

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST
(Revised 06/29/2022)

[City Elections In Even-Numbered Years]

Describing and setting forth a proposal to the voters at an election to be held on November 8, 2022, to amend the Charter of the City and County of San Francisco to change the election cycle for the offices of Mayor, Sheriff, District Attorney, City Attorney and Treasurer so that these offices will be elected in even-numbered years; to provide that the current term for the aforementioned offices will end on January 8, 2025 rather than January 8, 2024; to amend the definition of general municipal election so that such elections occur only in even-numbered years; and to change the signature threshold for initiative ordinances to two percent of the number of registered voters in San Francisco.

Existing Law

The Mayor, Sheriff, District Attorney, City Attorney and Treasurer are elected at general municipal elections held every four years, in odd-numbered years. The last election for the offices of Mayor, Sheriff, Treasurer, and District Attorney was held at the general municipal election in November 2019, and the next election for these offices will be held in November 2023. The last regularly scheduled election for City Attorney was also held in November 2019, but a vacancy election for this office will be held on June 7, 2022. Thereafter, the next election for City Attorney would also be held in November 2023. The persons elected to these offices serve four-year terms.

To qualify an ordinance for the ballot, the initiative petitions supporting that measure must include signatures from San Francisco voters in a number equal to at least five percent of the votes cast for all mayoral candidates in the preceding general municipal election for Mayor.

Amendments to Current Law

The proposed Charter Amendment would require elections for Mayor, Sheriff, District Attorney, City Attorney and Treasurer to be held in even-numbered years. To do so, the proposal would provide the person elected to the office of Mayor, Sheriff, District Attorney, City Attorney and Treasurer in 2019 to serve a five-year term. The next regularly scheduled election for the offices of Mayor, Sheriff, District Attorney, City Attorney and Treasurer would be held in November 2024 instead of November 2023. Thereafter, elections for these offices will occur every four years in even-numbered years. As a consequence of these changes, the definition of “general municipal election” is being amended to reflect that the City would hold regularly scheduled elections only in even-numbered years.

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The proposal would change the signature threshold for initiative ordinances to two percent of the number of registered voters in San Francisco, instead of five percent of the turnout in the last mayoral election.

Background

The second draft of the Charter Amendment includes non-substantive amendments made in the June 29, 2022 meeting of the Rules Committee to correct clerical errors in the first draft.