

Words You Need to Know

by the Ballot Simplification Committee

Affordable Housing (Proposition A): Residential units that persons or households within a certain range of incomes would be able to afford.

Amend (Propositions AA, B, C, D, E, F, G and L): To change.

Bond (Proposition A): A bond is a promise by the City to pay back money borrowed, plus interest, by a specific date. If the City needs to raise a large amount of money to pay for a library, sewer line, school, hospital or other project or program, it may borrow the money by selling bonds. (See also "General Obligation Bond".)

California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS) (Proposition B): manages retirement benefits for California public employees. Some San Francisco City employees participate in CalPERS retirement plans.

Charter Amendment (Propositions B, C, D, E, F and G): A change to the City's Charter. The Charter is the City's Constitution. The Charter can only be changed by a majority of the votes cast.

Combined Election (Proposition E): An election that includes a combination of municipal, district, state or federal candidates or measures.

Compensation (Proposition B): Salary and certain other payments to an employee. For the purpose of calculating retirement benefits for City employees, compensation generally excludes overtime pay. For some San Francisco employees hired before November 1976, compensation includes overtime.

Deferred Loans (Proposition A): Loans that postpone principal and/or interest payments for a period of time.

District Election (Proposition E): An election for officers or measures of a district, such as the Community College District, San Francisco Unified School District or BART. Does not refer to Supervisorial district elections.

Exemption (Propositions J and K): Freedom from an obligation or requirement that others must follow.

Expenditure Plan (Proposition AA): A written report describing how funds will be used. The Expenditure Plan for the Vehicle Registration Fee is included with the legal text for the measure.

Federal Election (Proposition E): An election for candidates to federal office, such as President of the United States or members of Congress.

Felony (Proposition D): A major crime or offense that is punishable by a fine and/or a jail sentence of more than a year.

General Fund (Propositions J, K and N): That part of the City's annual budget that can be used for any City purpose. Each year, the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors decide how the General Fund will be used. Money for the General Fund comes from property, business, sales, and other taxes and fees. Currently, the General Fund is 46% of the City's budget.

General Obligation Bond (Proposition A): A promise issued by the City to pay back money borrowed, plus interest, by a certain date. When the City wants to raise money to pay for a large public project, it can borrow money by issuing General Obligation Bonds. The City then repays the money plus interest over a period of years with property taxes. General obligation bonds must be approved by the voters.

Initiative (Propositions B, G, I and J): A proposition placed on the ballot by voters. Any voter may place an initiative on the ballot by gathering the required number of signatures on a petition.

Legally Recognized Caregiver (Proposition D): A person who is at least 18 years old, lives with a minor child, and completes a form to enroll the minor in school and consent to school-related medical care on behalf of the minor.

Local Election (Proposition E): See "municipal election."

Municipal Election (Proposition E, I): An election that involves only San Francisco offices and ballot measures. Generally, municipal elections are held in San Francisco on the first Tuesday immediately following the first Monday in November in odd-numbered years.

Operator (Proposition G): A person who drives a MUNI vehicle or performs related functions.

Ordinance (Propositions AA, C, D, H, I, J, K, L, M and N): A local law passed by the Board of Supervisors or by the voters.

Oversight (Proposition A): Watchful care or management; supervision.

Parole (Proposition D): Period of supervised release after a prison term.

Pass Through (Proposition A): To recover an increase in property taxes by passing on a portion of the cost to tenants.

Pavement to Parks Program (Proposition L): A City program that installs temporary parks and plazas on portions of City streets.

Payment for a Room and Related Charges (Propositions J and K): Payments subject to the hotel tax, including charges for a guest room, for additional guests, including pets, to occupy the room, or for use of a safe. Related charges include no-show charges; cancellation charges; charges for early or late arrival or departure; hospitality suites; and charges for parking for hotel guests.

Proposition (Propositions AA–N): Any measure that is submitted to the voters for approval or disapproval.

Proposition H (Proposition B): A Charter amendment passed by the voters in November 2002 that increased retirement benefits for City police and firefighters.

