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October 7, 2013

City of Porterville
Attention: City Charter Review Commission
291 N. Main St.
Porterville, CA 93257

Delivered by US Mail and Facsimile

RECEIVED

OCT - 9 2013

**CITY OF PORTERVILLE
PERSONNEL**

Dear Members of the City Charter Review Commission:

The Law Offices of Melo and Sarsfield, LLP, is a law firm located in Tulare County that practices in the area of civil rights law, to include voting rights. We have noted that the City of Porterville has initiated a periodic review of the City Charter and the provisions that govern the election to the City Council. Currently, candidates are elected "at large" and not by district within the limits of the city. We urge you to take this opportunity to adopt elections to the council by district. As the city attorney can verify, cities throughout California that persist in using "at large" election schemes in violation of the provisions of the California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) have faced expensive litigation by minority voters.

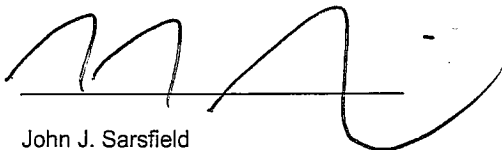
At large election voting schemes are unfair to minority voters and suppress minority voter turnout in violation of both state and federal law. Additionally, no city-defendant in California has to date been able to successfully defend a CVRA lawsuit where it has been shown that there is racially polarized voting.

As we understand it, in order to switch from "at large" elections to district elections, the Charter will need to be amended by a vote of the citizens of Porterville. We urge you to take all steps necessary to place the issue before the voters at the next regularly scheduled election in June of 2014.

If you wish to further discuss this letter or desire additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us at (559) 732 3000.

Very truly yours,

LAW OFFICES OF MELO AND SARSFIELD, LLP



John J. Sarsfield