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November 16, 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

"Chair Harrington was being disingenuous on November 5th. He had to have known SPUR would be releasing its 'Charter for Change' report five days later!"

Re: Streamlining Task Force Periodic Reviews and
SPUR

Dear Chair Harrington and Commission Streamlining Task Force Members,

It was somewhat shocking listening to the Commission Streamlining Task Force's November 5 meeting and then seeing in the November 5 meeting minutes that "*Chair Harrington noted that SPUR will soon release a report recommending cyclical Charter reviews and [Harrington] suggested the Task Force include a similar recommendation.*"

Harrington was being disingenuous. He had to have known on November 5 that SPUR would be releasing a second report — some sort of new "*Policy Brief*" — titled "*Charter for Change*" five days later, on November 10 authored by Harrington's successor as City Controller, Ben Rosenfield. Indeed, Harrington had to have known about SPUR's then-pending report by Rosenfield, because Harrington had to have known the second page of SPUR's report contained the author's acknowledgments, specifically thanking a "*City Charter Advisory Body*," which Harrington apparently is a member of.

So just five days before SPUR released its report on November 10, Harrington had to know what was in it, and what else SPUR intends to do **following** recommendations in the new report.

"Indeed, Harrington had to have known about SPUR's then-pending report by Rosenfield, because Harrington had to have known the second page of SPUR's report contained the author's acknowledgments, specifically thanking a 'City Charter Advisory Body,' which Harrington apparently is a member of, but which doesn't appear to actually exist!"

The *City Charter Advisory Body* doesn't appear to actually exist — at least not yet — although it may be some sort of SPUR subcommittee consisting of former Streamlining Task Force co-chair Jean Fraser and Chair Ed Harrington — both of whom are SPUR Board Members.

Five others are listed as Advisory Body members in SPUR's new report, including **Bob Gamble** (secretary of SPUR's San Francisco Ballot Analysis Committee); **Jon Holtzman** (a founding partner at the Renne Public Law Group in San Francisco, specializing in municipal law and government reforms, and a former Deputy City Attorney who served as chief negotiator and lead counsel for labor negotiations for the City of San Francisco); **Dawn Kamalanathan** (a special projects manager in the San Francisco Department of Public Works); **John Rahaim** (SPUR's Good Government Task Force member, and the former Director of San Francisco's Planning Department); and **Noelle Simmons** (a former Deputy Director for the San Francisco Department of Homelessness and Supportive Housing, who was tapped to serve as a panelist at a SPUR panel of "*Charter Reform*" on November 18). Gee, imagine that: A mere "*panelist*"?

What's not known is what relevant employment experience any of these five people have in law, or government legal reform, since only Holtzman appears to have legal training.

Harrington made that observation *after* Ms. Kittler suggested during the November 5 meeting's discussion on what to recommend regarding the Commission Streamlining Task Force (CSTF) itself that this Task Force should consider recommending that a recurring version of CSTF periodically review public bodies, especially inactive ones. Kittler requested City Administrator staff supporting the CSTF explore how often the CSTF should reconvene and recommended placing any future version in the Administrative Code rather than the Charter.

It was good hearing Task Force member Natasha Mihal — the City Controller’s appointee to this Task Force — supported the idea of periodic reviewing boards and commissions in the future, but expressed caution about extending CTSF in its current form. She favored including the concept in the CSTF’s final report, with implementation details to be determined at a later date — presumably after the Task Force completes its work.

Vice Chair Bruss requested **deferring** the decision about a future reincarnation of this Streamlining Task Force, so support staff to this Task Force can draft potential language, essentially deferring all decisions about the Streamlining Task Force being aligned to any of the templates to a future meeting.

As a reminder, this Streamlining Task Force has a mandatory sunset date of January 31, 2027 that was set by “*Proposition E*” voters approved in November 2024 creating this Task Force.

It would be inappropriate for this Task Force to include in your final report any recommendation about re-creating this body past your voter-mandated and established sunset date, without obtaining explicit voter approval beforehand.

What’s more, SPUR’s November 10 report specifically recommends that additional potentially massive “*streamlining*” of San Francisco’s City *departments* should also be undertaken by moving select City departments from the City Charter to the Administrative Code — including the Department of Public Health, Fire Department, Police Department, and Unified School District, among others — and recommends not only a massive restructuring of the City Administrator’s office, but also plans to overhaul the City Administrator’s function to make the Administrator the City’s “*chief operating officer*,” remove salary restrictions for Office of the Mayor employees, alter the City’s purchasing rules, “*fix*” the City’s public employee bargaining processes, revise procedures for placing ballot measures on the municipal ballot involving changes to the City Charter, and revise the City’s City budgeting process by massively altering voter-approved, Charter-mandated budget baselines and set-asides that SPUR brazenly asserts and mischaracterizes as “*may no longer make sense*.” Apparently, it doesn’t matter to SPUR that these budget set-asides make sense to the voters who approved them, if not to the policy wannabe’s at SPUR!

There’s additional changes SPUR recommends and wants made, apparently in its phase 2 of “*City Charter reform*,” including the mayor to hire potentially five “Deputy Mayors” that are currently serving as Mayor Lurie’s so-called “*Policy Chiefs*.” Then SPUR intends to march into as yet unspecified changes in City Charter reform part three.

But more shockingly, Chair Harrington — as a board member of SPUR — didn’t mention on November 5 that SPUR intends to follow up with even more issues it has up its sleeve in even more follow-on SPUR reports *after* recommendations in its November 10 report are underway.

News also surfaced on November 10 in the local media that Supervisor Raphael Mandelman and Mayor Lurie are in the process of creating a “*Charter Reform Task Force*” comprised of a broad selection of San Francisco leaders from “*businesses, labor, and nonprofits*.” What have non-profit organizations got to do with this? (*What’s love got to do with it?*) Missing from such a Task Force are, of course, neighborhood organizations, run-of-the-mill good government citizen advocates, and your average “*Joe Voter*,” “*Joe the Plumber*,” or “*John Q. Taxpayer*.”

All of what SPUR is recommending in its “*Charter for Change*” policy brief is beyond the scope of this current Commission Streamlining Task Force, which was to deal **exclusively** with only recommending changes to the City’s boards and commissions structure.

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Therefore, this Streamlining Task Force should stick to your current remit authorized by “*Proposition E*” and not stray into the issue of what a successive streamlining task force should look like, or when successive reviews should be undertaken. And you should definitely ***not*** weigh in on even opining about any other future government legal reforms beyond your current mandate that SPUR may want to drag this Task Force into.

It’s a big problem San Franciscans are facing this massive overhaul of our City government structures by our Board of Supervisors and Mayor essentially taking direction from *other* government reform amateurs at SPUR sporting conservative media megaphones.

Sincerely,

/s/

Patrick Monette-Shaw

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