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President Shamann Walton and Members
Board of Supervisors
1 Carlton B Goodlett Pl Ste 244
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July 14, 2022

Re: BOS 220638 City Elections in Even-Numbered Years Charter Amendment

Dear President Walton and Members,

I write today to memorialize my concerns about the proposed Charter Amendment. I already expressed the following at the Rules Committee on 6-29-22:

1. I am opposed to this idea; I would go in the other direction and restore the other off-year election.
2. Having a local election each year in November is an important check on our local government.
3. I'd rather have more democracy rather than less, and I think the cost savings here are not worth it.
4. We tend to have a higher voter turnout when offices and measures are more heavily contested.
5. Not easy for the Department of Elections to keep its staff with fewer elections; this makes it harder.
6. This would yield a June and November election in even-numbered years with 5 and 19 month gaps.
7. You could also send this item to the City Administrator or Capital Planning for review and comment.

I repeated some of those comments at the Rules Committee on 7-6-22 and added the following:

1. Voters just rejected changes to recall elections in Prop C; I hope they will reject this measure too.

Today I add in addition that removing the fifth election in the 4-year cycle, and moving the contests that now appear there to other elections, would result in longer ballots at the remaining four elections, with a 4 or 5 card ballot (both sides) likely needed each time, including federal, state, regional, and district candidates, local candidates with Ranked Choice Voting, state, regional, district, and local ballot measures, and political party county committees too. Taken together, while turnout may appear higher during even-year elections, longer ballots may result in fewer votes cast on down-ballot items (i.e. more undervotes), meaning less actual participation in critical local contests and ballot measures. In this case, I agree with Mayor Breed and urge the Board to either create a process to evaluate this proposed change or simply vote to reject submission or re-refer the matter to the Rules Committee.

Thank you for considering my views on this important issue.

Sincerely,

/s/

David Pilpel