

## **LEGISLATIVE DIGEST**

[Charter Amendment - Homelessness Oversight Commission]

**Describing and setting forth a proposal to the voters at an election to be held on November 5, 2019, to amend the Charter of the City and County of San Francisco to create the Homelessness Oversight Commission to oversee the Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing; to require the Commission to review and approve, disapprove, or modify: criteria to be used to ascertain eligibility or priority for programs and/or services operated or provided by the Department; the opening or closing of homeless shelters, navigation centers, or other facilities that provide shelter to unsheltered persons; and contracts and grant agreements with an annual value exceeding \$200,000; and to authorize the Commission to conduct public education and outreach concerning programs and services for homeless persons in San Francisco, and issues concerning homelessness.**

### Existing Law

The Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing (“HSH”) was established in 2016. Under the supervision and direction of the department’s Director, HSH is charged with managing and directing all housing, programs, and services for homeless persons in the City including, but not limited to, street outreach, homeless shelters, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing, as well as certain designated functions set forth in Chapter 20 of the municipal code. The Mayor appoints and may remove the head of HSH. HSH is not subject to direct oversight by a City Commission.

Chapter XXXI of the Administrative Code establishes the Local Homeless Coordinating Board (“LHCB”), which serves as the governing body of the Continuum of Care and advises HSH on homeless policy and budget allocations. With respect to HSH, the LHCB is a purely advisory body, and its advice is not binding on the department.

### Amendments to Current Law

The proposed Charter amendment would create the Homeless Oversight Commission. The Commission would have seven members, three appointed by the Mayor, three appointed by the Board of Supervisors, and one appointed by the San Francisco Unified School District’s Board of Education. The Mayor’s nominees and the Board of Education’s nominee would be subject to approval by the Board of Supervisors within 60 days of appointment. If the Board of Education fails to make an appointment, the seventh seat would be appointed by the Board of Supervisors.

One of the Mayor’s appointees and one of the Board of Supervisors’ appointees would be required to be a person who has personally experienced homelessness. One of the Mayor’s

appointees and one of the Board of Supervisors' appointees would be required to be a person with significant experience providing services to or engaging in advocacy on behalf of persons experiencing homelessness. One of the Mayor's appointees would be required to be a person with expertise in mental health service delivery or substance abuse treatment. One of the Board of Supervisors' appointees would be required to be a person with significant experience in financial management and oversight, accounting, or auditing. And the Board of Education's appointee would be required to be a person with significant experience working with homeless families with children and/or homeless youth.

The appointing authorities would be required to make their initial appointments by March 1, 2020 and the Commission would come into effect once four members are appointed. Commissioners would serve four-year terms (except for three commissioners serving initial two-year terms).

The Commission would oversee HSH, and would have all of the powers and duties of commissions set forth in the Charter, including but not limited to formulating, evaluating, and approving goals, objectives, plans and programs, and setting policies consistent with the overall objectives of the City, approving applicable departmental budgets, nominating to the Mayor candidates for department head, removing a department head, and conducting investigations into any aspect of governmental operations within its jurisdiction.

In addition, the Commission would be required to review, and approve, disapprove, or modify: 1) criteria to be used to ascertain eligibility or priority for programs and or services operated or provided by HSH, except criteria established by law or imposed as a condition of funding; 2) determinations by the Director to open or close homeless shelters, navigation centers, or other facilities that provide shelter to unsheltered persons; and 3) contracts and grant agreements entered into by the Department with an annual value exceeding \$200,000.

The Commission also would be authorized to conduct public education and outreach concerning programs and services for homeless persons in San Francisco, and issues concerning homelessness.