

Police Officer Staffing Levels Conditioned on Future Tax Funding*

Digest by the Ballot Simplification Committee

Status: Draft for Consideration
On: Wednesday, November 29, 2023
Members: Packard, Anderson, Unruh, Wong

Deadline to Request Reconsideration: TBD

The Way It Is Now: The City has a Police Commission (Commission) that oversees the Police Department's (SFPD's) policies and approves a proposed budget for the department. The Chief of Police manages SFPD's day-to-day operations.

As of September 2023, SFPD had about 1,578 full-duty sworn police officers. Every two years, the Chief of Police must report to the Commission SFPD's recommendation for the number of police officers the City needs. In approving SFPD's draft budget, the Commission is required to consider the Police Chief's recommended staffing levels. The Commission then forwards its proposed budget to the Mayor. The Mayor may change the budget before introducing it at the Board of Supervisors (Board). The Board may propose amendments the budget.

The Commission, the Mayor, and the Board are not required to adopt a budget that provides funding for the number of police officers SFPD recommends. The Charter does not specify that the City have a minimum number of police officers. The City pays for SFPD staffing and recruitment with money from the General Fund.

The Proposal: Proposition ___ would amend the Charter to change the process for establishing and funding the number of police officers in San Francisco. These changes would happen only if the voters in a future election were to approve a new tax or amend an existing tax dedicating enough funds to fully pay for additional police staffing and recruitment.

In the first year after voters approve full funding, Proposition ___ would set the minimum number of full-time police officers for the City at 1,700, with increases each year up to 2,074 in year five. For those five years, Proposition ___ would require the City to budget enough money to pay for at least the number of police officers SFPD actually employed during the prior year.

Under Proposition ___, beginning in year five after voters approve full funding, the Police Chief must report to the Commission the SFPD's recommended number of police officers for the City every five years instead of every two years. After year five, the Commission would also be required to adopt a minimum number of full-time police officers, which may not be reduced by more than 5% per year, unless two-thirds of the Commission votes to make a larger reduction.

Proposition ___ would require the Commission to approve a budget each fiscal year that funds SFPD's minimum number of full-time police officers. SFPD would be authorized to submit a budget amendment directly to the Board if it is able to fund more than the minimum number of police officers.

If in the future the voters approve full funding for police staffing and recruitment, Proposition ___ would create a fund that would last for at least five years and could continue for up to 10 years. It would require the City to set aside enough money in that fund each year to recruit police officers. The fund would have \$16.8 million in the first year, and would change for the next four years depending on the number of police officers SFPD needs to hire, but would not exceed \$30 million per year. If there is a budget deficit or economic emergency, the amount in the fund could be set at the previous year's level. The City may continue the fund for up to ten years without further voter approval.

If the voters do not approve full funding in the future, these changes in police staffing and recruitment would not go into effect.

A "YES" Vote Means: If you vote "yes," you want to make the following changes only if the voters adopt a future tax measure that provides required funding:

**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.*

- Set minimum levels of police officer staffing in San Francisco.
- Mandate that the City appropriates enough money in the budget to pay for the number of police officers the City already has for at least five years.
- Change the process of establishing minimum police staffing levels for the City, including by requiring the Commission to approve enough money in the SFPD budget to pay for minimum levels of police officers.
- Allow SFPD to introduce amendments to their own budget.
- Create a fund to set aside money to pay for police recruiting for at least five years.

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