
- Discussing with the Director effective methods to improve consumer education
- Studying and reporting on matters referred for review by the Director or the Board of Supervisors
- Rendering a report of its activities to the Director and the Board of Supervisors at least once each calendar year and willing to testify upon request.

### **Organization**

The CAAC is comprised of fifteen members (three from each Supervisorial District) and are appointed by the Board of Supervisors. In addition to the main body, the Commission includes three standing subcommittees.

# Key Accomplishments in 2019

The Commission proactively identified and addressed consumer concerns and issues directly impacting individuals and their local communities throughout Los Angeles County. Although consumer issues impact a broad range of Los Angeles County residents, the Commission made it imperative to address critical issues that affect some of the most vulnerable consumer populations that include senior citizens, low-income residents, women, and children.

Commissioners frequently presented information from communities and mainstream media outlets to the Director of DCBA for further research and review.

Key topics addressed by the Commission included tracking and weighing in on impactful legislation and ordinances, one of which (AB 539) was recently signed by Governor Newsom, supporting the recently passed Permanent Rent Stabilization Ordinance, advocating for tenant rights and protections for residents across Los Angeles County and educated consumers on how to identify and avoid Robo scam phone calls.

In addition to addressing consumer legislation, the Commission also participated in two separate outreach events targeted towards low income consumers and seniors. Not only did these events provide consumers with information on available resources, they also gave members of the public an opportunity to meet and voice their concerns with members of the CAAC directly.

Finally, the Commission continued to advocate for the use of print, social and digital media platforms to reach a greater population of consumers. By continuously advocating that all information distributed by DCBA is available in a variety of languages, DCBA was able to provide their services to a broader population of consumers that otherwise would be remain difficult to reach.

# Standing Committees

There are currently three standing committees of the CAAC. The purpose of the standing committees is to focus on specific issues that impact consumers across Los Angeles County, and through these committees, identify and recommend that the full body review and act on their findings. The committees include the Executive Committee, the Legislative Committee, and the Public Information Committee. Each Committee meets every other month to discuss specific aspects of Consumer Affairs in Los Angeles County.

## **Executive Committee**

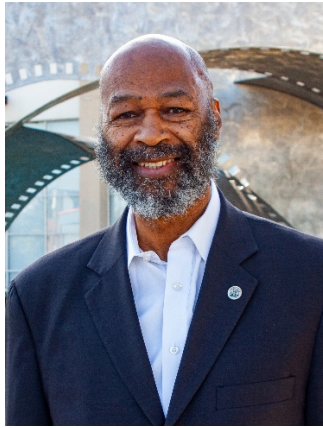
The Executive Committee proposes strategic direction and reviews the administrative policy guidelines and standards for the CAAC. The Executive Committee, whose membership includes the Commission Chair, Commission Vice Chair, and each Committee Chair, work together to devise approaches to increase the presence and effectiveness of the CAAC.



*Chair and Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee: Commissioners Mike Gomez and Joan Patsy Ostroy.*

## **Legislative Committee**

The Legislative Committee ensures the protection of Los Angeles County consumers by monitoring and proposing improvements to existing legislation and recommending new policies as the needs of consumers continue to evolve. The Legislative Committee, which met four times in 2019 in East Los Angeles, is Chaired by Commissioner Farrell Chiles. The Legislative Committee received presentations on AB 539, aimed to put restriction on payday loan lenders and the amount of interest rates they can impose on loans, on BankOn and LaSave, programs designed to create financial and money management opportunities for Los Angeles County residents, and recommended that the full Commission receive a presentation on the recently passed Permanent Rent Stabilization Ordinance and Tenant Protections.



*Chair of the Legislative Committee: Commissioner Farrell Chiles.*

### **Public Information Committee**

The Public Information Committee identifies, facilitates and enhances public outreach and dialogue to the diverse communities served by Los Angeles County. The Public Information Committee, Chaired by Commissioner Ronnie Jayne, has advocated for increased access to consumer services and consumer education- including the addition of additional languages for department communications. They have also championed the use of technology and media to reach the large consumer population of Los Angeles County. The Public Information Committee also leads the organization of commission-sponsored events, which aims to bring consumer education and resources into the community in an accessible format. In 2019, the Public Information Committee primarily focused on consumer outreach efforts and availability of services for all Los Angeles County residents.



