

**Van de Kamps Coalition Files Formal Request With  
Los Angeles District Attorney And Civil Grand Jury For  
Independent Investigation Of  
Los Angeles Community College District's Bond Program**

*Request Grows Out Of Heated August 17, 2011 LACCD Board Meeting When  
State Controller's Office Auditors Recommended Independent Investigation Of  
Possible Malfeasance In Hiring*

(Los Angeles, August 23, 2011) The Van de Kamps Coalition today submitted to the Los Angeles County District Attorney and the Los Angeles Civil Grand Jury a formal letter requesting that they open investigations of the troubled bond program of the Los Angeles Community College District ("LACCD"), including the awarding of a \$3.25 million contract to an unqualified firm to act as Inspector General to police the bond program.

The Van de Kamps Coalition's request is a follow-up to the very same recommendation made by State Controller John Chiang's auditors to the Board of Trustees at an August 17, 2011 special Board meeting. Board President Miguel Santiago called the meeting when, on August 10, 2011, the State Controller's Office publicly released a blistering audit report finding that LACCD had so mismanaged its bond program as to unlawfully spend over \$140 million – or 5% of the monies spent thus far in the \$5.7 billion bond construction program.

Additionally, the Controller found that LACCD substantially deviated from its own procurement rules in elevating a low-scoring firm, Policy Masters, Inc., to give it an interview, and ultimately, to award the multi-million dollar Inspector General contract to it. The Controller's audit said:

*"The fact that the Inspector General, whose qualification is questionable and may have been selected through a flawed bidding process, raised questions, at least in appearance, about the ability of the OIG to carry out these functions. These circumstances led to questions about possible malfeasance in the selection of the Inspector General."*

The Controller's Office was polite. At the time of the contract award, Policy Masters, Inc. had been formed just prior to release of the Request for Proposals for the contract, had no clients, and its President, Christine Marez, had no training or experience in inspector general work. Ms. Marez worked for five years for Gateway Science, Inc., whose principal owner, Art Gastulem, was previously investigated by local law enforcement officials for bribery of public officials. Apparently Ms. Marez is now receiving on-the-job training as she studies for an inspector general certificate.

The LACCD Board ignored the advice of Controller Chiang's office and appointed an Ad Hoc Committee of its own members to investigate the procurement of the Inspector General and implement the Controller's recommendations. The Ad Hoc Committee will include new Trustee

Steve Veres, old timer Mona Field, and a third trustee to be announced later. Because of the way the committee was appointed, its meetings will not be subject to the state's opening meeting laws enabling the Ad Hoc Committee to meet in secret. This is the second secret committee formed in recent months by LACCD in connection with the controversy swirling around its bond program. Previously, Chancellor Daniel LaVista formed an advisory group to himself that meets in secret about "improving" the bond program.

"We watched in amazement as the LACCD Board of Trustees ignored the State Controller's recommendation for outside and independent review of misconduct in the procurement of the Inspector General," said Laura Gutierrez. "Mona Field sat on the interview committee for the Inspector General. Does anyone think that Field will make public findings that there was anything wrong with her own work? It's a classic case of setting up another committee to whitewash the underlying corrupt contracting processes of our community college district."

Beyond the heated discussion where Chancellor Daniel LaVista claimed that John Chiang's auditors themselves were guilty of "retaliation," numerous issues regarding the LACCD's lack of transparency bubbled to the surface. Visibly angry Trustee Tina Park, stated that she believed a Brown Act violation occurred when all 3 members of the Board Audit Committee conducted a teleconference with the Controller's Office before the audit became public. The Brown Act generally forbids a quorum of a covered body, such as the Community College Board or its committees, to meet without proper public notice or allowing the public access to monitor the meeting.

Public commenters reminded the Board how District officials, including General Counsel Camille Goulet continued to stonewall disclosable public records – including the original report prepared by Capstone Advisory Group that may include a report of more serious wrongdoing. "You have to ask yourself, if the District turned over documents so damning that resulted in a scathing audit and recommendation for criminal investigation - what must be in the documents they won't hand over? What happened at Van de Kamps and what does the Capstone report reveal that is so radioactive they are withholding them and willing to take the heat for their baseless refusals to disclose records?" said Coalition member Miki Jackson.

For more information:

[www.VandeKamps.org](http://www.VandeKamps.org)

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*Van de Kamps Coalition is an alliance of 22 community organizations and members of the public working to open the long-promised community college satellite campus at the historic Van de Kamps Bakery site at San Fernando Road and Fletcher Drive.*