

December 21, 2021

Mayor Alejandra Sotelo-Solis
City of National City
1243 National City Boulevard
National City, CA 91950

**Re: Request to Implement District Voting under the California Voting Rights Act
Agenda Item #3**

Dear Honorable Mayor Sotelo-Solis and City Councilmembers,

On behalf of the board of directors and members of the Council of Philippine American Organizations (COPAO), we ask you and your fellow Councilmembers to adopt a resolution to transition from an at-large to district based elections as soon as possible.

National City's at-large elections is an outdated practice that has resulted in vote-dilution and political disempowerment for the Filipino American and other minority communities. The disempowering of minority voters and communities of interests is the reason why thirteen out of eighteen cities in San Diego County, including Solana Beach with less than 13,000 residents, have already transitioned to district voting.

COPAO has called National City its home for over four decades. The growth of Filipino residents and number of Philippine and Filipino American owned businesses and organizations lend to the economic and political strength of the area. Former Mayor Morrison's trip to the Philippines as part of a Philippine Economic Trade Mission with Mr. de Castro in 2015 epitomizes this importance of the Filipino population to National City. Our community has been denied adequate representation on the City's five-member council for decades, and it has been denied the fair opportunity to just influence the outcome of an election.

Upon Mayor Sotelo-Solis' swearing in, councilmember Rios is quoted as saying, "[Sotelo] will inspire us all to dream more, learn more, do more and become more as work together to move National City forward." In the same Union-Tribune article, Mayor Alejandra Sotelo-Solis also stated, "We all make up National City...and my decision-making should incorporate all of that." We now call upon Mayor Sotelo-Solis and Councilmembers to do more to move National City forward. Hear the voices of Filipino leaders and residents along with the support of the Black American Political Association of California (BAPAC) and other community members who stand with us. Vote in favor of district based elections!

Sincerely,

Joseph V. Mazares III
President, Council of Philippine American Organizations