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About the Ballot Simplification Committee

The Ballot Simplification Committee works in public meetings to prepare a fair and impartial summary of each local ballot measure in simple language. These summaries, or "digests," are printed in San Francisco's Voter Information Pamphlet, which is mailed to every registered voter before the election.

Each digest must explain the primary purposes and points of the measure, but is not required to include auxiliary or subsidiary information. Each digest must include the following four sections:

- *The Way It Is Now*
- *The Proposal*
- *A "Yes" Vote Means*
- *A "No" Vote Means*

In general, each digest is limited to 300 words. Digests may exceed the 300-word limit if the Committee determines that the complexity or scope of the proposed measure requires a longer digest. In addition, digests must be written as close as possible to the eighth-grade reading level.

The Ballot Simplification Committee also assists the Department of Elections in preparing other informational material for the Voter Information Pamphlet, such as a glossary of the terms that appear in the pamphlet. The Committee is responsible only for the digests and this other informational material. The City Attorney prepares the ballot questions and the Director of Elections determines the titles of propositions.

The uncertainty of whether the Governor will call a special statewide election for June 7 has affected planning for Ballot Simplification Committee meetings. Normally, the Committee completes digests no later than 85 days before an election, which would be March 14 for a June 7 election. Although an election has not yet been called, **the Committee is scheduled to meet on Monday, March 21**, to draft digests for local measures that would appear on the ballot if a June 7 election is called; **the Committee is also scheduled to meet on Tuesday, March 22**, to review any Requests for Reconsideration of digests drafted the previous day. If, prior to the meeting dates, it is clear that there will not be a June statewide special election, the Ballot Simplification Committee meetings will be cancelled.

Meeting agendas and agenda packets will be posted on the Department of Elections website, www.sfelections.org/bsc, and in our office in City Hall, Room 48. Agendas will be

posted at least 72 hours prior to the meeting, and agenda materials will be made available as early as possible. Please check often for any updates.

Procedure for Drafting Digests

The City Attorney's Office prepares a preliminary draft digest of each proposition. The Committee edits and amends the draft digest during public meetings.

The Committee begins by discussing and editing the preliminary draft digest prepared by the City Attorney's Office. During this discussion, the Committee may solicit information from City staff or from the drafters of the proposition. Other public comment generally is not permitted during this phase of the Committee's work.

When the Committee has agreed upon a draft digest, it opens the meeting to comments and suggestions from the public. Each speaker is generally permitted three minutes. The Committee respectfully requests that comments are limited to specific points concerning the language of the draft, are not argumentative, and do not repeat the suggestions of others.

After all members of the public who wish to comment on the digest have been heard, the Committee considers each of the comments and suggestions and decides whether to amend the draft digest. The Committee then votes to adopt the digest. At least three votes are required to adopt a digest.

Procedure for Reconsideration of Digests

Following adoption of a digest by the Ballot Simplification Committee, any person may request that the Committee reconsider the digest by submitting a written Request for Reconsideration to the Department of Elections. The request must indicate the specific language in the digest that the requestor wants to amend, what alternate language the requestor recommends, and the reasons for that recommendation. **Requests for Reconsideration must be submitted within 24 hours of adoption of the digest.** Each digest will be posted as soon as possible after adoption at www.sfelections.org/bsc, with the deadline for Requests for Reconsideration.

Please address any Requests for Reconsideration as follows:

E-mail: publications@sfgov.org

Fax: 415-554-7257

Hand Delivery: Ballot Simplification Committee – Request for Reconsideration,
C/o Barbara Carr, Department of Elections, City Hall, Room 48

Upon receipt of a Request for Reconsideration, the Committee deliberates and votes on whether to reconsider its digest. If the Committee decides to reconsider the digest language, it does so at that time. The Committee may or may not change the language of the digest. After this reconsideration, the Committee again opens the meeting to comments and suggestions from the public. The Committee then considers those

comments and suggestions, decides whether or not to amend, and votes to adopt a final digest. The Committee's decisions concerning Requests for Reconsideration are final.

Committee Members

The Ballot Simplification Committee consists of five voting members, each of whom must be a San Francisco resident and registered voter. The voting members are selected as follows:

- the Board of Supervisors appoints three:
 - two must be nominated by either the Northern California Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences or the Northern California Broadcasters Association.
 - one must be nominated by the League of Women Voters of San Francisco.
- the Mayor appoints two:
 - one must be nominated by the Northern California Media Workers Guild (formerly Northern California Newspaper Guild.)
 - one must be an educational reading specialist recommended by the Superintendent of Schools of the San Francisco Unified School District.

The City Attorney or his or her representative serves as a non-voting *ex officio* member. The Committee's work is administered by the Department of Elections.

The current voting members of the Committee are:

Betty Packard, Chair

Nominated by the Northern California Broadcasters Association/California Press Women
Appointed by the Board of Supervisors

June Fraps

Nominated by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences
Appointed by the Board of Supervisors

Ann Jorgensen

Nominated by the San Francisco Unified School District
Appointed by the Mayor

Adele Fasick

Nominated by the League of Women Voters
Appointed by the Board of Supervisors

Christine Unruh

Nominated by the California Media Workers Guild
Appointed by the Mayor