

Patrick Monette-Shaw

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January 25, 2022

Rules Committee

San Francisco Board of Supervisors

The Honorable Aaron Peskin, Chair, Rules Committee

The Honorable Rafael Mandelman, Member, Rules Committee

The Honorable Connie Chan, Member, Rules Committee

1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place

San Francisco, CA 94102

Agenda Item #4, Board File 211284: Charter Amendment, Establishment of Children's Agency and Commission

Dear Chair Peskin and Rules Committee Members,

I do not support Board File #211284, the proposed Charter Amendment introduced by Mayor Breed and co-sponsored by Supervisors Melgar and Mandelman to create a Children's Agency and Commission as currently written for the reasons below.

During the Rules Committee hearing on January 24, 2022 before the SFGOV-TV problem surfaced, the preliminary discussion revealed the Mayor's proposed Charter Amendment to establish the Children's Agency and Commission had been developed in secrecy. Secrecy is Mayor Breed's usual-and-customary *modus operandi*, and should come as no surprise. One problem is that Breed's legislative "*sausage making*" often comes embedded with *Salmonella* mashed into other ingredients that is not always killed during the cooking process.

I appreciated Supervisor Ronen's terrific analysis and insights during Rules Committee members opening discussion of this proposed Charter Amendment. I also appreciated the insights of Jill Wynn's and former Supervisor Norman Yee's public comments.

It was abundantly clear on Monday that this Charter Amendment most probably requires a complete re-write. Since the City Charter is essentially San Francisco's constitution, I don't believe this legislation should be rushed to the ballot for the June 7, 2022 election.

Given there is essentially just three months before the June election — February, March, and April — I don't think there is sufficient time to bring all stakeholders and school district constituents together in publicly-announced and pre-scheduled meetings to comply with the Brown Act and our Sunshine Ordinance to engage in discussion and crafting of legislation worthy of being enshrined in the City Charter. I say this, in part, given the Board of Supervisors own timelines and legal requirements to hold public hearings at the Rules Committee and then the full Board of Supervisors to effectuate placing this Charter Amendment on the June ballot. I also say this, in part, given:

1. The amount of time the Ballot Simplification Committee would need to schedule its meetings to review the Voter Guide legal text of the ballot measure and then write the official Ballot Digest for the Voter Guide, and
2. The length of lead time the Elections Department would need to assemble, print, and publish the mandatory Voter Guide sufficiently in advance of the election and mail it in time to all San Francisco voters, along with printing and mailing mail-in-ballots in advance of when early voting would begin.

Therefore, rather than trying to rush what should be a deliberative and thoughtful process writing a replacement Charter Amendment for the June 7 ballot, I recommend that the Rules Committee introduce and entertain a motion during your Special Meeting on Wednesday, January 26 to table this Agenda Item entirely, or to the Call of the Rules Committee Chair, to provide sufficient time to re-think and completely re-write this Charter Amendment and bring it before the voters at the November 2022 election. The motion should also include a formal Rules Committee recommendation to reject this

Charter Amendment entirely to the full Board of Supervisors due to insufficient time to develop an alternative Charter Amendment given the lead times leading up to the June 7 election.

As a housekeeping suggestion, rather than resuming public comment on Agenda Item 4 on Wednesday, I also recommend that you introduce a motion at the outset of resuming Agenda Item 4 to immediately Table this Agenda Item in order to shorten the length of time of Wednesday's Special Meeting without further debate among Committee members and without taking additional public testimony on this Item.

Please place this testimony in the Public Correspondence file for File #211287.

Respectfully submitted,

Patrick Monette-Shaw
Columnist/Reporter
Westside Observer Newspaper

cc: The Honorable Catherine Stefani, Supervisor, District 2
The Honorable Gordon Mar, Supervisor, District 4
The Honorable Dean Preston, Supervisor, District 5
The Honorable Matt Haney, Supervisor, District 6
The Honorable Myrna Melgar, Supervisor, District 7
The Honorable Hillary Ronen, Supervisor, District 9
The Honorable Shamann Walton, Supervisor, District 10
The Honorable Ahsha Safai, Supervisor, District 11
Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board
Victor Young, Clerk of the Rules Committee
Lee Hepner, Legislative Aide to Supervisor Aaron Peskin
Tom Temprano, Legislative Aide to Supervisor Rafael Mandelman
Frances Hsieh, Legislative Aide to Supervisor Connie Chan

From: [Beverly Melugin](#)
To: [Young, Victor \(BOS\)](#)
Cc: [Tavakoli, Shahde \(HSA\)](#)
Subject: Establishment of Children's Agency and Commission...
Date: Wednesday, January 26, 2022 10:12:31 AM

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Regarding:

4. 211284 [Charter Amendment - Establishment of Children's Agency and Commission; Funding for Children, Youth, and the San Francisco Unified School District; Funding Conditions on City Appropriations for the School District]

I oppose this Charter Amendment for the following reasons:

- The process was insulting to what has been a community-driven movement. No one saw the legislation until it was presented to the Board of Supervisors. That is why the legislation is so flawed.
- Establishing a super-agency adds another layer of bureaucracy that is duplicative, political and weakens community voice.
- An independent, free-standing Department of Early Care and Education will be a tremendous asset to San Francisco in the years to come.
- We all want to keep improving our ability to help SF's children and families and support a robust community process to figure out how to make that happen.
- We must fully use the tools already in the charter and available to the government to foster collaboration, a unified vision, and diverse authentic community engagement. Do this BEFORE we eliminate them.

Cordially,

-- Bev



Beverly A. Melugin

Executive Director

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