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Milton Marks Commission on California State
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January 5, 2022

San Francisco Board of Supervisors Rules Committee
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, City Hall, Room 244
San Francisco, CA 94102

RE: SUPPORT FOR OPEN SOURCE VOTING PILOT LEGISLATION (FILE NO. 211303)

Dear San Francisco Board of Supervisors Rules Committee,

The Little Hoover Commission supports legislation (File No. 211303) sponsored by Supervisor Shamann Walton that would authorize an open source voting pilot program to be conducted during the November 8, 2022 election in San Francisco.

The Commission underscored the importance of strengthening the security of the state's voting infrastructure in its March 2019 [letter](#) to the Governor and Legislature and its April 2021 report, [California Election Infrastructure: Making a Good System Better](#). In [Making a Good System Better](#), the Commission found that California relies on a for-profit model for election equipment security. Under this model, the process to test and re-certify election infrastructure is extensive and does not incentivize security upgrades for existing models.

To help California better address any security vulnerabilities, the Commission recommended that California invest in a publicly-owned, open source elections system. In this system, expert "white hat" hackers and interested members of the public could review the source code and report potential security flaws and other concerns before they could impact elections. Only authorized personnel would be allowed to physically modify the code. The Commission found several benefits to the state investing in and utilizing open source elections systems, including greater transparency, financial savings, and better alignment with a state goal to use open source software across government.

This legislation would partially implement the Commission's recommendation for California to adopt an open source elections system. For this reason, the Little Hoover Commission supports this legislation. If the Commission can provide any further information about our study, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

Pedro Nava, Chair

C: Commissioners, Little Hoover Commission

Pedro Nava, Chairman

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