

# Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission



## 2021 Annual Report

Los Angeles County Hall of Records

320 West Temple Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012

[Commission Webpage](#)

# 2021 Serving Commissioners

## Commission Chair

Joan Patsy Ostroy

## Commission Vice Chair

Gregory Gorman

### First District

Farrell J. Chiles

Mike Gomez

Mark Ramos

### Second District

Gregory Gorman

Eugene Hale

Ronnie Jayne

### Third District

Michelle "Mickey" Katz

Joan Patsy Ostroy

Eugene Willis Jr.

(Until 7/15/21)

### Fourth District

Charline Sistrunk

Mark Waronek

Scott Houston

(Appointed 5/20/21)

Marcel Rodarte

(Until 5/20/21)

### Fifth District

Vivian Chan

Daniel Deng

Harry Leon

# Background

## **History and Purpose of the Commission**

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

The Commission has provided valuable linkages between various community groups, agencies, and organizations invested in consumer issues to the DCBA and the Board of Supervisors (BOS). The collective experiences of each Commissioner 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 and County of Los Angeles.

## **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 their 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 methods to improve consumer education and outreach;
- Studying and reporting on matters referred for review by the Director or the BOS;
- Rendering a report of Commission activities to the Director and the BOS at least once each calendar year and willing to testify upon request.

As mandated under *Chapter 3.13.060*, the Commission shall meet at least six (6) times per calendar year.

## **Organization**

The CAAC is comprised of 15 appointed members (three (3) from each Supervisorial District) and are appointed by the BOS. In addition to the main body, the Commission has established three (3) standing subcommittees that also meet six (6) times per calendar year respectively.

# Key Accomplishments in 2021

The CAAC proactively identified and addressed issues, problems, and concerns that have impacted Los Angeles County consumers, residents, and 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 consumers that include senior citizens, women, immigrant populations, children, and low-income residents. However, due to the continued impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commission made it imperative to address critical issues that Los Angeles County consumers continue to face as a result of COVID-19.

In response to COVID-19, key legislative items addressed by the Commission included a review of the Public Health Anti-Retaliation Ordinance for Reported Non-Compliance of the Public Health Officer Order, a review of Hero Pay, a review of COVID-19 Vaccination Ordinances, a review on the status of the Los Angeles County Eviction Moratorium (now the Los Angeles County COVID-19 Tenant Protections Resolution), and received information on the Small Claims program, Mediation program, Financial Navigators program, and the recently launched Rent Registry Portal.

In addition to addressing consumer related 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 DCBA “Get Ahead LA” website, the DCBA Office of Immigrant Affairs “Immigrant Services Map”, along with a quarterly newsletter of events, programs, and services, was shared throughout all of the Supervisorial Districts with support and assistance from the CAAC.

Finally, for 2021, the CAAC established a fifth Commission goal that was aimed at not only increasing engagement and participation with consumers and residents of the County, but to also understand and advise some of the current challenges and hardships prevalent in some of the communities and populations in which they serve. As a result of this goal, the Commission drafted a letter of recommendation to the Director of DCBA to combat food insecurity based on a need identified by Commissioners from the Second Supervisorial District. The letter was drafted in 2021 and unanimously approved via roll call vote in 2022.

# Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Aside from the CAAC being comprised of individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds holding cultural differences and characteristics, the leadership and membership of the Commission embrace the diversity of the constituents, communities and individuals that they represent and serve throughout all the Supervisorial Districts of Los Angeles County.

As such, on the CAAC sub-committee level, the Committee membership have always made it a priority to ensure that business taken-up by both sub-committees is accessible, equitable, diverse, and inclusive of individuals from any and all backgrounds, including individuals in all protected classes such as race, color, age, sex, sexual orientation and people with disabilities. As legislative items are reviewed by the Legislative Committee, prioritizing equitable access, diversity and inclusion, the Public Information Committee ensures that all information on available services and programs is shared within each respective district, through the DCBA website and social media accounts, via print or webinars, and that each outreach item is available in a variety of languages and accessible to all.

