

Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission



2022 Annual Report

Los Angeles County Hall of Records

320 West Temple Street, Suite G-10

Los Angeles, CA 90012

[Commission Webpage](#)

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Commission Roster

Chair

Joan Patsy Ostroy

Vice-Chair

Gregory Gorman (Until 4/25/22)

Mike Gomez (From 5/19/22)

First District

Farrell J. Chiles

Mike Gomez

Mark Ramos

Second District

Gregory Gorman

(Until 4/25/22)

Ronnie Jayne

Carlos Collard

(From 3/17/22)

Nicole J. Jones

(From 11/17/22)

Third District

Michelle "Mickey" Katz

Joan Patsy Ostroy

Michelle Rofeh-Lensky

(From 5/19/22)

Fourth District

Charline Sistrunk

Mark Waronek

Cory Allen

(From 11/17/22)

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).

The Commission has provided valuable linkages between various community groups, agencies, and organizations invested in consumer issues to DCBA and the Board of Supervisors (BOS). The collective experiences and knowledge of each Commissioner as consumers, members of the business community, and leaders within their own communities have been a valuable resource that provides vital assistance to DCBA and Los Angeles County.

The Duties of the Commission

The CAAC plays a valuable role by supporting DCBA in maintaining its mission of “creating a fair vibrant marketplace for consumers and businesses”. The duties of the Commission as established by Chapter 3.13.130 - Duties include:

- A. To ascertain the needs of consumers and advise the director of their findings as appropriate;
- B. To advise the director concerning the protection and promotion of the interests of consumers;
- C. To advise the director regarding the need for changes in procedures, programs or legislation in order to further the interests of consumers;
- D. To discuss with the director methods for more effective consumer education;
- E. To study and report on matters referred for review by the director or the board of supervisors;
- F. To render to the director and the board of supervisors at least once each calendar year a report of its activities and to testify upon request.

As mandated under Chapter 3.13.060 the Commission shall meet at least six (6) times a year.

Organization

As described under Chapter 3.13.010 – Continuation-Composition “The commission shall have 15 positions...Each member of the board may nominate candidates for three positions on the commission”. In addition to the main body, the CAAC has established three (3) standing subcommittees that also meet six (6) times per calendar year respectively.

Commission Meeting Format

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 2022 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 full body meeting month.

Sub-Committee Meetings

In alignment with the meeting format for regular meetings, the CAAC also held all sub-committee meetings in 2022 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 full body 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 2022. The CAAC will continue to work diligently to plan and prepare for the eventual return of in-person meetings, in-district meetings, and community events if permissible by current COVID-19 guidelines and constraints.

Key Accomplishments

In 2022, the CAAC continued to proactively engage with consumers, residents, and community members to help address some of the issues, problems, and concerns experienced within their respective districts. The Commission takes great pride in focusing on pertinent issues that impact some of the most vulnerable populations of the County that include senior citizens, women, immigrant populations, children, and low-income residents. As the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic continued, the Commission made it imperative to share information on all available assistance programs and resources to consumers directly.

In an effort to implement Commission Goal No. 5 and take action to address the issues identified from the in-district report provided by Commissioner Ronnie Jayne from the 2nd Supervisorial District, the CAAC began the year by unanimously approving the *Letter of Recommendation to Combat Food Insecurity*. The letter, addressed to the Director of the Department of Consumer and Business Affairs (DCBA), urged the County of Los Angeles to increase their support of local food growers and develop strategies to provide fresh produce to underserved communities. As a result, the Director was pleased to share with the CAAC that there are American Rescue Plan funded pilot programs currently under development to help address this critical need. The Director encouraged the CAAC to provide their feedback about those programs once they formally launch.

Continuing with Commission Goal No.5, Commissioner Michelle “Mickey” Katz from the 3rd Supervisorial District and Lindsay Sturman, representative from the Livable Communities Initiative (LCI), provided an in-depth report on the need for safe, sustainable, and affordable housing within the 3rd Supervisorial District. After discussion, the Commission invited Lindsay Sturman to a future Commission meeting for further discussion regarding the status of the LCI and share some of the new challenges experienced.

Finally, as requested by Commissioner Mike Gomez, the CAAC received information from DCBA and the Neighborhood Legal Services of Los Angeles (NLSLA) regarding the rules and regulations surrounding health care debt and the collection of debts. The CAAC full body and Committees not only assisted with the development of outreach strategies for the NLSLA, but played a key role in sharing information about the services available to individuals experiencing the many challenges associated with debt and debt collection throughout Los Angeles County.

The Commission looks forward to the district reports from the Commissioners of the 4th and 5th Supervisorial District in early 2023.

Committee Business

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.

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, Vice-Chair, and the Legislative and Public Information Committee Chairs, work together to address or refer administrative agenda items to the CAAC 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 2022, was Chaired by Commissioner Harry Leon.

In 2022, the Legislative Committee received a presentation from DCBA on the new rules and regulations surrounding debt collection, that included information on Assembly Bill 1866, Senate Bill 908, and Regulation F. These policies set forth communication, notification, and procedural guidelines for agencies attempting to collect payments of debt, reducing the frequency of persistent inquiries to debtors from these agencies. The Committee also received a presentation from the NLSLA regarding healthcare debt and information about the services available to consumers through the NLSLA regarding the settlement of these debts.

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 2022, was Chaired by Commissioner Ronnie Jayne.

