

Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission



2020 Annual Report

Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration

500 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

<https://dcba.lacounty.gov/advisory-commission/>

2020 Serving Commissioners

Commission Chair

Mike Gomez
First District

Commission Vice Chair

Joan Patsy Ostroy
Third District

First District

Farrell J. Chiles
Mark Ramos
Mike Gomez

Second District

Eugene Hale
Gregory Gorman
Ronnie Jayne

Third District

Eugene Willis Jr.
Joan Patsy Ostroy
Ross Viselman (Served Until March 2020)

Fourth District

Charline Sistrunk
Marcel Rodarte
Mark Waronek

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 (BOS).

The Commission has provided valuable linkages between the BOS, DCBA, and various community groups and organizations invested in consumer issues. The Commissioners' collective experiences as consumers, members of the business community, and leaders within 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 but are not limited to:

- 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 and outreach
- Studying and reporting on matters referred by the Director or the BOS
- Rendering a report of its activities to the Director and the BOS at least once each calendar year and willing to testify upon request

Organization

The CAAC is comprised of 15 members (three from each Supervisorial District) and are appointed by the BOS. In addition to the main body, the Commission has three established standing subcommittees that also meet six times per calendar year.

Key Accomplishments in 2020

The CAAC proactively identified and addressed issues, problems, and concerns that have directly impacted Los Angeles County residents, consumers, and the various communities throughout Los Angeles County. The Commission takes great pride in focusing on issues that impact some of the most vulnerable Los Angeles County residents which include senior citizens, women, children and low-income residents. However, due to the unprecedented impacts of the COVID-19 health crisis of the County of Los Angeles, the Commission made it imperative to address critical issues and challenges that Los Angeles County residents faced, and continue to face, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to COVID-19, some of the key legislative topics addressed by the Commission included the tracking of impactful legislation and ordinances such as Assembly Bill (AB) 5, a bill aimed at extending the classification status of “gig economy” employees granting them additional benefits and protections, AB 3088, which granted additional eviction protections to tenants and landlords, and on the enacted Eviction Moratorium passed by the Los Angeles County BOS, which not only protected tenants from facing eviction due to non-payment of rent, but prohibited rent increases for tenants experiencing financial hardships related to COVID-19.

In addition to addressing consumer legislation, the Commission also played a key role in increasing outreach efforts to populations of consumers that would otherwise remain difficult to reach. Critical information about free and available resources like the Los Angeles County Library “Free WI-FI Finder” program, the DCBA Dispute Resolution Program, the Mediation and Small Claims process, food programs for disadvantaged populations, the 2020 United States Census, and on the Financial Navigators Program was shared throughout all of the Supervisorial Districts of the County via online, print, and word-of-mouth.

The Commission also assisted the Director of the Department in ensuring that Los Angeles County consumers were aware of typical and specialized holiday scams, and referring individuals affected by these scams to DCBA and other appropriate agencies. Finally, the CAAC shared information on the DCBA price gouging homepage, available for consumers to report suspected price gouging violations for further investigation by DCBA and its partner agencies.

Equity and Diversity

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Goals of the CAAC in 2020

The CAAC has put forth the following 3 goals for 2020:

1. Conduct meetings in no fewer than two different districts per year that align with DCBA events and each Commissioner is encouraged to attend at least 1 of DCBA's hosted events (preferably an event held in their Supervisorial District).
2. Weigh in on legislative matters that align with DCBA's codes and standards.
3. Each Commissioner is encouraged to calendar the annual schedule of full commission meeting dates and make it a priority to attend and actively participate in subcommittee business, having a representative from each district on all subcommittees.

Regular Meetings

The CAAC held its first regular meeting of 2020 at the Los Angeles County Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration in Downtown Los Angeles on January 24 at 10:30 a.m. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and ensure the wellbeing of all attending individuals, the calendared in-person meeting for March 2020 was cancelled. In order to continue serving and working on behalf of all Los Angeles County residents, consumers and communities in the County, the CAAC adapted to alternate method to conduct the remainder of the scheduled regular meetings for 2020. All meetings were held on a bi-monthly basis on the third Thursday of every meeting month and hosted via teleconference using the WebEx platform, including the previously cancelled March 2020 meeting, which was postponed and held in December. Attendance for all teleconferenced meetings was available using the online platform, through a call-in option and were recorded and available if requested.