On the Commission level, the CAAC leadership and membership welcome any members of the public to attend both the full Commission and sub-committee meetings. The CAAC also continuously provides the opportunity for fellow Commissioners, members of the public, and stakeholders in attendance, or who have submitted a public comment via email, to share their ideas, opinions, experiences, beliefs, and challenges they may face via public comment after every agenda item and during the designated public comment section on the agenda. A central goal taken-up by the Commission includes the planning of in-district meetings with agendas targeted towards some of the most vulnerable populations of the County such as senior citizens, students, individuals with technological challenges, and from diverse economic backgrounds, in an effort to increase awareness and support to underserved communities and populations. Finally, the Commission ensured that with the transition to teleconferenced meetings in response to the pandemic, individuals who may not have internet access available to them to attend virtually, had the opportunity to attend all Commission meetings through a call-in option.

The Commission continues to advocate for the inclusion of all individuals with ethnic differences, backgrounds and characteristics and continuously works towards and equitable, diverse, and inclusive environment for all residents, consumers and populations across the County of Los Angeles.

# Goals of the CAAC in 2021

The CAAC has put forth the following five (5) goals for 2021:

1. Conduct meetings, either in-person or virtually, that align with the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA) hosted events, in no fewer than two different districts per year 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, standards, and goals.
3. Each Commissioner is encouraged to calendar the annual schedule of full commission meeting dates and make it a priority to attend, either in-person or virtually (if available), and actively participate in subcommittee business, having a representative from each district on all sub-committees.
4. To be inclusive by inviting diverse community members to attend Commission meetings.
5. Each Commissioner is encouraged to provide a summary of the needs of their respective districts and describe how the County of Los Angeles is meeting those needs or how those needs should be met.

# Regular Meetings

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 CAAC held all regular meetings in 2021 via teleconference. Attendance for all teleconferenced meetings was available using the WebEx online platform, accessible through a call-in option, and were recorded and available upon request. All meetings were held on a bi-monthly basis on the third Thursday of every meeting month.

## Sub-Committee Meetings

In alignment with the meeting format for regular meetings, the CAAC also held all sub-committee meetings in 2021 via teleconference. Attendance for all teleconferenced sub-committee meetings was available using the WebEx online platform, accessible through a call-in option, and were recorded and available upon request. All meetings were held on a bi-monthly basis on the third Thursday of every meeting month, opposite of the regular meeting schedule.

## Community Meetings

As a result, and in response of the COVID-19 pandemic, and as recommended by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and the Public Health Officer Order, the CAAC cancelled all in-person community meetings planned for 2021. To increase outreach efforts to consumers and residents of the County, the CAAC participated in three (3) webinars hosted by DCBA. The first webinar, held in June, focused on the Mediator Training and Certification Program administered by the Department for individuals interested in becoming certified as Mediators. The second webinar, held in October, provided Los Angeles County residents with information on the Small Claims Court and Mediation process. The third webinar, held in December, provided general information to homeowners on the foreclosure prevention process. At each of these events, the Commission Chair and/or Vice Chair provided opening remarks to the attendees, promoted the services and programs available to consumers and residents, and provided attendees with information on how to attend Commission meetings.

## 2021 Standing Sub-Committees

There are currently three (3) 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 advise on their findings. The sub-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.

## **Committee Business**

### **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 ensure that administrative and pertinent agenda items are brought to the full body.

### **Legislative Committee**

The Legislative Committee ensures that Los Angeles County consumers are represented legislatively by continuously monitoring and proposing improvements to already existing, and planned legislation. The Committee often recommends changes to drafted policies as the needs of consumers continue to evolve. The Legislative Committee, which met five times in 2021, was Chaired by Commissioner Harry Leon.

In 2021, the Legislative Committee received presentations on the Public Health Anti-Retaliation Ordinance for Reported Non-Compliance of the Public Health Officer Order, an ordinance aimed at protecting whistleblowers reporting nonadherence or violations of the Public Health Office Order made by businesses or employers, information on the DCBA Rent Registry Portal, a new dashboard created for landlords and tenants of the County to pay annual rent registry dues and upload current information on properties, information on the Hero Pay and COVID-19 Vaccination Ordinance, and tracked the changes and extensions made to the Los Angeles County Eviction Moratorium, now titled the Los Angeles County COVID-19 Tenant Protections Resolution. All presentations and items were reviewed and discussed, and recommendations were made to the Commission Chair for presentation at future CAAC meetings.