Provisional Ballot: A ballot cast at a polling place that will not be counted until the Department of Elections verifies the voter's eligibility to cast that ballot.

Qualified Write-In Candidate (Frequently Asked Questions): A person who has completed the required paperwork and signatures for inclusion as a write-in candidate. Although the name of this person will not appear on the ballot, voters can vote for this person by writing the name of the person in the space on the ballot provided for write-in votes and following the specific ballot instructions. The Department of Elections counts write-in votes only for certified write-in candidates.

Retirement Benefits (Proposition B): Primarily pensions paid in retirement based on employees' age, years of service and final compensation. Benefits, which are administered through the Retirement System, also include disability and survivor benefits. Retirees may also receive health benefits through the Health Service System.

Seismic (Proposition A): Relating to earthquakes.

Single-Room Occupancy (Proposition A): A type of housing with only one room per unit. Also known as SRO.

State Election (Proposition E): An election for California offices or ballot measures, such as the Governor, members of the State Senate or Assembly, or an amendment to the State Constitution.

Term (Proposition F): The period of time for which a public official may hold his or her office.

Transit Employees (Proposition G): Persons who work for the City's Municipal Railway transit system (MUNI). This includes MUNI operators and mechanics.

Vote-by-Mail Ballots (Frequently Asked Questions): Ballots mailed to voters or given to voters in person at the Department of Elections. Vote-by-mail ballots can be mailed to the Department of Elections, turned in at the Department of Elections office in City Hall, or turned in at any San Francisco polling place on Election Day. Also known as absentee ballots. See page 5 for more information.

Read the Fine Print— in Large Print

The Department of Elections offers the Voter Information Pamphlet in large print. Sign up to receive one by calling 415-554-4375.

The large-print Voter Information Pamphlet is also available in Chinese and Spanish.

vote!

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Administrative Law Judge (ALJ) (Proposition F): A hearing officer who presides over hearings and appeals involving government agencies.

Amend (Propositions C, D and F): To change.

Assets (Proposition F): Anything owned, such as property or a bank account, that has monetary value.

Audit (Proposition B): A formal examination of financial or management accounts and information.

Bond (Propositions A, B and G): A bond is a promise by the City to pay back money borrowed, plus interest, by a specific date. If the City needs to raise a large amount of money to pay for a library, sewer line, school, hospital or other project or program, it may borrow the money by selling bonds. (See also "General Obligation Bond".)

CalPERS (Proposition D): The California Public Employees Retirement System, which manages retirement benefits for more than 1.6 million California public employees. Some San Francisco City employees participate in CalPERS retirement plans.

Cause (as in "removed for cause") (Proposition C): Official misconduct. Commissioners who may be "removed for cause" can be removed from office only for official misconduct.

Charter Amendment (Propositions C and D): A change to the City's Charter. The Charter is the City's Constitution. The Charter can only be changed by a majority of the votes cast.

Compensation (Proposition D): Salary and certain other payments to an employee. For the purpose of calculating retirement benefits for City employees, compensation generally excludes overtime pay. For some San Francisco employees hired before November 1976, compensation includes overtime.

Declaration of Policy (Proposition G): A statement or expression of the will of the voters.

Early Voting: Voting in person at City Hall before Election Day or mailing a vote-by-mail ballot before Election Day. See page 5 for more information.

Emergency Operations Center: The citywide emergency operations center at 1011 Turk St. Some city agencies have their own departmental emergency operations centers.

Exemption (Proposition A): Freedom from an obligation or requirement that others must follow.

Facilities (Propositions A and B): Buildings or rooms used for particular purposes.

Fiscal Year (Proposition D): The City's 12-month budget period, starting July 1st and ending June 30th of the following calendar year.

General Fund: That part of the City's annual budget that can be used for any City purpose. Each year, the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors decide how the General Fund will be used. Money for the General Fund comes from property, business, sales, and other taxes and fees. Currently, the General Fund is 46% of the City's budget.

General Obligation Bond (Proposition B): A promise issued by the City to pay back money borrowed, plus interest, by a certain date. When the City wants to raise money to pay for a large public project, it can borrow money by issuing General Obligation Bonds. The City then repays the money plus interest over a period of years with property taxes. General obligation bonds must be approved by the voters.

