

**Ballot Simplification Committee –
FINAL APPROVED Digest – Wednesday, August 10, 2011 – Packard, Fraps,
Fasick, Jorgensen, Unruh**

City Retirement Benefits and Health Care Benefits *(working title only, subject to change)*

Any Requests for Reconsideration were due Tuesday, August 9, at 11:45 a.m.

THE WAY IT IS NOW:

The City provides its employees and elected officials with pension benefits through the San Francisco Employees' Retirement System (SFERS) and health benefits through the Health Service System (HSS). The Unified School District, Community College District and Superior Court also participate in SFERS and HSS, but not all of their employees receive benefits through these City systems. Some City employees receive pension benefits through a contract between the City and the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS).

Pension Benefits: SFERS pays defined benefits to eligible retired employees. Employee contributions, employer contributions, and investment earnings fund SFERS' payments. Most employees pay 7.5% of compensation to SFERS. Police officers and firefighters pay more. Investment earnings and City contributions fund the balance.

Employees become eligible for "service retirement" benefits based on age and years of service:

- Police officers and firefighters (safety employees) can retire at age 50 after five years of service, with maximum benefits at age 55 with 30 years of service.
- Other employees and elected officials (miscellaneous employees) can retire at age 50 with 20 years of service or at 60 with 10 years, with maximum benefits at age 62 with 32.6 years of service.

These benefits are determined by final compensation, retirement age, and service length. Final compensation is based on a one- or two-year average of the highest annual compensation.

Some miscellaneous employees who leave City employment before becoming eligible for service retirement can receive a "vesting allowance" when they reach age 50. The City matches employee contributions to the costs of this benefit.

SFERS retirees may receive cost-of-living adjustments up to 3.5% annually depending on inflation and SFERS investment earnings.

Health Benefits: Retired City employees can obtain health care coverage from the Health Service System. Retirees and the City contribute to this coverage. Employees hired after January 9, 2009, contribute 2% of their compensation toward their retiree health care and the City contributes 1%.

The Health Service Board (HSB) oversees the HSS. The HSB has three appointed members and four members elected by HSS members. It approves health care plans by a two-thirds vote. The Charter requires that one plan allows members to choose any licensed medical provider.

THE PROPOSAL:

Pension Benefits: Proposition C is a Charter amendment that would change the way the City and current and future employees share in funding SFERS pension benefits. The base employee contribution rate would remain the same—7.5% for most employees—when the City contribution rate is between 11% and 12% of City payroll. Employees making at least \$50,000 would pay an additional amount up to 6% of compensation when the City contribution rate is over 12% of City payroll. When the City contribution rate falls below 11%, employee contributions would be decreased proportionately.

Proposition C would require elected officials to pay the same contribution rates as City employees, and would also require the City and unions representing CalPERS members to negotiate terms of employment for employees to share costs or receive benefits comparable in value to adjustments required for SFERS employee contributions.

Proposition C would also create new retirement plans for employees hired on or after January 7, 2012, that would:

- For miscellaneous employees, increase the minimum retirement age to 53 with 20 years of service or 65 with 10 years;
- For safety employees, the minimum retirement age would remain at 50 with five years of service, but the age for maximum benefits would increase to 58;
- For all employees, limit covered compensation, calculate final compensation from a three-year average, and change the multipliers used to calculate pension benefits, and
- For miscellaneous employees, raise the age of eligibility to receive vesting allowances to 53 and reduce by half the City's contribution to vesting allowances.

Proposition C would limit cost-of-living adjustments for SFERS retirees.

Health Benefits: Proposition C would require that elected officials and employees hired on or before January 9, 2009, contribute up to 1% of compensation toward their retiree health care, with a matching contribution by the City.

For employees or elected officials who left the City workforce before June 30, 2001, and retire after January 6, 2012, Proposition C requires that City contributions toward retiree health benefits remain at the same levels they were when the employee left the City workforce.

Proposition C would change the Health Service System and Health Service Board, including the following:

- replace one elected member of the HSB with a member nominated by the City Controller and approved by the HSB;
- change HSB's voting requirement for approving member health plans from two-thirds to a simple majority;
- remove the requirement for a plan permitting the member to choose any licensed medical provider; and
- allow HSB to spend money on ways to limit health care costs.

Other Measure: If the voters approve both Proposition C and Proposition D, only the measure with the most votes will become law.

A “YES” VOTE MEANS: If you vote "yes," you want to:

- adjust employee contributions to SFERS based on the City's costs;
- reduce pension benefits for future City employees;
- limit cost-of-living adjustments to retirement benefits;
- decrease City contributions to retiree health care costs for certain former employees;
- require all employees to contribute toward their retiree health care;
- change the composition and voting requirements of the Health Service Board; and
- make other changes to the Retirement System and Health Service System.

A “NO” VOTE MEANS: If you vote “no,” you do not want to make these changes to the Charter.

word count: 818 [suggested word limit: 300]