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Historic Ballot Win for Growing Immigrant Communities in Orange County

Immigrant, faith and labor groups strengthen democracy and government accountability in Anaheim

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Anaheim, Calif.— Voters said “Yes” Tuesday to two measures here that will change the way city elections happen in the future.

A coalition of local community, faith and labor groups mobilized a massive volunteer effort for measures L and M, including recruiting over 900 volunteer shifts since September that knocked on the doors of 27,000 voting households. More than 100 volunteers turned out voters on Election Day.

“We had volunteers from and in every neighborhood in Anaheim, talking to voters in 5 languages,” said Arturo Ferreras, chair of the South District Neighborhood Council and Filipino community leader. “We showed that the people of Anaheim truly do want a neighborhood voice on their City Council.”

Measure L, which won with 68.2% of the vote, creates districts within the city from which voters select their councilmembers. Measure M, which passed with 53.1% of the vote, adds two seats to the city council.

Anaheim is the largest city in California whose council is elected entirely at-large. Residents for decades had been experiencing a mismatch and advocating for change between the interests of the city’s growing Latino and Asian immigrant communities and actions of the city’s political establishment.

“My neighbors and I started talking about these issues before the measures were even on the ballot,” said Ada Tamayo, a resident of Anaheim and leader on the Yes on L and M Coalition. “Our coalition has had more than 10,000 conversations about district elections. The community was ready.”

Letting voters decide on L & M helped settle a lawsuit against the City of Anaheim filed in 2012 under the California Voting Rights Act. Just weeks after the suit was filed, neighborhood leaders even more loudly called for district elections after the city experienced a weekend of civil unrest in response to police shootings of two young Latino men.

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For interviews with Anaheim residents who volunteered on the campaign, contact [Daria Ovide by email](mailto:dariaovide@unitehere.org) or at 617-666-3799.

Organizations leading the coalition for Yes on L and M are [Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance \(OCAPICA\)](#), [Orange County Communities Organized for Responsible Development \(OCCORD\)](#), [Orange County Congregation Community Organization \(OCCCO\)](#), [Orange County Labor Federation](#), [ACLU of Southern California](#), [Korean Resource Center](#), [UNITE HERE Local 11](#)