*Chair of the Public Information Committee: Commissioner Ronnie Jayne.*

# Commissioner Profiles

## Chair, Mike Gomez – 1<sup>st</sup> District



Commissioner Gomez was appointed to the CAAC by Supervisor Hilda L. Solis in 2015. Commissioner Gomez has spent more than 40 years as an actor and director in television, theater, and film. Commissioner Gomez has appeared on television shows, including *Star Trek: The Next Generation*; *Hunter*; and *Criminal Minds*; and films, including *Heartbreak Ridge* and *Born in East L.A.* Commissioner Gomez is best known for his role as ‘The Auto Circus Cop’ in the ‘Leads?’ scene with ‘The Dude’ in the cult classic *The Big Lebowski*. Gomez is active with many community organizations, including the National Migrants Workers' Conference for Children, United Farmworkers of America, L.A. Special Olympics, AIDS WALK LA, March of Dimes, American Red Cross, and NOSOTROS. Commissioner Gomez has served on various commissions and committees over the years in the city of El Monte, including serving as an interim Planning Commissioner.

## Vice Chair, Joan Patsy Ostroy – 3<sup>rd</sup> District



Commissioner Ostroy was appointed to the CAAC by Supervisor Sheila Kuehl in 2015. Commissioner Ostroy has been a family lawyer since 1977, acting in the roles of litigator, consultant, and mediator. Commissioner Ostroy served as the Chair of the Los Angeles County Bar Association’s Family Law Section, Chair of the Executive Committee of the State Bar of California, and President of the Women Lawyers’ Association of Los Angeles. Commissioner Ostroy was a co-founder of the Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law and the Los Angeles Collaborative Family Law Association. Commissioner Ostroy was rated AV Preeminent by Martindale-Hubell and has been included in Los Angeles Daily Journal’s listing of top 24 Family Law Mediators in State of California and Los Angeles Magazine’s listing of top 50 Women Lawyers in Southern California. Commissioner Ostroy is also celebrated in Marquis Who’s Who

## Legislative Committee Chair, Farrell Chiles – 1<sup>st</sup> District



Commissioner Chiles was appointed to the CAAC by Supervisor Hilda L. Solis in 2015. Commissioner Chiles is retired from the federal government and military service (U.S. Army) and is currently a writer and author of five books. Commissioner Chiles previously served as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Blacks In Government (BIG), the leading national organization for African-American public service employees and also served as the Vice President of Resource Development for the Tuskegee Airmen Scholarship Foundation. In 2001, Commissioner Chiles was awarded the Public Service Image Award by the County of Los Angeles and the Greater Los Angeles Federal Executive Board.



## **Public Information Chair, Ronnie Jayne – 2<sup>nd</sup> District**



Commissioner Jayne was appointed to the CAAC by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas. Commissioner Jayne is currently a professional singer, pianist, entertainer, songwriter and owner of Ronnie Jayne Music & A Song For You Productions, a company specializing in custom live musical entertainment for special events. Consumer protection has always been a major passion of Commissioner Jayne, in fact, it was the subject of her first term paper in 7th grade. Commissioner Jayne has chaired Culver City's Fiesta La Ballona, is on the board of the Culver City Chamber of Commerce, is President Emeritus of the Culver City Democratic Club and served on the Culver City Cultural Affairs Commission.

## **Mark Ramos – 1<sup>st</sup> District**

Commissioner Ramos was appointed to the CAAC by Supervisor Hilda L. Solis in 2015.

## **Gregory Gorman – 2<sup>nd</sup> District**



Commissioner Gorman has transitioned from one of Los Angeles' most highly-regarded trial and complex business lawyers into a leader in Entrepreneurial Management. Commissioner Gorman was recognized twice as a “Super Lawyer” for his trial work and became the first African American Partner at one of the premier law firms in the country. Commissioner Gorman went on to become Managing Counsel of Yum Brands, the Fortune 500 Company that owns Taco Bell, Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut, Long John Silvers and A&W Restaurants. Commissioner Gorman now provides high level strategic consulting services such as filling interim C-Suite positions, training boards and providing strategic planning, finance and accounting presentations for aspiring nonprofit and corporate board members.

## **Eugene Willis Jr. – 3<sup>rd</sup> District**



Commissioner Willis was appointed to the CAAC by Supervisor Sheila Kuehl. Commissioner Willis is currently the Business Contracts Manager at UCLA with over ten years of business experience in contracts, grants and procurement. Commissioner Willis holds a Juris Doctor from Lincoln Law School of Sacramento and a Bachelor's degree from Florida State University. Commissioner Willis earned the Certified Professional Contracts Manager designation from the NCMA and is a Certified Research Administrator. Commissioner Willis also holds credentials in construction and a real estate license. Commissioner Willis was previously appointed to the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee for two years and is a vital member of the leadership committee providing input and guidance to the board.



### **Ross Viselman – 3<sup>rd</sup> District**



Commissioner Viselman was appointed to the CAAC by Supervisor Sheila Kuehl in 2015. Commissioner Viselman has worked as an attorney for more than a decade, currently with the State Bar of California's Office of the Chief Trial Counsel. A graduate of Harvard Law School, Commissioner Viselman has previously worked with Federal Public Defender in San Diego, several law firms in Los Angeles, and with the Los Angeles Dodgers baseball club. Commissioner Viselman is an adjunct professor in Torts at California School of Law and was previously a commissioner in the Workforce Investment Board, appointed by Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky.