In 2022, the Public Information Committee members shared their outreach expertise with Shelly Tsai, representative from the NLSLA, and helped develop new outreach strategies for this agency. As a result of this discussion, DCBA, the CAAC, and the NLSLA plan to partner to increase outreach and awareness of available programs and services. The Public Information Committee continues to collaborate with DCBA to increase accessibility, and to help develop strategies to increase outreach to underserved communities across the County.

Commission Goals

The CAAC has put forth the following five (5) goals for 2022:

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 sub-committee 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.

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.

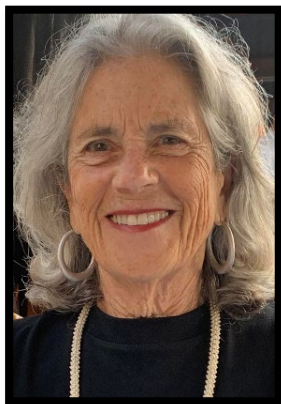
As such, on the CAAC sub-committee level, the Committee membership have always made it a priority to ensure that business taken-up by both sub-committees is accessible, equitable, diverse, and inclusive of individuals from any and all backgrounds, including individuals in all protected classes such as 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 of the agenda. A central goal taken-up by the Commission includes the planning of the eventual return of in-person, 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-district meetings are key in increasing awareness and support to underserved communities and populations. Finally, the Commission ensured that with the continuation of teleconferenced meetings in response to the pandemic, individuals who may not have internet access available 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 an equitable, diverse, and inclusive environment for all residents, consumers, and populations across the County of Los Angeles.

Commissioner Profiles

Chair, Joan Patsy Ostroy – 3rd District



Commissioner Ostroy was appointed to the CAAC by Supervisor Sheila Kuehl in 2015 and has served as Chair of the Commission for the past two terms. She has been a family lawyer since 1977, acting in the roles of litigator, consultant, and mediator, until retiring in 2020. Ostroy has 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. She is a co-founder of the Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law and the Los Angeles Collaborative Family Law Association. She 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 the State of California and Los Angeles Magazine's listing of top 50 Women Lawyers in Southern California. Since retirement, she has become active in the Black Jewish Justice Alliance, focusing on issues of racism and anti-semitism.

Vice-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 and was elected as the Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission (CAAC) Vice-Chair in 2017 and 2018, elected the CAAC Chair in 2019 and 2020.

Legislative Committee Chair, 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.

Public Information Committee Chair, Ronnie Jayne – 2nd District



Commissioner Jayne was appointed to the CAAC by Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, and re-appointed by Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell. Commissioner Jayne is currently a professional singer, pianist, entertainer, songwriter, comic actress 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! Ronnie Jayne has chaired Culver City's Fiesta la Ballona, is President Emeritus of the Culver City Democratic Club and served on the Culver City Cultural Affairs Commission.

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.

Carlos Collard – 2nd District



Commissioner Collard was appointed to the CAAC by Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell in 2022. Carlos' activism began while helping his parents and younger siblings through education and advocacy for their consumer and social service needs. He transformed those skills and private sector experience for both a large company and a small business into local government and community leadership. He has worked for the city of Santa Monica within the areas of transportation, urban planning, community services, and public works. In his community, he led volunteers to launch the city of Los Angeles' South Robertson Neighborhoods Council (SORO NC) – where he was a public official elected to office by community members – and remains Los Angeles' youngest-ever neighborhood council president. He has served on the Metro Westside/Central Service Council and chaired a Los Angeles city council district's transportation committee. Carlos is a former Los Angeles County foster youth and has served as board president of California Youth Connection, a statewide nonprofit that provides leadership and advocacy training for foster youth, and he continues to support foster youth locally and abroad. Carlos is a first-generation college graduate and has chaired committees for UCLA and served on its alumni association board of directors.

Nicole J. Jones – 2nd District



Nicole J. Jones possesses multisector leadership and experiences, having had a diverse career encompassing various higher education, philanthropy, nonprofit, government, and board/commission roles. In addition to the Los Angeles County Consumer Affairs Advisory Commission appointment, Nicole serves on the WASC Senior College University Commission (a key accreditation body for colleges and universities in California) and the L.A. Trust for Children's Health board as well as a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Nicole received her bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley and master's degree from City University of New York, Baruch College. Additionally, she completed the Coro Fellows Program in Public Affairs and the National Urban Fellows Program

Michelle "Mickey" Katz – 3rd District

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

Michelle Rofeh-Lensky – 3rd District

Commissioner Rofeh-Lensky was appointed to the CAAC by Supervisor Sheila Kuehl.

Cory Allen – 4th District

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

Charline Sistrunk – 4th District



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

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. 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.

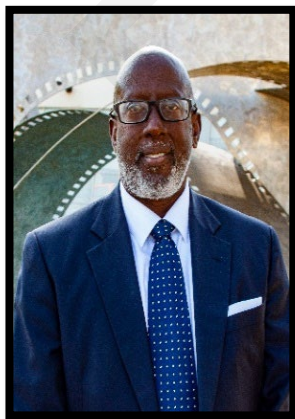
Daniel Deng – 5th District



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 2022

Vice 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

Closing Message

The Commission is proud to continue their partnership with DCBA. The Commission will always serve in the best interests of the consumers of Los Angeles County by advocating for increased consumer education, consumer outreach, equity, inclusivity, and measures to enhance consumer protection for all. A key goal of the Commission in 2023 will be to develop new methods to increase civic engagement and community participation.