Sub-Committee Meetings

The CAAC sub-committees held their first meetings of 2020 at the East Los Angeles Community Center in East Los Angeles on February 20. However, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, and in an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and ensure the wellbeing of all attending individuals, the calendared in-person meeting for April 2020 was cancelled. In order to continue serving and working on behalf of all Los Angeles County residents, consumers and communities in the County, the CAAC also conducted its sub-committee meetings via teleconference using the WebEx platform. All meetings were held on a bi-monthly basis, with the Legislative and Public Information Committees held on the third Thursday of every meeting month, and the Executive Committee held on the third Friday. Attendance for all teleconferenced meetings was available using the online platform, through a call-in option and were recorded and available if requested.

Community Meetings

As a result, and in response of the COVID-19 pandemic, and as recommended by the Los Angeles County and California State Health Officer Order, the CAAC cancelled all in-person community meetings planned for 2020. The Commission and standing Sub-Committees continue to plan and discuss alternate options and methods to host community meetings via an online platform or format.

The Commission and Sub-Committees have made it imperative that plans for community meetings in 2021 are finalized and that these meetings will be inclusive to all individuals who may not be familiar with virtual or web-based events. Established community meetings will available using an online platform, via call-in option and recorded for future use.

2020 Standing Sub-Committees

There are currently three standing sub-committees of the CAAC. The purpose of the standing sub-committees is to focus on specific issues that impact consumers across Los Angeles County, and through these sub-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 create new approaches in an effort to increase the presence and effectiveness of the CAAC.



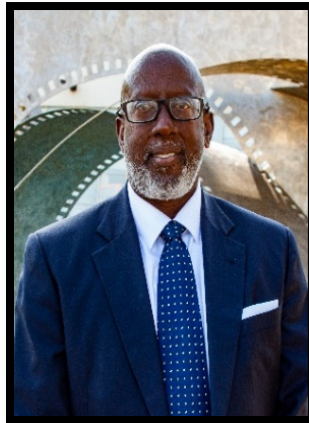
Chair and Vice-Chair of the Executive Committee: Commissioners Mike Gomez and Joan Patsy Ostroy.

Legislative Committee

The Legislative Committee ensures that Los Angeles County consumers are represented legislatively by continuously monitoring and proposing improvements to already existing, and future legislation. The Committee often recommends new policies as the needs of consumers continue to evolve. The Legislative Committee, which met five times in 2020, was Chaired by Commissioner Gregory Gorman.

The Legislative Committee received presentations on AB 5, a bill that would extend the classification status for “gig economy” workers in California, on AB 3088, a bill that would grant additional protections for Los Angeles County residents and landlords, information on the importance and the logistical implementation of the 2020 U.S Census for Los Angeles County, and conducted a detailed analysis of all current and future legislative laws, regulations and bills for 2020. All presentations that were received by the Legislative Committee were reviewed,

discussed and a recommendation was made by the Committee Chair to the Commission Chair to present at a future CAAC meeting.



Chair of the Legislative Committee: Commissioner Gregory Gorman.

Public Information Committee

The Public Information Committee identifies, facilitates and enhances public outreach and dialogue and has advocated for increased access to consumer services and consumer education, including the addition of multiple languages for department communications for the diverse communities served by Los Angeles County. The Public Information Committee, which met five times in 2020, was Chaired by Commissioner Ronnie Jayne.

The Public Information Committee received presentations on the 2020 U.S Census and the importance of outreaching to underserved Los Angeles County communities, shared important information with Los Angeles County residents on the availability of resources and assistance programs such as the Los Angeles County Library Free Public Wi-Fi finder, the DCBA price gouging website, and methods that residents can use to spot, avoid and report suspected scams. Finally, the Public Information Committee continues to coordinate with DCBA in the creation and implementation of Countywide events to ensure that concerns impacting specific districts are addressed by the CAAC.



Chair of the Public Information Committee: Commissioner Ronnie Jayne.

Commissioner Profiles

Chair, Mike Gomez – 1st 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*. Commissioner Gomez is active in 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 interim Planning Commissioner.

Vice Chair, Joan Patsy Ostroy – 3rd District



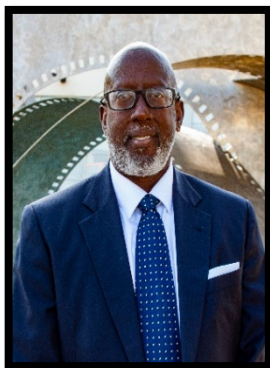
Commissioner Ostroy was appointed to the CAAC by Supervisor Sheila Kuehl in 2015. Now professionally retired as of 2020, Commissioner Ostroy served as a family lawyer, acting in the roles of litigator, consultant, and mediator. Commissioner Ostroy served as the Chair of the Los Angeles County Bar Association's 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.