### **Charline Sistrunk – 4<sup>th</sup> District**



Commissioner Sistrunk was appointed to the CAAC by Supervisor Janice Hahn.

### **Marcel Rodarte – 4<sup>th</sup> District**



Commissioner Rodarte was appointed to the CAAC by Supervisor Janice Hahn. Commissioner Rodarte enlisted in the U.S. Navy while in high school, served four years as an Aviation Electronics Technician and later enlisted in the U.S. Air Force Reserve. Commissioner Rodarte retired with 21 years of total service with the rank of Senior Master Sergeant (E-8). After his military career, Commissioner Rodarte began his federal service career with the Department of the Navy, Department of the Air Force, the Department of Defense, and the Department of Homeland Security. Commissioner Rodarte became the third Executive Director of the California Contract Cities Association on July 1, 2016, served on Norwalk's City Council and was the City's Mayor from 2014 through 2015.

## **Vivian Chan – 5<sup>th</sup> District**



Author, Lecturer, Online-Columnist, Producer/Event Organizer, Curator and Consultant in the philanthropic community for over 30 years. Formal Chair for the San Marino PTA Council, First District PTA Asian Outreach, Pasadena City College President's AAPI Advisory Committee, LA County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission, San Marino City Recreation Commission, Pasadena Symphony Orchestra, National Charity League, American Cancer Society Relay For Life & Producer for Pasadena Playhouse. Currently serving as President for the Pasadena City College PTSA, EVP/Curator of Chinese Floral Art Foundation-USA Charter, Co-Chair The Huntington Library Chinese Garden Verdant Mist Scholar Society, Board member of Clazzical Notes, United Charity Foundation, PCC Foundation, USC Trojan Affiliates, San Marino PTA Affiliates, Elite Performance Arts Group USA, Creator/Executive Producer for Asia Pacific American-Festival at San Gabriel Mission Playhouse, Chair for "Joyful Living Happy Life" bilingual lecture series at San Marino Crowell Public Library, American Cancer Society Hope Gala couple with "Love Notes Around The World" campaign and Co-author "Practice Happiness: 7 Habits of Joyful Living" a bilingual publication..

## **Harry Leon – 5<sup>th</sup> District**



Crescenta Valley Town Council President Harry Leon has lived in La Crescenta with his wife Maral Leon and two children since summer of 2003. Owner of a small plumbing firm, Commissioner Leon was elected to the Crescenta Valley Town Council in 2010 and has proudly served his community as president of the council since 2016. During his tenure, Commissioner Leon has led campaigns to beautify Crescenta Valley, has brought student leaders into council meetings through the CV Youth Council program, and has unified his community through the Korean-Armenian Cultural Festival. A proven and trusted leader in his community, Commissioner Leon is now running for an open seat on the Glendale Community College Board of Trustees.

## **Daniel Deng – 5<sup>th</sup> District**



Commissioner Deng started out advocating for consumer rights when he interned for David Horowitz in his "Fight Back" television program in KNBC Channel 4 in 1990. Commissioner Deng worked as a journalist covering consumer issues for various Chinese media before he became a consumer attorney in 1998. Commissioner Deng is currently a member of Consumer Attorneys Association of Los Angeles, a member of Consumer Attorneys of California, and a member of The American Association of Justice. Commissioner Deng is also a legal columnist for several Chinese publications and hosts radio shows at AM 1430 (Cantonese), and AM 690 (Mandarin) covering legal and consumer issues for the Chinese listeners.

## **Former Commissioners in 2019**

**Dennis Arguelles – 2<sup>nd</sup> District (Served Until April 2019)**

**Kisheen Wayne Tulloss – 2<sup>nd</sup> District (Served Until August 2019)**

**Patrick Wilson – 4<sup>th</sup> District (served Until November 2019)**



# Regular Meetings

The CAAC held six meetings in 2019. Regular Meetings were held on the third Thursday of every other month at the East Los Angeles Service Center with the exception of two in-district meetings that were held in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Supervisorial District. Notable agenda items included the tracking, and weighing in on impactful legislation and ordinances, one of which (AB 539) was recently signed by Governor Newsom, supporting the recently passed Permanent Rent Stabilization Ordinance, advocating for tenant rights and protections for residents across Los Angeles County and educated consumers on how to identify and avoid Robo scam phone calls.