Infrastructure (Proposition B): The basic facilities and services needed for the functioning of a community, such as transportation and communications systems, and water and power lines.

Ordinance (Propositions C, E and F): A local law passed by the Board of Supervisors or by the voters.

Oversight (Proposition B): Watchful care or management; supervision.

Parcel Tax (Proposition A): A tax that is based on a flat fee for each unit of real property that receives a separate tax bill.

Pass-through (Proposition B): To recover an increase in property taxes by passing on a portion of the cost to tenants.

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Police Command Center (Proposition B): Police Department headquarters, which houses command staff, departmental emergency operations center, and administrative and planning functions.

Proposition (Propositions A–G): Any measure that is submitted to the voters for approval or disapproval.

Provisional Ballot: A ballot cast at a polling place that will not be counted until the Department of Elections verifies the voter's eligibility to cast that ballot.

Qualified Write-In Candidate (Frequently Asked Questions): A person who has completed the required paperwork and signatures for inclusion as a write-in candidate. Although the name of this person will not appear on the ballot, voters can vote for this person by writing the name of the person in the space on the ballot provided for write-in votes and following the specific ballot instructions. The Department of Elections counts write-in votes only for qualified write-in candidates.

Seismic (Propositions A and B): Relating to earthquakes.

SFERS (Proposition D): The San Francisco Employee Retirement System, which manages retirement and deferred compensation plans for City employees.

Transbay Joint Powers Authority (TJPA) (Proposition G): A local government agency created to design, build, and operate the Transbay Transit Center. The TJPA was established by state law and includes San Francisco and Bay Area representatives.

Vote-by-Mail Ballots (Frequently Asked Questions): Ballots mailed to voters or given to voters in person at the Department of Elections. Vote-by-mail ballots can be mailed to the Department of Elections, turned in at the Department of Elections office in City Hall, or turned in at any San Francisco polling place on Election Day. Also known as absentee ballots. See page 5 for more information.



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Vote!

November 2009

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Listed below are definitions of terms:

Amend (Propositions A-C, E) – To change.

Audit (Proposition D) – A formal examination of financial or management accounts and information.

Certified Write-In Candidate – A person who has completed the required paperwork and signatures for inclusion as a write-in candidate. Although the name of this person will not appear on the ballot, voters can vote for this person by writing the name of the person in the space on the ballot provided for write-in votes and following the specific ballot instructions. The Department of Elections counts write-in votes only for certified write-in candidates.

Charter Amendment (Propositions A-B) – A change to the City's Charter. The Charter is the City's Constitution. The Charter can only be changed by a majority of the votes cast.

Declaration of Policy (Proposition E) – A statement or expression of the will of the voters.

Early Voting – Voting in person at City Hall before Election Day or mailing a vote-by-mail ballot before Election Day. See page 7 for more information.

Fiscal Year (Proposition A) – The City's 12-month budget period, starting July 1st and ending June 30th of the following calendar year.

Initiative (Proposition D) – A proposition placed on the ballot by voters. Any voter may place an initiative on the ballot by gathering the required number of signatures on a petition.

Municipal Code (Proposition D) – City law, which includes San Francisco's Administrative Code, Planning Code, Elections

Code, Business and Tax Regulations Code and others.

Net Revenues (Proposition C) – The amount of money left after expenses of a transaction have been paid.

Official Newspaper (Proposition A) – A newspaper or newspapers selected annually by the Board of Supervisors to publish required public notices. They must be published for the dissemination of general local or national news, have a bona fide general circulation of at least 50,000 copies per calendar week and be printed in the City and County on three or more days in a calendar week.

Ordinance (Propositions A, C-E) – A local law passed by the Board of Supervisors or by the voters.

Oversight – Watchful care or management; supervision.

Proposition (Propositions A-E) – Any measure that is submitted to the voters for approval or disapproval.

Rolling Two-Year Budget (Proposition A) – The estimated revenues and costs of operating the City for two years, to be reviewed annually.

