



OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER
CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

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Mr. John Arntz
Department of Elections
City Hall 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place Room 48
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

August 12, 2024

RE: Proposition D – City Commissions and Mayoral Authority

Dear Mr. Arntz,

Should the proposed Charter amendment be approved by the voters, in my opinion, it would generate moderate savings ranging from \$350,000 to \$630,000 annually in stipend and health benefit costs. Additional savings may result from reduced administrative or staff costs as the number of commissions decreases, although at a level that cannot be estimated at this time.

The proposed Charter amendment would limit the City to a total of 65 commissions. Currently, approximately 125 commissions operate in the City, with some commissions established in the City Charter, while others are established by ordinance or other authority. The amendment would remove approximately 27 commissions from the City Charter, while retaining another 22 commissions in the Charter. The City would need to eliminate a total of approximately 60 commissions from some combination of the Charter and other sources to satisfy the 65-commission limit. The proposed Charter amendment would establish the five-member Commission Streamlining Task Force to make recommendations to the Mayor and Board of Supervisors on changing, eliminating, or consolidating the City's appointive boards and commissions within the 65-commission limit. The Task Force will be appointed by City officials and would have the authority to hire staff and consultants and receive support from the City Attorney and the City Administrator as needed.

All adjudicatory functions of an eliminated commission shall be performed by hearing officers or Administrative Law Judges. For context, this may cost between \$450 and \$2,000 per hearing.

The Charter amendment would prohibit the City from paying members of these commissions or providing them healthcare benefits. Certain appointive boards and commissions pay stipends to the commissioners on a per meeting basis ranging from \$25 to \$500 per meeting, while some commissioners are paid between \$100 and \$500 per month. Not all commissioners receive stipends. For context, in FY 2022-23 the City paid approximately \$350,000 for stipends and health benefits for 180 commissioners citywide. These costs could range up to approximately \$630,000 if more commission seats were filled and commissions met more often. The proposed Charter amendment would result in cost savings ranging from approximately \$350,000 to \$630,000 annually.

In addition to commissioner stipends and health insurance, commissions also require staff time from City employees who support commissions' operations and prepare briefing materials to present at hearings. The amount of staff time needed to support commissions would decrease as the City changes, eliminates, or combines commissions – freeing staff to work on other government functions, although at a level that cannot be determined at this time. To the extent the City hires additional staff to run the Commission Streamlining Task Force, the cost to government may increase.

The average annual operating costs of the 27 commissions that would be removed from the Charter is approximately \$85,000 per commission. These operating costs include stipends, health benefits, some staff costs, operating expenses, and other miscellaneous expenses. If all 27 of the commissions removed from the Charter were not recommended by the Task Force for inclusion in the 65-commission limit and fully eliminated, the total savings would be approximately \$2.3 million. The total level of savings will depend on which commissions the Task Force recommends for removal to fit within the 65-commission limit. Some of these 27 commissions are staffed by full time employees with an average of 1.5 employees, while others are staffed by employees who split their time between the commission and other responsibilities with an average of .6 employees.

Sincerely,



Greg Wagner
Controller

Note: This analysis reflects our understanding of the proposal as of the date shown. At times further information is provided to us which may result in revisions being made to this analysis before the final Controller's statement appears in the Voter Information Pamphlet.