

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Charter Amendment - 16- and 17-Year-Olds Voting in Municipal Elections]

Describing and setting forth a proposal to the voters at an election to be held on November 3, 2020, to amend the Charter of the City and County of San Francisco to authorize youths aged 16 and 17 to vote in municipal elections.

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 that voters must be at least 18 years old to vote. See Cal. Const., art. II, § 2 (“A United States citizen 18 years of age and resident in this State may vote.”); Cal. Elec. Code § 2000(b) (“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.”).

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

In 2016, the Board of Supervisors submitted a Charter amendment to the voters that would have authorized 16 and 17 year olds to vote in municipal elections. See File No. 150267. The measure appeared as Proposition F on the November 8, 2016 ballot, but failed to obtain the voters’ approval.

n:\legana\as2020\2000399\01447415.doc