



DEAN PRESTON

July 25, 2022

Chair Packard and Members of the Ballot Simplification Committee
% Clerk Claire Miranda
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place City Hall,
Room 48 San Francisco, CA 94102
Via email to: publications@sfgov.org

Re: City Elections in Even-Numbered Years

Dear Chair Packard and Members of the Ballot Simplification Committee:

Thank you for your hard work on the digest for this and all other ballot measures. I write to request some minor but significant changes to the proposed ballot question and digest for the City Elections in Even-Numbered Years charter amendment.

Adding Context for the Proposed Change

Per the Ballot Simplification Committee's website, each summary digest "explains the main purposes and points of the measure." While the current draft digest outlines some context and practical effects of the change, such as the fact that voting yes would mean voting "to hold elections for local ballot measures only in even-numbered years or at special elections," it leaves out the purpose of the proposal and the practical effects it would have on voter participation. This can be rectified by referencing voter participation in two ways.

First, the digest can reflect the purpose of the proposed amendment by providing insight into the conditions under the current election year scheme. For example, the committee can add a sentence to "The Way It Is Now" which notes: "Over the last decade, average voter turnout for general elections held in the odd years has been 43.1% while average turnout for presidential elections held in even years during the same time period has been 79.8%."¹

¹ These numbers are based on voter participation for Mayor, District Attorney, and Sheriff elections held November 2011 (42.47%), November 2015 (45.45%), and November 2019 (41.64%)— which average to 43.1%— in comparison to presidential elections held in November 2012 (72.56%), November 2016 (80.71%), and November 2020 (86.33%)— which average to 79.8%. Voter participation in November 2013, the last separate odd-year election for City Attorney and Treasurer before those races were consolidated with other odd-year elections, was 29.20%. These results can be accessed at the Department of Elections website at <https://sfelections.sfgov.org/past-election-results>.



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The digest can also note within “The Proposal” that the proposal is to “amend the Charter to require that the City hold elections for Mayor, Sheriff, District Attorney, City Attorney, and Treasurer in presidential election years and eliminate local elections in odd-numbered years *in order to increase voter participation in electing these local officials.*”

We request that these two modifications be made to the summary digest. Adding this important and highly relevant information will provide voters with a more complete understanding of the proposed ballot measure.

I appreciate your time in crafting the digest and for your consideration of this important change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dean Preston".

Dean Preston
District 5 Supervisor