

2016 MAY 11 PM 1:47

DEPARTMENT OF ELECTIONS

REVISED LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

(6/8/2015, Amended in Committee)

[Charter Amendment – Sixteen- and Seventeen-Year-Old Voting for Municipal Elections]

Describing and setting forth a proposal to the voters to amend the Charter of the City and County of San Francisco, to authorize 16- and 17-year-olds to vote in municipal elections, at an election to be held on November 8, 2016.

Existing Law

Article XVII of the Charter defines “voter” as “an elector who is registered in accordance with the provisions of state law.” State law provides: “Any person who will be at least 18 years of age at the time of the next election is eligible to register and vote at that election.” Cal. Elec. Code § 2000(b); *see also* Cal. Const., art. II, § 2.

Amendments to Current Law

The proposal would amend the Charter’s definition of “voter,” for the purpose of municipal elections, to be “any person who is at least 16 years old, meets all the qualifications for voter registration in accordance with state law other than those provisions that address age, and is registered to vote with the Department of Elections.”

Background Information

On January 5, 2015, the San Francisco Youth Commission adopted a resolution urging the Mayor and Board of Supervisors to lower San Francisco’s legal voting age to sixteen.

On June 8, 2015, the Rules Committee amended this proposal. The second draft specifies that 16 and 17-year-olds may vote in elections for members of the Board of Education for the San Francisco Unified School District and the Governing Board of the Community College District. The second draft would also seek to place the proposal on the ballot for the November 8, 2016 election.

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