

## Public Advocate\*

Digest by the Ballot Simplification Committee

**Status:** Approved Digest  
**On:** Tuesday, August 9, 2016  
**Members:** Packard, Anderson, Fasick, Fraps, Jorgensen

**Deadline to Request Reconsideration:** 12 p.m. on Wednesday, August 10

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**The Way It Is Now:** The City currently does not have a particular official or central office responsible for overseeing how City departments interact with the public. A number of City agencies provide opportunities for the public to obtain information, report problems or submit service requests. Some examples include:

- the City's 311 Customer Service Line;
- all 11 Supervisors' offices (each of which employs three aides to provide constituent services);
- the Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Services;
- the City Attorney's Office;
- the Controller; and
- the Office of Citizen Complaints (for complaints about police actions).

The Controller is the City's chief accounting officer and auditor. The Controller monitors the level and effectiveness of City services. The Controller also oversees the City's whistleblower program, which receives and investigates confidential complaints regarding misuse of City funds and improper activities by City officers and employees.

The City's Office of Citizen Complaints (OCC) investigates complaints of misconduct and neglect of duty by police officers and may file disciplinary charges against officers. The Mayor appoints a Director of the OCC from nominees selected by the Police Commission, and the Board of Supervisors confirms the Mayor's appointment.

**The Proposal:** Proposition \_\_\_ is a Charter amendment that would create the position of Public Advocate. The Public Advocate would be elected at a City-wide election and serve a four-year term. The first Public Advocate would be elected at the first election held after January 1, 2017, and would serve a shortened term. Beginning in 2020, the Public Advocate would be elected every four years. No person could serve as Public Advocate for more than two consecutive terms.

Under Proposition \_\_\_, the Public Advocate would:

- investigate and attempt to resolve complaints from members of the public concerning City services and programs;
- receive and investigate some confidential whistleblower complaints concerning City services and programs;
- review the administration of City programs, management practices and contracting procedures, and make recommendations to improve them; and
- appoint a Director of the Office of Citizen Complaints (or its successor) from nominees selected by the Police Commission, subject to the Board of Supervisors' approval.

*\*Working title, for identification only. The Director of Elections determines the title of each local ballot measure; measure titles are not considered during Ballot Simplification Committee meetings.*

The Controller would continue to handle whistleblower complaints regarding misuse of City funds.

Proposition \_\_ would also make it City policy to provide the Public Advocate with a support staff of at least 25 people.

**A "YES" Vote Means:** If you vote "yes," you want to amend the Charter to create the position of Public Advocate, responsible for investigating and attempting to resolve public complaints concerning City services and programs. You also want to make it City policy to provide the Public Advocate with a support staff of at least 25 people.

**A "NO" Vote Means:** If you vote "no," you do not want to make these changes.