



# San Diego City Attorney **MICHAEL J. AGUIRRE**

---

## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 7, 2007**

Contact: Maria Velasquez, Communications Director (619) 235-5725 [mvelasquez@sandiego.gov](mailto:mvelasquez@sandiego.gov)

### **REPORT SOLIDIFIES PRACTICAL ARGUMENTS FOR PRESERVING THE ROLE OF THE CITY AS AN INDEPENDENT ELECTED OFFICIAL**

**San Diego, CA**—As the Mayor’s appointed City Charter Review Committee is meeting to make recommendations regarding the City’s constitution, the City Attorney released a report today on the *Importance of Preserving the Role of the City Attorney as an Independent Elected Official*.

The report provides historical context and offers practical arguments for why the City Attorney must remain an independent, elected official. For the past 76 years, the City Attorney has been an elected officer answering directly to the people.

This has given the City Attorney the independence to serve as a “watchdog” over City government and “the conscience of the community.”

“Similarly, an effort to compromise the City Attorney’s powers and responsibilities, by taking away control of litigation and placing it inappropriately in the hands of the Mayor and Council, would erode the City Attorney’s independence and undermine the public interest,” said City Attorney Michael Aguirre.

The report also references the City Attorney’s role within San Diego’s current political climate:

Given the new consolidation of power in the Mayor’s office under the Strong Mayor form of government, and recent federal investigations involving City Council members, there is significant evidence of a need to strengthen the independence of the City Attorney’s Office, not to weaken it. Some seek to change the structure or powers of the City Attorney’s office as a reaction to the person presently holding the office. But to do so misses the mark, ignoring the office as an institution and the fact that it has worked well, as presently structured, for eight decades.

A copy of the Report will be posted Monday afternoon on the City Attorney’s website, [www.sandiegocityattorney.org](http://www.sandiegocityattorney.org), click Significant Reports and Legal Documents.

###