### **Public Information Committee**

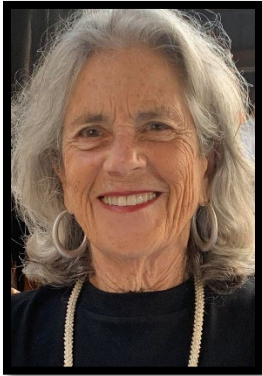
The Public Information Committee identifies, facilitates and enhances public outreach and dialogue and has advocated for increased access to consumer services and consumer education, including the addition of multiple languages for department communications for the diverse communities served by Los Angeles County. The Public Information Committee, which met six times in 2021, was Chaired by Commissioner Ronnie Jayne.

In 2021, the Public Information Committee received presentations and information on free and available resources like the DCBA “Get Ahead LA” website, a platform developed to help Los Angeles County consumers find needed assistance and programs, the DCBA Office of Immigrant Affairs “Immigrant Services Map”, connecting immigrant communities with free services and legitimate legal resources, helped plan a quarterly newsletter of events, programs, and services that was shared throughout all of the Supervisorial Districts, and continued to share tips to residents on how to spot, avoid and report suspected scams. The Public Information Committee continues to coordinate with DCBA in the creation and implementation of Countywide events to ensure that challenges impacting specific communities are spotlighted.



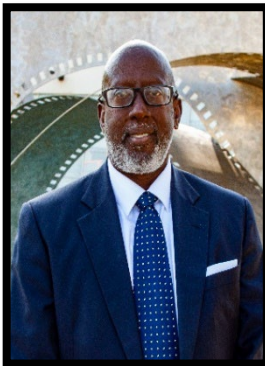
# Commissioner Profiles

## **Chair, Joan Patsy Ostroy – 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

## **Vice Chair, 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.

## **Legislative Committee Chair, Harry Leon – 5<sup>th</sup> District**



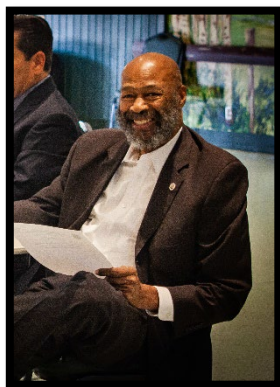
Crescenta Valley Town Council President Harry Leon has lived in La Crescenta with his wife, Maral Leon, and two children since summer of 2003. Owner of a small plumbing firm, Commissioner Leon was elected to the Crescenta Valley Town Council in 2010 and has proudly served his community as president of 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.

### **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

### **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.

### **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. 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.

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

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

### **Michelle "Mickey" Katz – 3<sup>rd</sup> District**

Commissioner Katz was appointed to the CAAC by Supervisor Sheila Kuehl.

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



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

#### **Mark Waronek – 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

#### **Scott Houston – 4<sup>th</sup> District**

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

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

Commissioner Chan was appointed to the CAAC by Supervisor Michael Antonovich. She is the founder of Asian Link Marketing, Healthy Cuisine Online & Rejuvenation LLC. Founding board member of Chinese Floral Arts Foundation-USA Charter & Clazzical Notes. Author, Lecturer, Online-Columnist, Producer, Curator, Life Coach and Consultant in the philanthropic community for over 32 years. Co-author “Practice Happiness: 7 Habits of Joyful Living”. Creator of “Be a Scholar For a Day” a curriculum for 4th graders teaches diversity learning, “Love Note Around The World” for American Cancer Society, “Junior Got Talents” at Pasadena Playhouse and Asian Pacific American Festival at San Gabriel Mission Playhouse. Current President of Pasadena City College PTSA and Co-Chairs Elite Performing Arts Group USA.

### **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 2021**

### **Eugene Hale – 2<sup>nd</sup> District**

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

### **Eugene Willis Jr. – 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 (CPCM) 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.

### **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.

Picture Pending

As a response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CAAC held all meetings through teleconference as allowed under Assembly Bill 361.  
The above image represents the look and format of a typical Commission meeting.

The Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission is proud to continue their 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 measures to enhance consumer protection for all.