

# Words You Need to Know

by the Ballot Simplification Committee

**Affordable Housing** (Proposition A): Residential units that persons or households within a certain range of incomes would be able to afford.

**Amend** (Propositions AA, B, C, D, E, F, G and L): To change.

**Bond** (Proposition A): A bond is a promise by the City to pay back money borrowed, plus interest, by a specific date. If the City needs to raise a large amount of money to pay for a library, sewer line, school, hospital or other project or program, it may borrow the money by selling bonds. (See also "General Obligation Bond.")

**California Public Employees Retirement System** (CalPERS) (Proposition B): manages retirement benefits for California public employees. Some San Francisco City employees participate in CalPERS retirement plans.

**Charter Amendment** (Propositions B, C, D, E, F and G): A change to the City's Charter. The Charter is the City's Constitution. The Charter can only be changed by a majority of the votes cast.

**Combined Election** (Proposition E): An election that includes a combination of municipal, district, state or federal candidates or measures.

**Compensation** (Proposition B): Salary and certain other payments to an employee. For the purpose of calculating retirement benefits for City employees, compensation generally excludes overtime pay. For some San Francisco employees hired before November 1976, compensation includes overtime.

**Deferred Loans** (Proposition A): Loans that postpone principal and/or interest payments for a period of time.

**District Election** (Proposition E): An election for officers or measures of a district, such as the Community College District, San Francisco Unified School District or BART. Does not refer to Supervisorial district elections.

**Exemption** (Propositions J and K): Freedom from an obligation or requirement that others must follow.

**Expenditure Plan** (Proposition AA): A written report describing how funds will be used. The Expenditure Plan for the Vehicle Registration Fee is included with the legal text for the measure.

**Federal Election** (Proposition E): An election for candidates to federal office, such as President of the United States or members of Congress.

**Felony** (Proposition D): A major crime or offense that is punishable by a fine and/or a jail sentence of more than a year.

**General Fund** (Propositions J, K and N): That part of the City's annual budget that can be used for any City purpose. Each year, the Mayor and the Board of Supervisors decide how the General Fund will be used. Money for the General Fund comes from property, business, sales, and other taxes and fees. Currently, the General Fund is 46% of the City's budget.

**General Obligation Bond** (Proposition A): A promise issued by the City to pay back money borrowed, plus interest, by a certain date. When the City wants to raise money to pay for a large public project, it can borrow money by issuing General Obligation Bonds. The City then repays the money plus interest over a period of years with property taxes. General obligation bonds must be approved by the voters.

**Initiative** (Propositions B, G, I and J): A proposition placed on the ballot by voters. Any voter may place an initiative on the ballot by gathering the required number of signatures on a petition.

**Legally Recognized Caregiver** (Proposition D): A person who is at least 18 years old, lives with a minor child, and completes a form to enroll the minor in school and consent to school-related medical care on behalf of the minor.

**Local Election** (Proposition E): See "municipal election."

**Municipal Election** (Proposition E, I): An election that involves only San Francisco offices and ballot measures. Generally, municipal elections are held in San Francisco on the first Tuesday immediately following the first Monday in November in odd-numbered years.

**Operator** (Proposition G): A person who drives a MUNI vehicle or performs related functions.

**Ordinance** (Propositions AA, C, D, H, I, J, K, L, M and N): A local law passed by the Board of Supervisors or by the voters.

**Oversight** (Proposition A): Watchful care or management; supervision.

**Parole** (Proposition D): Period of supervised release after a prison term.

**Pass Through** (Proposition A): To recover an increase in property taxes by passing on a portion of the cost to tenants.

**Pavement to Parks Program** (Proposition L): A City program that installs temporary parks and plazas on portions of City streets.

**Payment for a Room and Related Charges** (Propositions J and K): Payments subject to the hotel tax, including charges for a guest room, for additional guests, including pets, to occupy the room, or for use of a safe. Related charges include no-show charges; cancellation charges; charges for early or late arrival or departure; hospitality suites; and charges for parking for hotel guests.

**Proposition** (Propositions AA–N): Any measure that is submitted to the voters for approval or disapproval.

**Proposition H** (Proposition B): A Charter amendment passed by the voters in November 2002 that increased retirement benefits for City police and firefighters.

**Provisional Ballot**: A ballot cast at a polling place that will not be counted until the Department of Elections verifies the voter's eligibility to cast that ballot.

**Qualified Write-In Candidate** (Frequently Asked Questions): A person who has completed the required paperwork and signatures for inclusion as a write-in candidate. Although the name of this person will not appear on the ballot, voters can vote for this person by writing the name of the person in the space on the ballot provided for write-in votes and following the specific ballot instructions. The Department of Elections counts write-in votes only for certified write-in candidates.

**Retirement Benefits** (Proposition B): Primarily pensions paid in retirement based on employees' age, years of service and final compensation. Benefits, which are administered through the Retirement System, also include disability and survivor benefits. Retirees may also receive health benefits through the Health Service System.

**Seismic** (Proposition A): Relating to earthquakes.

**Single-Room Occupancy** (Proposition A): A type of housing with only one room per unit. Also known as SRO.

**State Election** (Proposition E): An election for California offices or ballot measures, such as the Governor, members of the State Senate or Assembly, or an amendment to the State Constitution.

**Term** (Proposition F): The period of time for which a public official may hold his or her office.

**Transit Employees** (Proposition G): Persons who work for the City's Municipal Railway transit system (MUNI). This includes MUNI operators and mechanics.

**Vote-by-Mail Ballots** (Frequently Asked Questions): Ballots mailed to voters or given to voters in person at the Department of Elections. Vote-by-mail ballots can be mailed to the Department of Elections, turned in at the Department of Elections office in City Hall, or turned in at any San Francisco polling place on Election Day. Also known as absentee ballots. See page 5 for more information.

## Read the Fine Print— in Large Print

The Department of Elections offers the Voter Information Pamphlet in large print.

Sign up to receive one by calling 415-554-4375.

The large-print Voter Information Pamphlet is also available in Chinese and Spanish.

**vote!**