

Holding City Elections in Even-Numbered Years*

Digest by the Ballot Simplification Committee

Status: Draft for Consideration
On: Tuesday, July 26, 2020
Members: Packard, Anderson, Merrill, Patterson

Deadline to Request Reconsideration: TBD

The Way It Is Now: The City holds elections for Mayor, Sheriff, District Attorney, City Attorney and Treasurer every four years in November of odd-numbered years. The last regular election for these offices was in November 2019, and the next scheduled election for these offices will be in November 2023.

The City holds elections for Assessor-Recorder, Public Defender, Board of Supervisors members, School Board members, and City College Board members every four years in November of even-numbered years. Elections for State and federal offices are also held in even-numbered years.

Local ballot measures can be on the ballots for all these elections, in both even-numbered and odd-numbered years.

Voters may place a City ordinance or declaration of policy on the ballot by submitting enough signatures from San Francisco voters on an initiative petition. To qualify for the ballot, the petition must include signatures from San Francisco voters equaling at least five percent of the votes cast for all candidates in the preceding election for Mayor. As of July 2022, this threshold is 8,979 signatures.

The Proposal: Proposition __ would 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.

The next scheduled elections for Mayor, Sheriff, District Attorney, City Attorney and Treasurer would be in November 2024 instead of November 2023, so the current terms for those officials would be extended by one year. The City would hold later elections for those offices every four years in even-numbered years.

Proposition __ would require the voters to consider local ballot measures only in even-numbered years, or at special elections the City calls at other times.

Proposition __ would also change the signature threshold for City initiative ordinances and declarations of policy to two percent of the number of registered voters in San Francisco, which is approximately 9,948 as of July 2022, instead of five percent of the turnout in the last mayoral election.

A "YES" Vote Means: If you vote "yes," you want the City to hold elections for Mayor, Sheriff, District Attorney, City Attorney, and Treasurer in presidential election years, to hold elections for local ballot measures only in even-numbered years or at special elections, and to change the signature threshold for voters to place ordinances and declarations of policy on the ballot

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

**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.*