

Police Staffing and Deferred Retirement*

Digest by the Ballot Simplification Committee

Status: Final Digest
On: Friday, August 2, 2024
Members: Packard, Anderson, Wong, Wang

The Way It Is Now: The Police Commission (Commission) oversees the San Francisco Police Department (Department). The Charter requires the Chief of the Department (Police Chief) to submit a report every two years to the Commission. This report describes the current number of full-duty sworn officers and recommends adequate staffing levels of full-duty sworn officers for the next two years. The Commission must consider this report and recommendation when it approves the Department's budget.

The Charter does not define "full-duty sworn officers."

The San Francisco Employee Retirement System is the retirement and pension system for City employees. Under the Charter, police officers are eligible for retirement benefits, with pension payments based on their compensation, age and length of service. The Charter does not allow City employees, including police officers, to continue working full time for the City after retirement. But the City may rehire retired City employees to work a limited number of hours each year while they also collect retirement benefits.

The Proposal: Proposition ___ would amend the Charter to define "full-duty sworn officer" to mean a full-time officer except those on long-term leaves of absence, recruits who are training at the Police Academy and officers assigned to the San Francisco International Airport. To reduce the administrative burden, the measure would require the Police Chief to provide a report every three years, instead of two, on current full-duty sworn officers and recommend future staffing to the Commission. The Commission would report annually to the Board of Supervisors (Board) on the Department's progress on meeting its staffing goals, including its goal of increasing the representation of women in the Department to 30% of new recruits by 2030.

Proposition ___ would establish a Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) for eligible police officers. Full-duty police officers in the ranks of Officer, Sergeant and Inspector who are at least 50 years old and have at least 25 years of eligible service with the Department or another law enforcement agency could participate. Participants would continue to work full-time for the Department at their current salary and benefit levels. Participants must agree to perform neighborhood patrol work or conduct investigations, regardless of their previous assignment. Participants would only be allowed to participate for up to five years. The pension payments the participant would have collected upon retirement would be placed into a tax-deferred and interest-bearing account. When their DROP period ends, participants must stop work for the City and would receive their deferred monthly pension payments with interest. The Board could limit the number of DROP participants.

Proposition _ authorizes the DROP program for an initial five-year period. Thereafter, the Board would have the authority to continue the program every five years until it expires.

A "YES" Vote Means: If you vote "yes," you want to amend the Charter to define "full-duty sworn officer"; require the Police Chief to make a report and recommend future staffing of full-duty sworn officers to the Police Commission every three years instead of two; require the Commission to report annually to the Board on Department staffing; and create a five-year program with possible renewals allowing police officers to continue working for the Department after retiring, with pension payments deferred while they are working.

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.*