Roof Sign (Proposition D) – A sign or any portion thereof erected or painted on or over the roof covering any portion of a building, and either supported on the roof or on an independent structural frame or sign tower, or located on the side or roof of a penthouse, roof tank, roof shed, elevator housing or other roof structure. (San Francisco Planning Code Sec. 602.17.)

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WORDS YOU NEED TO KNOW *(continued)*

Sign with Illumination (Proposition D) – Directly illuminated sign: A sign designed to give forth artificial light directly (or through transparent or translucent material) from a source of light within such sign, including but not limited to neon and exposed lamp signs. (San Francisco Planning Code Sec. 602.4.); **Indirectly illuminated sign:** A sign illuminated with a light directed primarily toward such sign and so shielded that no direct rays from the light are visible elsewhere than on the lot where said illumination occurs. If not effectively so shielded, such sign shall be deemed to be a directly illuminated sign. (San Francisco Planning Code Sec. 602.11.)

Video Sign (Proposition D) – A sign that displays, emits, or projects or is readily capable of displaying, emitting or projecting a visual representation or image; an animated video, visual representation, or image; or other video image of any kind onto a building, fabric, screen, sidewalk, wall, or other surface through a variety of means, including, but not limited to: camera; computer; digital cinema, imaging, or video; electronic display; fiber optics; film; internet; intranet; light emitting diode screen or video display; microprocessor or microcontrolled based systems; picture frames; plasma display; projector; satellite; scrolling display; streaming video; telephony; television; VHS; wireless transmission; or other technology that can transmit animated or video images. (San Francisco Planning Code Sec. 602.21A.)

Vote-by-Mail Ballots (Frequently Asked Questions) – Ballots mailed to voters or given to voters in person at the Department of Elections. Vote-by-mail ballots can be mailed to the Department of Elections, turned in at the Department of Elections office in City Hall, or turned in at any San Francisco polling place on Election Day. Also known as absentee ballots. See page 7 for more information.

Voting by Mail (Frequently Asked Questions) – Also known as absentee voting. See page 7 for more information.

Wall Sign (Proposition D) – A sign painted directly on the wall or placed flat against a building wall with its copy parallel to the wall to which it is attached and not protruding more than the thickness of the sign cabinet. (San Francisco Planning Code Sec. 602.22.)

Wind Sign (Proposition D) – Any sign composed of two or more banners, flags, or other objects, mounted serially and fastened in such a manner as to move upon being subjected to pressure by wind or breeze. (San Francisco Planning Code Sec. 602.23.)

November 2008



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LISTED BELOW ARE DEFINITIONS OF TERMS:

ABSENTEE (VOTE-BY-MAIL) BALLOTS (FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS) — Ballots mailed to voters or given to voters in person at the Department of Elections. Absentee ballots can be mailed to the Department of Elections, turned in at the Department of Elections office in City Hall, or turned in at any San Francisco polling place on election day. Also known as vote-by-mail ballots. See page 7 for more information.

ACUTE CARE (PROPOSITION A) — Providing emergency services and general medical and surgical treatment for brief and severe disorders rather than long-term residential care for chronic illnesses.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING (PROPOSITIONS B AND N) — Residential units that persons or households within a certain range of incomes would be able to afford.

AMEND (PROPOSITIONS B-K AND M) — To change.

AUDIT (PROPOSITION A) — A formal examination of financial or management accounts and information.

BATTERY (PROPOSITION K) — The willful and unlawful use of force or violence against another person.

BOND (PROPOSITIONS A, D, H AND I) — A bond is a promise by the City to pay back money borrowed, plus interest, by a specific date. If the City needs to raise a large amount of money to pay for a library, sewer line, school, hospital or other project or program, it may borrow the money by selling bonds. (See also "General Obligation Bond" and "Revenue Bond".)

BUDGETARY AND FISCAL PROVISIONS (PROPOSITION I) — Provisions addressing financial resources, spending, and debt.

CALIFORNIA SPECIAL SUBJECT TEACHING CREDENTIAL (PROPOSITION V) — A state-issued certificate that authorizes a person to teach a particular subject.

