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July 29, 2020

Peter Stevens and Members of the S.F. Ballot Simplification Committee  
c/o Barbara Carr  
Department of Elections  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place - City Hall, Room 48  
San Francisco, CA 94102

Re: Request for Reconsideration  
Police Staffing Level (Working Title for Supervisor Yee Charter Amendment)

Dear Chair Packard and Members of the Ballot Simplification Committee:

The Bar Association of San Francisco's Criminal Justice Task Force ("BASF-CJTF"<sup>1</sup>) writes to you concerning Supervisor Yee's Charter Amendment ("Yee Amendment"). We have previously publicly urged stakeholders including Supervisor Yee to ensure that this matter is submitted to the voters.<sup>2</sup>

We support revisions to the current ballot explanation to communicate more clearly to voters that the Yee Amendment replaces the minimum staffing level of 1,971 officers with a regular process by which (1) the Police Chief makes a report and recommendation for current staffing needs to the Police Commission, and (2) the Police Commission considers this report and recommendation when making a decision about the SFPD's budget and staffing levels. The Yee Amendment should not be understood by voters as primarily eliminating the minimum staffing level of 1,971 officers. More significantly, it replaces it with a regular process to meet the City's current needs. We also support revisions to the current ballot explanation that would contextualize the elimination of minimum staffing levels of community policing and patrol officers. That specific provision of the Yee Amendment is overemphasized in the current ballot explanation relative to the

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<sup>1</sup> The Bar Association of San Francisco represents 7,500 members and is the largest legal organization in Northern California dedicated to criminal justice reform. In 2015, BASF established the Criminal Justice Task Force, consisting of judges, prosecutors, public defenders, law enforcement, private defense counsel, civil liberties advocates, and others, to advance systemic reforms in San Francisco.

<sup>2</sup> See July 9, 2020 BASF-CJTF Ltr. to Supervisor Yee, *available at* <https://www.sfbar.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Final-BASF-Letter-to-President-Yee-re-SFPOA-Meet-and-Confer-7.9.20-1.pdf>.

more significant provisions concerning the regular process for evaluating and setting staffing for the whole department, as reflected in our proposed changes below. Finally, we believe the term “full duty” is better interpreted for voters as “full time.”

We therefore support the following ballot description:

**The Way It is Now:** The City Charter currently has a requirement set in 1994 that the City must employ a minimum of 1,971 full time sworn police officers, including minimum numbers of neighborhood policing and patrol officers.

**The Proposal:** Proposition \_\_\_\_ is a Charter amendment that would remove these mandatory minimum numbers of full-time sworn officers and replace them with a regular process in which the Police Chief submits a report and recommendation regarding current staffing needs for all positions to the Police Commission. The Police Commission must consider this report and recommendation when making an independent, final decision about the SFPD’s budget and staffing levels.

**A "YES" Vote Means:** If you vote “yes,” you want to remove the requirement to always employ 1,971 full-time 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 consideration.

Sincerely,



Stuart Plunkett  
President, The Bar Association of San Francisco