



OCA-GREATER LOS ANGELES

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1145 Wilshire Blvd., 1st Floor, Los Angeles, CA 90017

EMBRACING THE HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS OF ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS

Monterey Park City Council and City Clerk
Monterey Park City Hall
320 West Newmark Avenue
Monterey Park, CA 91754

OCA – Greater Los Angeles (“OCA-GLA”) submits this letter to express its concerns regarding the proposal to add a new Section 21.24.675 to Chapter 21.24 of the Monterey Park Municipal Code, which would require at least one sign on non-residential properties to bear the legal name of the establishment, organization, or business or identifying the nature of the business on which such signs are placed using the modern Latin alphabet. OCA-GLA urges the Monterey Park City Council not to adopt this nonsensical, discriminatory, and potentially unconstitutional ordinance.

Founded in 1973, OCA is a national organization dedicated to advancing the social, political, and economic well-being of Asian and Pacific Americans (APAs) in the United States. Since its inception in 1991, the Greater Los Angeles chapter of OCA has worked with community partners to assist Los Angeles residents of all backgrounds by advancing civic participation and promoting civil rights.

Proponents of the ordinance contend that public safety personnel are frequently unable to discern one business from another because of the logographic script used by some businesses. This cannot be a valid concern, as all properties (whether residential or non-residential) in the City bear a numeric address that allows for easy identification of the location. To the extent that public safety personnel contend that numerical addresses are difficult to see, that certainly does not seem to have an impact when responding to calls from residential properties.

Moreover, the ordinance would create a financial burden on small business owners who currently do not have a sign in the modern Latin alphabet and who have previously made a business decision not to have one, as their customers do not require one. It should not be up to the City to determine whether a business owner needs to have a sign in the modern Latin alphabet or not.

As such, the ordinance is also highly constitutionally suspect. Proponents of the ordinance contend that the proposed ordinance is intended to be content neutral. But the motives behind the ordinance are revealed by the Proponents’ statement that the ordinance will protect public health, safety, and welfare “by enhancing the City’s character.” This implies that signs in languages that do not utilize the modern Latin alphabet detract from the City’s character, suggesting that the motives behind the ordinance are discriminatory and content-related. If passed, the ordinance will undoubtedly be challenged in court, which will be costly for taxpayers.



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OCA-GLA respectfully calls on the City Council to decline to adopt the proposed ordinance, as there is no compelling governmental reason for writing what amounts to a discriminatory form of mandated speech into the City's municipal code.

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