CHARTER AMENDMENT (PROPOSITIONS B-J) — A change to the City's Charter. The Charter is the City's Constitution. The Charter can only be changed by a majority of the votes cast.

CHARTER-CREATED BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS (PROPOSITION C) — The following boards and commissions are created by the Charter: Airport Commission, Board of Appeals, Building Inspection Commission, Civil Service Commission, Commission

on Aging, Commission on the Environment, Commission on the Status of Women, Elections Commission, Entertainment Commission, Ethics Commission, Fire Commission, Health Commission, Human Rights Commission, Human Services Commission, Juvenile Probation Commission, Library Commission, Municipal Transportation Agency Board of Directors, Planning Commission, Police Commission, Port Commission, Public Utilities Commission, Recreation and Parks Commission, Rent Board, Small Business Commission and Taxi Commission.

CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (PROPOSITION C) — A committee created by the City to obtain the input and views of San Franciscans. The following citizen advisory committees are created by the Charter: Municipal Transportation Agency Citizens' Advisory Council; Public Utilities Commission Citizens' Advisory Committee; Park, Recreation and Open Space Fund Citizens Advisory Committee; and Citizens Audit Review Board.

CITY ADMINISTRATOR (PROPOSITIONS E, H AND I) — The City official responsible for managing services within the City's executive branch.

CLEAN ENERGY (PROPOSITION H) — Although there is no official definition, it is often used to refer to a source of energy that is either renewable, such as solar power or wind power, or emits very little pollution when it is generated.

COMMON AREA (PROPOSITION M) — An area that may be accessed or used by all tenants.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT (PROPOSITION J) — A geographical area legally designated to preserve and protect historical or natural resources.

COST-OF-LIVING ADJUSTMENT (PROPOSITION S) — An amount added to a base to adjust for inflation.

DECLARATION OF POLICY (PROPOSITIONS U AND V) — A statement or expression of the will of the voters.

DEPLOYMENT (PROPOSITION U) — The placement or stationing of troops.

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WORDS YOU NEED TO KNOW *(continued)*

DOWNTOWN (PROPOSITION J) — The area generally bounded by Washington or California streets on the north, Harrison or Folsom streets on the south, the Embarcadero on the east, and Fifth or Taylor on the west. The downtown also extends west for one block along Market Street to Van Ness Avenue. (see the City's Zoning Map, which is available on the City's website at www.sfgov.org/site/planning_index.asp?id=35228)

EARLY VOTING — Voting in person at City Hall before election day or mailing an absentee ballot before election day. See page 7 for more information.

EXEMPTION (PROPOSITIONS O AND Q) — Freedom from an obligation or requirement that others must follow.

EXTORTION (PROPOSITION K) — The threat of physical force or fear against another person to obtain money or property.

FELONY (PROPOSITION L) — A major crime or offense that is punishable by a fine and/or a jail sentence of more than a year.

FISCAL YEAR (PROPOSITIONS L AND S) — The City's 12-month budget period, starting July 1st and ending June 30th of the following calendar year.

GENERAL FUND (PROPOSITIONS N, O AND S) — That part of the City's annual budget that can be used for any City purpose. Each year, the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors decide how the General Fund will be used. Money for the General Fund comes from property, business, sales, and other taxes and fees. Currently, the General Fund is 47% of the City's budget.

GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND (PROPOSITION A) — A promise issued by the City to pay back money borrowed, plus interest, by a certain date. When the City wants to raise money to pay for a large public project, it can borrow money by issuing General Obligation Bonds. The City then repays the money plus interest over a period of years with property taxes. General obligation bonds must be approved by the voters. (See also "Revenue Bond".)

HISTORIC DISTRICT (PROPOSITION J) — A geographical area legally designated to protect and preserve historic buildings and structures.

HOTEL TAX (PROPOSITION D) — A tax added to the rental of hotel rooms.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING (PROPOSITION K) — The transportation and sale of persons into forced labor.

INFRASTRUCTURE (PROPOSITION D) — The basic facilities and services needed for the functioning of a community, such as transportation and communications systems, and water and power lines.

