

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Charter Amendment - Children and Youth Fund; Commission on Children, Youth, and Their Families]

A proposal to the qualified voters of the City and County of San Francisco to amend the Charter of the City and County of San Francisco at an election to be held on November 4, 2014, by amending Section 16.108, adding a new Section 4.133, and repealing former Sections 4.133 and 16.108, to: (1) renew and rename the Children’s Fund and eliminate the Fund’s expiration date; (2) increase the property tax set-aside for the Fund from three cents per \$100 of assessed valuation to five cents; (3) provide for services for at-risk youth 18 to 24 years old; (4) revise and expand the planning process for expenditures from the Fund; (5) modify the advisory committee for the Fund; (6) create a Commission on Children, Youth and Their Families; and (7) repeal an obsolete provision of the Charter.

Existing Law

In 1991, the voters first created in the City Charter a “Children’s Fund,” which receives a set portion of the property tax each year. The current amount of the set-aside is 3 cents for each \$100 of assessed property value. The Children’s Fund is used to increase services for children under 18 years of age, including child care, health services, job training, social services, educational programs, recreational and cultural programs, and delinquency prevention services.

The Department of Children, Youth and Their Families, which reports to the Mayor, administers the Children’s Fund. The Mayor also appoints a 15-member Children’s Fund Advisory Committee. The Charter sets a three-year planning cycle for spending money from the Children’s Fund.

The Children’s Fund and the property tax set-aside will expire on June 30, 2016.

Amendments to Current Law

The proposal is a Charter amendment that would change the name of the Fund from “the Children’s Fund” to “the Children and Youth Fund.”

The proposal would eliminate the current provision that the Fund and the property tax set-aside will expire on June 30, 2016. Under the proposal, the Fund and the property tax set-aside would continue until changed or repealed by the voters.

The proposal would increase the property tax set-aside from the current 3 cents for each \$100 of assessed property value to 5 cents for each \$100 of assessed property value. The proposal would not increase or otherwise change the property tax rate; it would only affect how the tax may be spent.

The proposal would allow the City to use the Fund to provide services to “Disconnected Transitional-Aged Youth,” as well as to continue to provide services to children younger than 18 years. “Disconnected Transitional-Aged Youth” are youth, 18 to 24 years old, who: are homeless or in danger of homelessness; have dropped out of high school; have a disability or other special needs, including substance abuse; are young, unmarried parents; are undocumented; are immigrants and/or English Learners; are Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and Questioning (“LGBTQQ”); and/or are transitioning from the foster care, juvenile justice, criminal justice or special education systems.

The proposal would change the current three-year planning cycle for spending from the Fund to a five-year cycle, and set out additional steps in the cycle.

The proposal would replace the current Advisory Committee for the Fund with a new Service Provider Advisory Committee.

The proposal would create a seven-member Commission on Children, Youth and Their Families to oversee the Department of Children, Youth and Their Families and to administer the Children and Youth Fund. The Mayor and the Board of Supervisors would appoint the members of the Commission.

And the proposal would repeal Charter Section 4.133, which created the Taxi Commission. The Board of Supervisors and the Mayor dissolved the Taxi Commission and transferred its functions to the Municipal Transportation Agency in 2008 under Charter Section 8A.101(b). But because Section 4.133 was approved by the voters, the City needs voter approval to remove it from the Charter, even though it no longer is law.

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