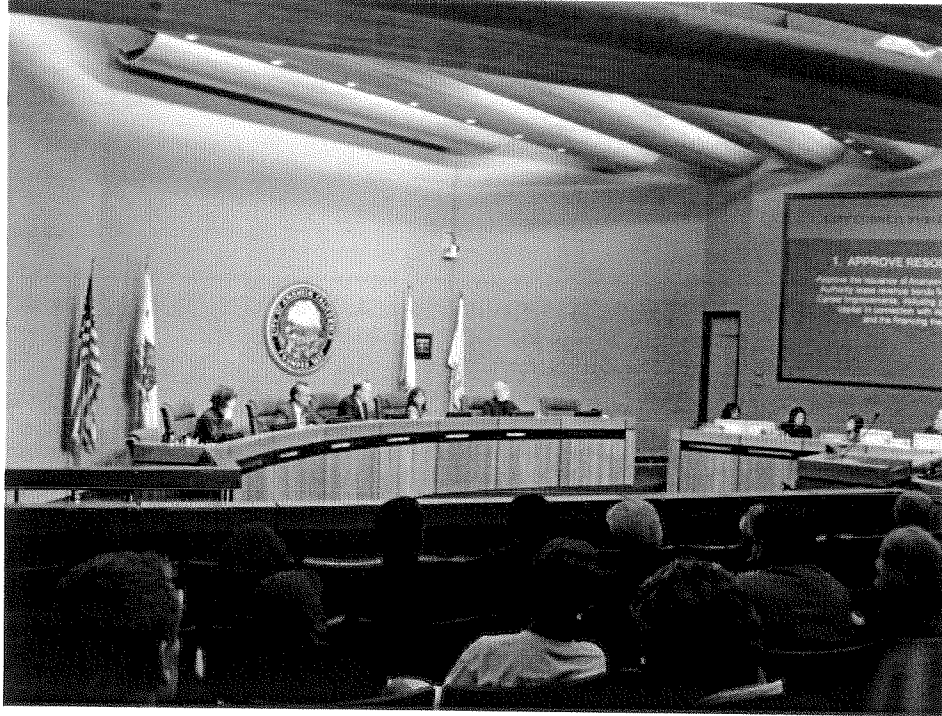


## ATTACHMENT 7

Politics, government and public life for Southern California

## Anaheim City Council settles nearly 2-year-old Voting Rights Act lawsuit; Voters to have final say

Sharon McNary | January 7th, 2014, 9:11pm



Susan Valot/KPCC

Members of the Anaheim City Council on Tuesday settled a lawsuit that alleged the city's at-large election system denied the city's Latino majority the ability to elect council members of its choice.

Anaheim's City Council on Tuesday settled a lawsuit that alleged the city's at-large election system denied the city's Latino majority the ability to elect council members of its choice.

The settlement calls for the city to put two charter amendments to voters in November. Voters will be asked if they want to increase the city's four-member council to six members. And they will be asked if they want to elect council members by district.

The settlement ends nearly two years of legal wrangling between the city and three plaintiffs who were represented by the ACLU of Southern California. They had contended that the city's at-large election system was discriminatory. Anaheim is about 54 percent Latino, but the council is all white.

Anaheim had argued that because it is a charter city, it has more power of self-government than general-law cities and is not subject to the California Voting Rights Act.

In the settlement, the plaintiffs agreed to dismiss the suit and stop the clock on legal fees. Under the state Voting Rights Act, taxpayers end up bearing the costs if a city loses a legal challenge. This case is expected to cost Anaheim about \$2 million.

The plaintiffs also forfeited the ability to re-file the case if they don't like the outcome of the election.

The California Voting Rights Act has become a powerful tool in the hands of voters in cities, counties and school districts where large blocs of residents or voters of color are not represented on governing boards. Many jurisdictions have settled cases and abandoned at-large elections, and in some cases, ordered elections to create districts.

In Palmdale, the city lost the state's first-ever trial in a state Voting Rights Act case, and the city has been ordered to hold district elections.

Sharon McNary, *Politics Reporter*