

Political Grab Bag

By Steve Bagby, Sr., Political Action Committee Chair

Congratulations to Mayor-Elect Karen Bass!

Karen Bass made history when she became the first woman and first African American woman elected Mayor in Los Angeles' 241-year history. Per a Los Angeles Times article of November 25, 2022, she had the highest vote total for the City's top job and more than doubled the number Eric Garcetti received when he became Mayor in 2013. When she is officially sworn in privately before the City Clerk as Los Angeles' Mayor on December 12th, (there will be a public Inauguration celebration on December 11th on the Sprint St. steps of City Hall) she'll be making history in more ways than one as she will be joining three other African American Mayors who will be running the nation's **four largest cities**. She will join **Eric Adams of New York, Lori Lightfoot of Chicago and Sylvester Turner of Houston**. Los Angeles is the second largest city in terms of population after New York. Chicago is the third and Houston is the fourth. This is a major accomplishment, indeed!!!

As she said in several of her speeches since the election, she plans to "hit the ground running," and in that regard, she is formulating her team that will be ready on day one to take action. She has already selected her Chief of Staff, Chris Thompson, and in a very savvy move, she has offered the current Mayoral staff the opportunity to stay in place until April, with the ability to apply for permanent positions during that time frame. This move recognizes the talents of the current staff and provides an opportunity for her to use the institutional knowledge of the current administration, which can only be beneficial to her in both the short term and the long term. As she stated on November 29th in selecting her Chief of Staff: "My number one priority is assembling a team that will be ready on day one to move our city forward. With his vast leadership experience and shared vision for our city, Chris is the right person to serve as my Chief of Staff and work with me to lead our agenda for Los Angeles' future," said Mayor-elect Bass. "Though this is an unprecedented three-week transition, make no mistake – change is coming and we will hit the ground running." (*L.A. Sentinel News Service/latimesentinel.net*- November 29, 2022.)

Per the same *L.A. Sentinel* article, Chris Thompson is a “seasoned leader in both the private and public sectors, [who] will bring a fresh perspective and new direction to the mayor’s office and City Hall.” Chris Thompson, who is African American, “currently serves as Senior Vice President of Government Relations for the LA28 Olympic and Paralympic Games working with local, state and federal officials and agencies to ensure a successful 2028 Summer Games in Los Angeles. He served as Chief of Staff to Senator Dianne Feinstein from 2008 until 2013, after first joining her office in 2003. He also served as an aide to Congressman Julian C. Dixon, who represented parts of Los Angeles. Chris Thompson’s private sector experience includes serving as a Vice President for Southern California Edison/Edison International and serving on the Board of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce. In addition, he was appointed to the Board of the California Privacy Protection Agency by Governor Gavin Newsom and serves on the boards of the PBS SoCal/Public Media Group of Southern California, the California Science Center Foundation and on the Public Policy Institute of California’s Statewide Leadership Council.” Based upon his stated experience, he brings a wide array of expertise and contacts which will assist Ms. Bass in her approach and experience as a “coalition builder,” which she states “is about marshalling all of the resources, all of the skills, the knowledge, the talent of this city... It's about marshalling your resources to solve your problems.” (*Chanel 7 Eyewitness News- ABC7.com—November 17, 2022.*) Congratulations on her outstanding accomplishment! **Now the real work begins!**

There is another historic “first” that is being celebrated locally. The City of Long Beach, the second largest city in Los Angeles County, is celebrating the election of its first African American Mayor, Rex Richardson, who previously served as the Vice-Mayor of Long Beach. Rex Richardson, who was a former student body president at Cal State Dominguez Hills, a union organizer and the youngest person to serve on the Long Beach City Council after his election in 2014, will replace Robert Garcia, who was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in California's 42nd District on November 8th. Being mindful of the issues that Long Beach is facing, Mayor-elect Richardson stated: “As Long Beach's next Mayor, I will focus on tackling our city's biggest challenges and working daily to make City Hall more responsive to residents' needs. I look forward to getting started with our transition.” (*City News Service/abc.7.com/November 15, 2022.*) Mayor-elect

Richardson is expected to be sworn in on December 20, 2022. It is quite significant that both Los Angeles and its largest neighboring city will both have African American Mayors!! We applaud the tenacity and fervor of both Mayors-elect to want to serve the constituencies of each of these cities!!!

We also have a major “first” to celebrate on the national level. As Nancy Pelosi stepped down as the House of Representatives Caucus Leader for two decades after the Democrats lost their House majority in the November 8th election, the **Democrats, by acclamation, elected Representative Hakeem Jeffries of New York to be minority leader, making him the first African American person to claim that top position.** Hakeem Jeffries, whose District cover parts of Brooklyn and Queens, is confident and thinking ahead as it is said that Jeffries, who is 30 years younger than Nancy Pelosi, hopes to be the minority leader for only two years as his goal is to help Democrats retake the House in the 2024 election where he would then likely become the majority leader. (*CNN onlinenews/cnn.com/December 2, 2022.*) As he has stated about unifying the progressives and moderates in the Democratic party: “There’s nothing more unifying than being in the minority . . . and having a clear-eyed objective and goal of getting back into the majority.” (*CNNonlinesnews/cnn.com/December 2, 2022.*) Mr. Jeffries also stated that House Democrats held together [in their vote for a new leader] because they shared a commitment to fighting for “young people, seniors, immigrants, veterans, the poor, the sick, the afflicted, the least, the lost and the left behind.” From the minority in the House, he said Democrats would “push back against extremism whenever necessary.” (*Online news/nytimes.com/November 30, 2022.*) He is definitely the type of forward looking Representative that we should have leading the Democrats in the House so as to be able to tackle the vast array of pressing issues that the nation is currently facing.

These historic “firsts” are all very uplifting to our spirits and psyche and we hope that their desire to excel in their respective positions is definitely realized as these are some serious times and we’re grateful that they have placed themselves in a position to be able to become the “first” in their respective roles.

Thank you for reading!