

Laura N. Chick

Biography

Shortly after President Obama signed the Federal Recovery Act, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger turned to Los Angeles City Controller Laura Chick. He tapped her to be the first-in-the-nation Inspector General to oversee the more than \$50 Billion in economic stimulus dollars that California is receiving.

“Laura’s impressive track record as a watchdog and public servant makes her uniquely qualified to ensure this funding is used as it was intended—to create jobs and help our state through this difficult economic time,” said Governor Schwarzenegger.

The Sacramento Bee heralded Chick’s arrival in the Capitol with the headline, “*MISUSE STIMULUS CASH, YOU’LL ANSWER TO HER.*”

A trained social worker, Laura received her Bachelors Degree in History from UCLA and a Masters in Social Work from USC. Her experience includes managing a family-owned retail business.

Laura first entered elected office in 1993 when she defeated a 16 year incumbent for a seat on the Los Angeles City Council in the West San Fernando Valley. Seven months after taking office her district was devastated by the Northridge Earthquake. Chick went into action working around the clock, an ever present figure in the toppled neighborhoods. Laura used the crisis as an opportunity to rebuild in a smarter and better way, creating what is now a thriving redevelopment zone with shops, cafes and a legitimate theater converted from an X-rated movie house.

In 2001 Laura was overwhelmingly elected City Controller, becoming the first woman to hold citywide office in Los Angeles. As Controller, she was the Chief Auditor and Chief Accountant of the City working to ensure its fiscal health. In her nearly eight years in this office, Laura released over 170 audits and reports exposing a wide range of problems throughout city government. As the taxpayers’ watchdog she rooted out waste and fraud and championed innovation and new ideas to challenge the status-quo.

A *Los Angeles Business Journal* feature said, “Los Angeles City Controller Laura Chick has emerged as a central voice in the ongoing debate over how the city handles its contracts.” As the *Los Angeles Magazine* stated, “Where others couch and evade, she is Ms. Blunt.”

One of her last audits to be released exposed a backlog of thousands of untested DNA rape kits at the Los Angeles Police Department. Laura’s report brought a national spotlight to an intolerable situation. This resulted in City officials finally making the problem a priority. Her work recently won her the prestigious ProPublica Prize for Investigative Governance.

Laura is now energetically taking up the state's challenge of overseeing the massive expenditure of American Recovery funds. "My job as Inspector General is to deter, detect and disclose waste and fraud. I'm putting everyone on notice that I am watching and if there is something wrong we will find it," said Chick.

Laura Chick is the proud mother of two grown daughters—Katherine, a public school teacher in Los Angeles, and Care, a psychologist in northern California. She is also the beaming grandmother of Morgan.