Pictured Left to Right: DCBA Deputy Director Joel Ayala, DCBA Director Joe Nicchitta, Commissioners Harry Leon, Ross Viselman, Charline Sistrunk, Vivian Chan, Public Information Committee Chair Ronnie Jayne, Commission Chair Mike Gomez, Legislative Committee Chair Farrell Chiles, Commissioner Marcel Rodarte, Senior Policy Analyst Wason Fu



Pictured clockwise left to right: DCBA Supervisor Maritza Gutierrez, DCBA Staff Francisco Mendez, DCBA Deputy Director Maggie Becerra, County Council Sayuj Panicker, Commissioners Charline Sistrunk, Harry Leon, Eugene Willis Jr, Public Information Committee Chair Ronnie Jayne, Commission Vice Chair Joan Patsy Ostroy, Commission Chair Mike Gomez, Legislative Committee Chair Farrell Chiles and Commissioner Gregory Gorman.

# Community Meetings

In addition to the regular meetings held at the East Los Angeles Civic Center, the Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission also holds meetings in alternate locations throughout the Supervisorial Districts. In 2019, the Commission held two meetings, one in the First Supervisorial District, in the city of Pomona and the other in the Second Supervisorial District, in Culver City.

The purpose of these community-based meetings are to educate the community about the services provided by DCBA and other participating local agencies, to increase outreach efforts from both DCBA and increase the visibility of the CAAC. These meetings also provided the CAAC an opportunity to research specific issues in their representing district and in turn, develop strategies and goals that will be for the benefit of those constituents and their communities.

## Pomona

◆ Los Angeles County Supervisor Hilda L. Solis ◆ City of Pomona ◆ Fairplex ◆  
◆ Los Angeles County Department of Consumer and Business Affairs ◆  
◆ Los Angeles County Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission ◆  
INVITE YOU TO A:

### CONSUMER PROTECTION RESOURCE FAIR & COMMUNITY FORUM



Meet local government leaders,  
appointed and elected officials,  
and learn about:

- ◆ AVOIDING SCAMS ◆
- ◆ YOUR RIGHTS AS A RENTER ◆
- ◆ HOW L.A. COUNTY IS FIGHTING  
IMMIGRATION FRAUD ◆

◆ FREE ADMISSION ◆ FREE PARKING ◆ FREE FOOD & BEVERAGES ◆  
◆ FREE INFORMATION & GIFTS FROM COMMUNITY PARTNERS ◆

**Thursday, March 14, 5:30 to 8 p.m.**

**Fairplex Sheraton Conference Center**

**601 W. McKinley Ave. Pomona, CA 91768**

Spanish Translation Available



Schedule of events (subject to change):

- ◆ 5:30 p.m. - Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission meeting
- ◆ 6 p.m. - Presentations and Q&A from the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs
- ◆ Resource Fair open throughout the event

For more information:

Email: [info@dcba.lacounty.gov](mailto:info@dcba.lacounty.gov)  
Call: (213) 974-9699

A community meeting was held in the First Supervisorial District, in the city of Pomona at the Fairplex Sheraton Conference Center. In preparation for the event, the Commission partnered with DCBA to research prevalent issues affecting the constituents in the First Supervisorial District in Los Angeles County. After extensive research, it was determined that a Consumer Protection Resource Fair and Community Forum would be held that would cover topics such as, tenant rights and protections, resources on methods to avoid scams and information on how Los Angeles County is fighting against immigration fraud services. The event also provided the general public an opportunity to attend a CAAC meeting and have an opportunity to meet and voice their concerns to the Commissioners directly.



# Culver City

The second community meeting was held in the Second Supervisorial District, in Culver City at the Veterans Memorial Hall. After extensive research and planning it was determined that the CAAC meeting for November would coincide with a DCBA sponsored Smarter Senior Forum. At the forum, seniors received vital information and presentations from various partnering agencies on the availability of services specifically targeted towards the senior population. Partnering agencies included: DCBA, The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS), and a presentation from Culver City Mayor Meghan Sahli-Wells. At the meeting, CAAC Chair Mike Gomez formally introduced the Commission, its mission and objectives, and the serving Commissioners to the attending audience.





*Pictured from left to right: Commission Chair Mike Gomez, Culver City Mayor Meghan Sahli-Wells and Legislative Committee Chair Farrell Chiles at the Smarter Senior Forum in Culver City.*



Commission Chair Mike Gomez introducing Commissioner Gregory Gorman at the Smarter Senior Forum held in Culver City.





Pictured left to right: Commission Vice Chair Joan Patsy Ostroy, Commissioners Charline Sistrunk, Eugene Willis, Public Information Committee Chair Ronnie Jayne, Legislative Committee Chair Farrell Chiles, Commission Chair Mike Gomez, Commissioners Gregory Gorman and Harry Leon  
Not Pictured: Commissioners Daniel Deng, Marcel Rodarte, Ross Viselman, Vivian Chan and Mark Ramos

The Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission is proud to continue its partnership with the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs. The commission will continue to serve the residents of their respective Districts by highlighting the importance of consumer education, outreach, and preventive measures to enhance consumer protection.