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November 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

"Simply removing the requirement to appoint a Commission's secretary from the City Charter will impair managing the affairs and operations of boards or commissions."

Re: **Don't Eliminate Commission Secretaries**

Dear Chair Harrington and Commission Streamlining Task Force,

City Charter §4.102-9 states each appointive board or commission shall "*Appoint an executive secretary to manage the affairs and operations of the board or commission.*" One Task Force member stated during the November 19 meeting (at 5:36:00 on [audiotape](#)):

"It also begs the question of the Charter provision that allows commissions to appoint their own commission secretary, and whether or not we want to allow flexibility for a greater pool of resources for more centralized City functions and centralized support for these bodies."

Minutes later, Deputy City Attorney Jon Givner sought clarification (at about 5:47 on audiotape) from the mere three Task Force members present asking for guidance to start writing draft language for a Charter amendment, regarding the question of Executive Secretaries for commissions. Member Kittler piped up and said from the perspective of her day job [as the Mayor's Budget Director] that "*I would strongly prefer that [Commission Secretaries] not be in there, so we can explore other staffing options.*"

Obviously, focusing primarily on her Mayor's Budget Director day job of pinching pennies hunting for any potential cost savings, of course Kittler — who is not qualified to hold the Streamlining Task Force's seat as an "*expert*" in open and accountable government — wants to eliminate Commission Secretaries that are mandated in the City Charter with managing the affairs of their respective Commissions.

It's another example of being pound-wise, penny foolish!

The idea Commissions shouldn't have a dedicated Commission Secretary, and rely instead on a centralized "*floating*" pool of secretaries is a terrible idea, because "*institutional knowledge*" about a given Board's current affairs would vanish.

It defies logic to think some other, unnamed "*staffing options*" can replace the valuable benefits of having a dedicated Commission Secretary. After all, they perform an invaluable service in keeping track of a governing body's or policy body's current workload and evolving issues, and as such help keep their respective bodies on track to fulfill their annual goals and duties.

"It defies logic to think some other, unnamed 'staffing options' can replace the valuable benefits of having a dedicated Commission Secretary."

Simply removing the requirement to appoint a Commission's secretary from the City Charter will impair managing the affairs and operations of the board or commission. In this Streamlining Task Force's obsession with finding "*efficiencies*" in City government, this will adversely affect the efficiency of a board or commission's performance. It will do nothing to achieve alleged streamlining goals. Importantly, it will not make planning more effective, coordinated, or efficient — and actually, it may do the exact *opposite* and lessen the effectiveness of boards and commissions!

You should revisit this decision, and reverse it.

Sincerely,
/s/
Patrick Monette-Shaw

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