



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
OFFICE OF THE CONTROLLER

Ben Rosenfield
Controller

Todd Rydstrom
Deputy Controller

July 14, 2016

Ms. Angela Calvillo
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102-4689

RE: Files 160583 and 160781 – Charter amendment establishing an elected Office of the Public Advocate (second draft)

Dear Ms. Calvillo,

Should the proposed charter amendment be approved by the voters, in my opinion, it would result in a moderate to significant increase in the cost of government.

The proposed new Office of the Public Advocate would have a variety of powers to review, investigate and make recommendations regarding the City's public information programs, complaint resolution processes, and its management, contracting and employment practices. Additionally, the Public Advocate would have the authority to receive and investigate certain whistleblower complaints. The authority and responsibility to perform these functions currently exists in various City departments, which remain largely unchanged in the proposed measure. The Public Advocate would have the authority to introduce legislation.

The Charter amendment mandates a minimum staffing requirement of four positions for this new office, at a likely cost of between \$600,000 and \$800,000 annually. The amendment also sets a City policy recommending an additional twenty-two staff for the office. The additional cost to meet this staffing policy would likely cost between \$2.8 million and \$3.5 million annually, although this policy is not binding on the City and would be subject to decisions made during the annual budget process.

The Public Advocate would be elected at the first citywide general or special election occurring after January 1, 2017. The salary for the new Public Advocate would be set by the Civil Service Commission.

This proposed amendment is not in compliance with a non-binding, voter-adopted city policy regarding mandatory expenditures. This policy seeks to limit voter-mandated expenditure requirements that limit the discretion of the Mayor and Board of Supervisors in the City's budget process.

Note that the proposed amendment would change the duties of the Controller's Office, which has prepared this statement.

Sincerely,


for Ben Rosenfield
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.