



City and County of San Francisco
Department of Elections

John Arntz, Director

Contact: Barbara Carr
Telephone: (415) 554-4375
Email: publications@sfgov.org

About the Ballot Simplification Committee

The Ballot Simplification Committee prepares a fair and impartial summary of each local ballot measure in simple language. These summaries, or “digests,” which are prepared at public meetings, are printed in San Francisco’s Voter Information Pamphlet, which is mailed to every registered voter before the election.

Each digest explains the primary purposes and points of the measure, and includes the following four sections:

- *The Way It Is Now*
- *The Proposal*
- *A “Yes” Vote Means*
- *A “No” Vote Means*

In general, each digest is limited to 300 words. Digests may exceed the 300-word limit if the Committee determines that the complexity or scope of the measure requires a longer digest. In addition, digests must be written as close as possible to the eighth-grade reading level.

The Ballot Simplification Committee also assists the Department of Elections in preparing other materials, such as “Frequently Asked Questions” and “Words You Need to Know,” a glossary of terms that appear in the pamphlet. The City Attorney’s Office prepares the ballot questions, and the Director of Elections determines each measure’s title.

In advance of the November 3, 2015, Consolidated Municipal Election, the Ballot Simplification Committee will meet during the period of July 27 to August 10.

Meeting agendas and agenda materials will be posted at sfelections.org/bsc and in the Department of Elections office in City Hall, Room 48. Agendas will be posted at least 72 hours prior to the meeting, and agenda materials will be made available as early as possible. Please check for updates.

Procedure for Drafting Digests

The City Attorney's Office prepares a preliminary draft digest for each measure.

The Committee begins by discussing and editing that preliminary draft digest. Public comment is generally not permitted during this phase of the Committee's work.

After the Committee has agreed upon a draft digest, it opens the meeting to public comment, which is generally limited to three minutes per person. The Committee respectfully requests that speakers identify which portions of the draft digest they would like to change and the reasons for the proposed change.

After public comment, the Committee considers each of the proposed changes and decides whether to amend the draft digest. The Committee then votes to adopt the digest. At least three votes are required to adopt a digest.

Procedure for Reconsideration of Digests

After the Committee adopts a digest, any person may request that the Committee reconsider the digest by submitting a written Request for Reconsideration to the Department of Elections. The request must indicate:

- The specific language in the digest that the requestor wants to amend;
- What alternate language the requestor recommends; and
- The reasons for the recommendation.

Requests for Reconsideration must be submitted within 24 hours of adoption of the digest. Each digest will be posted as soon as possible after adoption at [sfelections.org/bsc](https://www.sfelections.org/bsc), with the deadline for Requests for Reconsideration. Please transmit Requests for Reconsideration to one or more of the following:

Email: publications@sfgov.org

Fax: (415) 554-7829

Delivery: Ballot Simplification Committee– Request for Reconsideration,
c/o Barbara Carr, Department of Elections, City Hall, Room 48

The Committee takes up each Request for Reconsideration at a public meeting, and decides, after public comment, whether to amend its digest. At least three votes are required to amend a digest. The Committee's decisions concerning Requests for Reconsideration are final.

Committee Members

The Ballot Simplification Committee consists of five voting members, each of whom must be a San Francisco resident and registered voter. The voting members are selected as follows:

- The Board of Supervisors appoints three members:
 - Two must be nominated by either the Northern California Chapter of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences or the Northern California Broadcasters Association.
 - One must be nominated by the League of Women Voters of San Francisco.
- The Mayor appoints two members:
 - One must be nominated by the Northern California Media Workers Guild (formerly Northern California Newspaper Guild).
 - One must be an educational reading specialist recommended by the Superintendent of Schools of the San Francisco Unified School District.

A member of the City Attorney's Office serves as a non-voting *ex officio* member.

The current voting members of the Committee are:

Betty Packard, Chair

Nominated by the Northern California Broadcasters Association/California Press Women,
Appointed by the Board of Supervisors

June Fraps

Nominated by the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences,
Appointed by the Board of Supervisors

Ann Jorgensen

Nominated by the San Francisco Unified School District,
Appointed by the Mayor

Adele Fasick

Nominated by the League of Women Voters,
Appointed by the Board of Supervisors

Christine Unruh

Nominated by the Pacific Media Workers Guild,
Appointed by the Mayor