Public Information Chair, Ronnie Jayne – 2nd 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

Legislative Committee Chair, Gregory Gorman – 2nd 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.

Farrell Chiles – 1st 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.

Mark Ramos – 1st District

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

Eugene Hale – 2nd District

Commissioner Hale was appointed to the CAAC by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas in 2020.

Eugene Willis Jr. – 3rd District



Commissioner Eugene Willis Jr. was appointed to the CAAC by Supervisor Sheila Kuehl, March 2019. Willis is an experienced & dynamic leader with over 10 years of experience in the business community and as a community leader. He is a licensed attorney, small business owner and realtor. He previously served two years on the Sacramento County Equal Employment Opportunity Advisory Committee (EEOC), where he received stellar recommendations. Willis has experience in complex contract negotiations, grants & research administration, real estate, and procurement. He holds a Juris Doctor from Lincoln Law School of Sacramento, a bachelor's from Florida State University and a master's degree from Southwest Baptist University. Willis is a Certified Contracts Manager (CCPM) and Certified Research Administrator (CRA). Willis is a member of the California State BAR and considered an up-and-coming competent lawyer. He is an avid traveler and speaks conversational level Spanish. Willis is a vital member of the leadership committee providing input and guidance to the board.

Charline Sistrunk – 4th District



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

Marcel Rodarte – 4th 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.

Mark Waronek – 4th District



Mark A. Waronek has over 26 years of experience in government and community relations, and public affairs. Mark is the owner and President/CEO of M&M Consulting Group – a business he started March 2019. Mark previously worked at one of the largest public affairs firm in Los Angeles County, Ek, Sunkin & Bai servicing clients all over Los Angeles County, specializing in all cities outside the City of Los Angeles. Mark worked for Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn as her South Bay Senior Deputy (2016-2018) working in all the cities in the South Bay from the Palos Verdes Peninsula to Marina del Rey. Mark currently is the Mayor in the City of Lomita – he served as Mayor in 2016-2017. He also served on the council from 2003-2007, and as Mayor from 2006-07. He is involved in many organizations and associations in the South Bay and the Los Angeles County region. He is currently the Vice-President for the California Contract Cities Association and is a board member on the CAL Cities Transportation, Communications Public Works Policy Committee and many other regional organizations/associations. Previously, he worked for Ek & Ek – public affairs company out of the San Pedro office for seven years – 2010 – 2016. He was the Principal and Owner of Waronek & Associates, a consulting firm he started in April 2005, after several years as an associate and project manager for three top advocacy and public affairs consulting firms in Los Angeles

Vivian Chan – 5th District

Commissioner Chan was appointed to the CAAC by Supervisor Michael Antonovich. Commissioner Chan is the founder of Asian Link Marketing & Healthy Cuisine Online. Founding board member of United Charity Foundation & Chinese Floral Arts Foundation-USA Charter. Creator of “Be a Scholar For a Day” a curriculum for 4th graders, “Love Note Around The World” for American Cancer Society, “Absolutely Beautiful” Fashion Show & “Junior Got Talents” at Pasadena Playhouse. Commissioner Chan is also the chairman of the First District PTA Asian Outreach, ACS California Chinese Unit Leadership Council/SCCRFL special event, and Pasadena City College Foundation Board of Director.

Harry Leon – 5th 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.

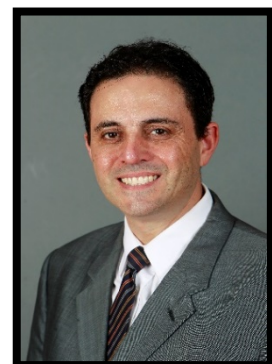
Daniel Deng – 5th District



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 2020

Ross Viselman – 3rd District (Served Until March 2020)



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.



Pictured left to right: Commission Vice Chair Joan Patsy Ostroy, Commissioner Charline Sistrunk, Public Information Committee Chair Ronnie Jayne, Commissioners Eugene Willis Jr., Farrell Chiles, Commission Chair Mike Gomez, Legislative Committee Chair Gregory Gorman and Commissioner Harry Leon

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 and represent the residents of each Supervisorial District throughout Los Angeles County by highlighting the importance of consumer education, consumer outreach, equity, inclusivity and preventive measures to enhance consumer protection for all.