

**Patrick Monette-Shaw**

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August 29, 2025

Ed Harrington, Chair  
Commission Streamlining Task Force  
c/o City Administrator's Office  
City Hall, Room 316  
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place  
San Francisco, CA 94102-4694

Re: **September 3 Recommendations on Public Safety  
Bodies: Police and Fire Commissions**

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Dear Mr. Harrington and Commission Streamlining Task Force Members,

Version 2 of the City Administrator's "*Recommended Actions for Public Safety Bodies*" memo revised as of August 29 states on page 6 that the staff recommendation is: "**Consider keeping**" both the Fire Commission and Police Commission," based on the newly-developed "*Evaluation Criteria*" document that stipulates all evaluation criteria were assessed as being "No," and merging either Commission with another Public Body would be "**impractical because there is no other body with overlapping functions**" that could absorb the functions of the Police Commission and Fire Commission.

I support this recommendation, given the governance and oversight roles of both Commissions.

However, I continue to take issue with application of some of the "**Governance Bodies Template**" parameters adopted by this Streamlining Task Force, on advice of City Administrator staff.

**Appointing Authority**

Currently, the Board of Supervisors appoints three of the seven seats on the Police Commission, and the Mayor appoints four seats. I believe the current appointing Authority for the Police Commission should remain as is, and not be shoehorned into the Streamlining Task Forces artificial template. Changing the Police Commission's appointing authority was something recommended in "*Prop. D*," which voters overwhelmingly defeated by passing "*Prop. E*." Split appointments must be retained.

As the San Francisco Bar Association rightly noted:

*"Independent governance of commissions requires that its members [be] independent. The selection of Commissioners should rest with an informed and transparent nomination process. No single branch of government should name all Commissioners."*

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***"No single branch of government should name all Commissioners."***

**This Streamlining Task Force completely ignores that truly effective '*Governance Bodies*' must be independent and have split appointments across government branches."**

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All along, the Commission Streamlining Task Force has completely ignored the fact that truly effective "*Governance Bodies*" must, therefore, be independent and have split appointments across branches of government.

To hand sole (all) commissioner appointments on any given Board or Commission only to the Mayor in the Executive Branch essentially renders that Mayor a "*King*"! Like Donald Trump, a Mayor also isn't a "*King*"!

Therefore, I believe the Streamlining Task Force should recommend to the Board of Supervisor that **all** governance boards and commissions be converted to having split appointments between the Executive Branch and the Legislative Branch, in order to be more responsive to all San Franciscans.

**Hiring and Firing Authority of Department Heads**

For both the Police Commission and the Fire Commission — and other Governance Bodies in other policy group areas— this Streamlining Task Force is recommending converting the short-list of three candidate for each Commission's role, and replacing it with an undefined "**consultative responsibility only**" role, with no guarantee that a given Mayor will

actively engage with any Commission in a consultative, or bicameral-like, manner between the legislative and executive branches, let alone in a consultative approach with a specific Governance Commission to preserve a **checks-and-balances** relationship approach.

Governing bodies create a short list for hiring directors in part to reduce bias and focus on the most qualified and relevant candidates for a Department head, making subsequent evaluation stages more productive. By focusing only on the most promising candidates, the governing body increases the probability of hiring a top performer from a pool of highly suitable candidates who meet, or exceed, the required criteria.

The shortlisting process allows Governance Commissions to methodically compare candidates' skills and experience.

Eliminating the three-candidate short list is not transparent to the public, and may taint the process by allowing elected officials to insert themselves into hiring decisions, which can create a perception of a conflict of interest.

*Elected officials* have no business making unilateral *hiring* decisions, in part because eliminating a short list of qualified candidates identified by a Governance Body increases the likelihood of politicizing hiring of department heads.

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Importantly, when voters rejected “*Prop. D*” last November, they did so because the “*Prop. D*” Astroturf backers wanted to reduce Legislative Branch powers, and weaken public participatory government in San Francisco, to hand even more “*power*” to a “*strong mayor*.” [Those backers had no way of knowing beforehand that Mark Farrell would sink to fourth place, and Daniel Lurie would become the “*strong*” Mayor, instead.]

That this Streamlining Task Force is recommending eliminating the short-list process, signals that this Task Force is actively working against the will of San Francisco voters who rejected “*Prop. D*” by passing “*Prop. E*.”

This bears repeating: Streamlining Task Force Chair Harrington cautioned Task Force members against “*dramatically altering the City’s commission structure, and against radically overhauling public governance.*”

Eliminating the three-candidate shortlist process would be an act of dramatically altering the City’s commissions structure and radically harming public governance.

### **Employee Discipline Authority**

Again, this Streamlining Task Force appears to be exceeding its mandate by wading into the issue of employee discipline, which “*Prop. E*” did not task this Task Force with doing.

The City Administrator’s staff apparently proposed that this Streamlining Task Force should recommend changing employee disciplinary processes for peace officers and firefighters **merely** for citywide “*consistency*” and convenience, wrongly claiming unique disciplinary processes for Public Safety employees may be inconsistent with other Boards and Commissions over Departments that consist of non-public safety, “*civilian*” City employees.

Public Safety employees should be able to retain their disciplinary rights to an impartial Administrative Law Judge adjudication process, not have their discipline be meted out by political appointees to a City Board or Commission, which political interference to please any Commissioner’s Appointing Authority is almost Kafkaesque, à la “*The Trial*,” or “*Investigations of a Dog*.”

City Administrator staff and this Streamlining Task Force seem to ignore that peace officers, firefighters, and Sheriff’s deputies are highly specialized jobs, and deserve unique disciplinary procedures. Unlike other City employees, California has a Public Safety Officers Procedural Bill of Rights Act (POBR) codified in Government Code § 3300, et seq. As well, Sheriff’s Deputies, like police officers, are covered by the Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST).

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This Task Force has created a “*red herring*” and a logical fallacy that disciplinary actions must be uniformly “*consistent*” across all City Departments, despite the unique roles and duties of peace officers.

It is beyond the scope of this Task Force’s mandate to streamline or standardize employee discipline — since not even the Board of Supervisors are permitted to interfere with Departmental operations, including discipline of City employees.

This bears repeating: Streamlining Task Force Chair Harrington cautioned Task Force members against “*dramatically altering the City’s commission structure, and against radically overhauling public governance.*”

As such, both the Police Commission and Fire Commission deserve to be retained as they are currently structured.

Otherwise, eliminating split appointments between the Executive Branch and Legislative branch for appointment of Commissioners, eliminating any Commission’s current authority to create a three-person short list for recommendation for Department Heads, and radically altering the disciplinary process would all be acts of dramatically altering the City’s commissions structure and radically harming public governance.

For all the reasons stated above, this Commission Streamlining Task Force should reject the City Administrator’s staff recommendation, and **vote instead to retain the Police Commission and Fire Commission as they are currently structured.**

Sincerely,

/s/

Patrick Monette-Shaw

cc: Rachel Alonso, Project Director, City Administrator’s Office

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**Eliminating split appointments between the Executive Branch and Legislative branch for appointment of Commissioners, and eliminating any Commission’s current authority to create a three-person short list for recommendation for Department Heads would be an act of dramatically and radically harming public governance.”**

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**“ This Commission Streamlining Task Force should vote instead to retain the Police Commission and Fire Commission Sheriff’s as they are currently structured.”**

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