INITIATIVE (PROPOSITIONS K, V AND R) — A proposition placed on the ballot by voters. Any voter may place an initiative on the ballot by gathering the required number of signatures on a petition.

LANDLINE (PROPOSITION O) — A telephone line such as metal wire or optic fibers.

LOW AND MODERATE INCOME (PROPOSITION B) — Annual incomes which fall within a specified range used to determine eligibility for specific programs or benefits.

MAYOR'S OFFICE OF HOUSING (PROPOSITION B) — The Mayor's Office of Housing coordinates efforts to maximize housing opportunities for low-income households and individuals. It administers a variety of housing programs funded by federal, state, and local sources. It also works to coordinate the efforts of federal, state, and local housing agencies.

MEDIAN INCOME (PROPOSITION B) — A level of income based on all incomes earned within San Francisco. Half of all San Francisco households have incomes above this level and half have incomes below this level.

MISDEMEANOR (PROPOSITION L) — A minor crime or offense that is punishable by a fine and/or a jail sentence of one year or less.

MIXED USE AREA (PROPOSITION D) — An area where there are multiple significant uses such as housing, office buildings, retail, and industrial uses, and open space and parks.

ORDINANCE (PROPOSITIONS K-T) — A local law passed by the Board of Supervisors or by the voters.

OVERSIGHT (PROPOSITION A) — Watchful care or management; supervision.

PARENTAL LEAVE (PROPOSITION G) — Policy that allows parents to temporarily leave their jobs to care for a child.

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WORDS YOU NEED TO KNOW *(continued)*

PASS-THROUGH (PROPOSITION A) — To recover an increase in property taxes by passing on a portion of the cost to tenants.

PLANNING COMMISSION (PROPOSITION J) — The City commission responsible for adopting and maintaining a comprehensive, long term general plan for future improvement and development of the City.

PROPOSITION (PROPOSITIONS A-V) — Any measure that is submitted to the voters for approval or disapproval.

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION (PUC) (PROPOSITIONS H, I AND R) — A City agency that provides water, wastewater, and municipal power services to San Francisco.

PUBLIC UTILITY (PROPOSITIONS C, H, I AND R) — A privately owned company that provides utility services to the general public, such as an electric company, cable company, or bus line. State law regulates public utilities.

QUALIFIED WRITE-IN CANDIDATE — A person who has completed the required paperwork and signatures for inclusion as a write-in candidate. Although the name of this person will not appear on the ballot, voters can vote for this person by writing the name of the person in the space on the ballot provided for write-in votes and following the specific ballot instructions. The Department of Elections counts write-in votes only for qualified write-in candidates.

RECALL (PROPOSITIONS E AND F) — The process by which voters can remove an elected official from office.

REFERENDUM (PROPOSITION F) — The process by which voters can overturn legislation enacted by a governing body such as the Board of Supervisors.

REVENUE BOND (PROPOSITION H) — If the City needs money to pay for something, such as the construction or repair of a facility, the City may borrow the money by selling bonds. The City pays back the money with interest. Revenue bonds are bonds that are paid back using money such as fees collected by the department which issued the bonds. These bonds are not repaid with property tax money. (See also "General Obligation Bond".)

SALES TAX (PROPOSITION P) — A tax added to the sale of certain retail goods.

SAN FRANCISCO MEDIAN INCOME (PROPOSITION B) — See "Median Income".

SEISMIC (PROPOSITIONS A AND N) — Relating to earthquakes.

SET-ASIDE (PROPOSITIONS B AND S) — The amount of money in the City's budget that must be used for a particular purpose.

SEX WORKERS (PROPOSITION K) — Prostitutes or other people who work in the sex industry.

SIGNATURE REQUIREMENTS (PROPOSITION E) — The number of signatures required by law.

TERM (PROPOSITIONS E, F, J AND P) — The period of time for which a public official may hold his or her office.

TRAUMA CENTER (PROPOSITION A) — A hospital equipped to provide comprehensive emergency medical services.

VOTING BY MAIL (FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS) — Also known as absentee voting. See page 7 for more information.



