

Words You Need to Know – Approved August 9, 2011

Amend (Proposition C, D, E and F): To change a law.

Applicable codes (Proposition A): Laws and regulations, such as the Education Code or the Building Code, that apply to certain structures and activities.

Attendance area (Proposition H): Geographic boundaries drawn around elementary schools for the purposes of student assignment. Middle and high schools do not have attendance areas.

Areas with lowest average test scores (Proposition H): Specific areas in the City where the average test score is in the lowest 20% of standardized test scores, when compared with other areas in the City.

Calendar year (Proposition F): A 12-month period, beginning on January 1 and ending on December 31 of each year.

California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) (Propositions C and D): CalPERS is a State-run system that provides pension benefits for California public employees. Some City employees receive pension benefits through CalPERS rather than the San Francisco Employee Retirement System. These employees include sheriff's deputies, probation officers, district attorney and public defender investigators, juvenile court counselors, and institutional police officers.

Campaign consultant (Proposition F): A person who provides campaign services, such as hiring campaign staff, supervising the use of campaign funds, directing the solicitation of campaign contributions, selecting vendors, producing campaign literature and advertising, seeking endorsements, or advising on public policy positions.

Charter amendment (Propositions C, D and E): 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.

Compensation (Proposition F): Payments, fees, or anything else of value provided in exchange for services.

Cost-of-living adjustment (Propositions C and D): An annual increase in pension benefits. San Francisco Employee Retirement System pays a basic cost-of-living increase of up to 2% based on inflation. It may also pay a supplemental cost-of-living increase up to a combined total of 3.5% annually.

Covered compensation (Propositions C and D): Employee compensation that is considered when calculating pension contributions and benefits.

Defined benefits (Propositions C and D): A set monthly amount qualified employees are entitled to receive after they retire from public service.

Designated feeder school (Proposition H): Elementary school from which students normally are assigned to a specific middle school.

Electronic filing (Proposition F): Providing or submitting information through the electronic transmission of data (e.g., e-mail).

Environmentally sustainable (Proposition A): Furthers the long-term well-being of the environment.

Ethics Commission (Proposition F): The City's Ethics Commission is responsible for administering, interpreting and enforcing City ethics laws, including laws regulating campaign contributions, conflicts of interest, lobbyists, campaign consultants, whistle-blowing, public records, and public meetings. The Ethics Commission also provides educational materials and advice on ethics questions. The Ethics Commission consists of five members, appointed by the Mayor, the Board of Supervisors, City Attorney, District Attorney, and Assessor-Recorder, respectively.

Feeder school (Proposition H): see "designated feeder school."

Final compensation (Propositions C and D): The average of an employee's highest annual compensation over the relevant period.

General obligation bonds (Propositions A and B): A promise issued by a government body to pay back money borrowed, plus interest, by a certain date. The government body repays the money, plus interest, over a period of years with property taxes. General obligation bond measures must be approved by the voters.

Health Service Board (Propositions C and D): A seven-member City board that oversees the Health Service System.

Health Service System (Propositions C and D): A City-run system that provides health benefits to eligible employees, retirees and dependents of the City, Unified School District, Community College District, and Superior Court.

Initiative (Propositions D, E and H): A proposition placed on the ballot by voters. Any voter may place an initiative on the ballot by gathering the required number of valid signatures on a petition.

Local campaign (Proposition F): A campaign for or against local ballot measures or candidates for local offices, including Mayor, Board of Supervisors, City Attorney, District Attorney, Treasurer, Sheriff, Assessor-Recorder, Public Defender, Board of Education of the San Francisco Unified School District, and Governing Board of the San Francisco Community College District.

Ordinance (Propositions E, F and G): A local law passed by the Board of Supervisors or by the voters.

Oversight (Propositions A and B): Monitoring activities to ensure that they follow the purposes of a program.

Programs for children and seniors (Proposition G): Programs designed to benefit children and seniors, such as delivering meals to seniors, providing in-home assistance to seniors, establishing adult day care, supporting child care, and paying for health care for children and families.

Proposition (Propositions A–H): Any measure that is submitted to the voters for approval or disapproval.

Public safety programs (Proposition G): Programs designed to safeguard the public, such as community policing, police officer and firefighter salaries, police academy classes, and replacement of police vehicles and firefighting equipment.

Repeal (Proposition E): To remove a law, so that it no longer has any effect.

Required valid signatures (Proposition E): the number of signatures of voters registered in San Francisco required on a petition to qualify a measure for the ballot, according to state and local law.

Sales tax (Proposition G): A tax added to the sale of certain retail goods.

San Francisco County Transportation Authority (Proposition G): The Transportation Authority is a public agency that is separate from the City, although the 11 members of the Board of Supervisors serve as members of the Authority's governing board. The Transportation Authority uses a portion of sales tax money to pay for transportation projects approved by the voters.

San Francisco Employees' Retirement System (SFERS) (Propositions C and D): A City-run system that provides pension benefits to most City employees. SFERS also provides pension benefits to some employees of the Unified School District, Community College District, and Superior Court.

School facilities (Proposition A): Buildings and structures that house schools or activities that support schools.

Seismic upgrade (Proposition B): Improving or renovating a structure to protect it from potential earthquake damage.

Service retirement (Propositions C and D): A pension benefit available to employees who meet age and years of service requirements. Employees who

qualify for service retirement receive defined benefits determined by final compensation, retirement age, and length of service.

Special district (Proposition G): A government body with limited powers formed to provide a specific service. (This is not related to Supervisorial districts.)

Street corridor (Proposition B): A number of consecutive blocks of a street, including the sidewalks and medians.

Vesting allowance (Propositions C and D): A retirement benefit available to certain employees who have worked for the City for at least five years. Employees who qualify for a vesting allowance receive payments based on the employee's contributions to SFERS, a matching employer contribution, and interest.

Vesting retirement (Propositions C and D): A retirement benefit available to some safety employees who leave City employment before becoming eligible for a service retirement. Those employees who work for the City for at least five years may receive benefits that are calculated according to the same formula used for "service retirement" (defined above).