



President, Board of Supervisors  
District 7

City and County of San Francisco

## NORMAN YEE

July 29, 2020

Peter Stevens and Members of the Ballot Simplification Committee  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
City Hall, Room 48  
San Francisco, CA 94102  
Via email to: [publications@sfgov.org](mailto:publications@sfgov.org)

Re: Police Staffing Measure Request for Reconsideration

Dear Chair Packard and Members of the Ballot Simplification Committee,

Thank you for hearing our Police Staffing ballot measure at the Committee meeting of July 28, 2020. We very much appreciate your time and thoughtful deliberation in preparing the draft digest and in making revisions.

I appreciate your considering and incorporating some of the proposed changes included in the July 28, 2020 letter and public comment from my staff. This includes language in “the Proposal” explaining that a regular process for evaluating police staffing levels would replace the existing requirement that the City maintain a minimum police staffing level of 1,971 full-duty sworn officers at all times.

At the hearing, the Committee decided not to incorporate some of the proposed changes to the “a ‘Yes’ Vote Means” section which would make clear to voters that this measure establishes a regular process for the Police Chief to make a report and recommendation to the Police Commission when determining the Police Department’s appropriate budget and staffing levels.

I would like to first explain the context for the requested changes, and then offer language to include in the digest. The ballot measure’s intention is to establish a regular, data-informed process for setting police staffing levels that reflects the workload of the Department and the current needs of the city. In order to allow staffing levels to be based on the regular evaluation of staffing needs, the measure would remove the minimum staffing requirement. The regular process established for setting police staffing levels is *not* secondary to the removal of the minimum staffing level. Removing the minimum staffing level is essential to the establishment of the new process. Making this clear in both the language in “the Proposal” and “a ‘YES’ Vote Means” is critical for voters to understand the measure.

As currently written, we believe that the approved digest does not make clear to voters the content or intention of the measure. It gives substantially more detail and attention to the removal of the minimum staffing level without adequately conveying to voters the role of the regular process in setting future staffing levels.

As a result, we respectfully request the Committee reconsider including language in “a ‘YES’ Vote Means” to explain that the regular process for evaluating and setting staffing levels would replace the existing requirement that the City maintain a set minimum number of full-duty sworn officers.



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Additionally, we ask that the Committee remove language referencing the full-duty sworn police officers for neighborhood policing and patrol from “the Proposal” and “a ‘Yes’ Vote Means.” This is a much less significant provision of the Charter Amendment, yet it appears in three sections: “the Way it is Now,” “the Proposal,” and “a ‘YES’ Vote Means.”

This measure should be primarily understood by voters as establishing a process to regularly assess and base staffing decisions on the current needs of the city and workload of the Department.

We respectfully request that the ballot language be revised to read:

**The Way It Is Now:** In 1994, San Francisco voters approved a change to the City Charter (Charter) that requires the City to employ 1,971 full-duty sworn police officers, including a minimum number of neighborhood policing and patrol officers.

**The Proposal:** Proposition \_\_\_ is a Charter amendment that would remove the requirements the City maintain mandatory minimum numbers of full-duty sworn police officers and replace them with a regular process in which the Police Chief submits a report and recommendation regarding staffing needs for all positions to the Police Commission (Commission). The Commission must consider this report and recommendation when making a decision on the Police Department’s budget and staffing levels.

**A "YES" Vote Means:** If you vote “yes,” you want to remove the City Charter requirement that the City must at all times employ 1,971 full-duty sworn police officers and replace it with a regular process for the Police Chief to make a report and recommendation to the Police Commission to establish the Police Department’s appropriate budget and staffing levels for all positions.

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Norman Yee".

Supervisor Norman Yee  
President, Board of Supervisors  
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