

Changes to Ballot Measure Process*

Digest by the Ballot Simplification Committee

Status: Final Digest
On: Thursday, July 30, 2026
Members: Packard, Wong, Bella, Paxton, Pon

The Way It Is Now: The San Francisco Board of Supervisors (Board) has 11 members. A measure can be either an ordinance to change the law or a declaration of policy. Under the City Charter, measures can be placed on the ballot in several ways, including:

- By a majority vote of the Board;
- By four or more Board members without a Board vote;
- By the Mayor without a Board vote; or
- By a signature initiative (petition) signed by at least 2% of the registered voters in San Francisco, currently about 10,600 signatures.

Currently San Francisco has over 530,000 registered voters.

Signature initiatives usually appear on the ballot at the next regularly scheduled election.

Signature initiatives may call for an earlier “special” election on an ordinance if the petition is signed by at least 10% of the votes cast for all candidates for Mayor in the last election. Currently, this is about 39,000 signatures.

Once a signature initiative is submitted to the Department of Elections, it cannot be withdrawn.

The Proposal: Proposition __ would amend the Charter to increase the requirements to put measures on the ballot by:

- Increasing the number of signatures required to place a signature initiative on the ballot from 2% to 8% (currently from about 10,600 to about 42,500 signatures) of the registered voters in San Francisco.
- Increasing the number of signatures required to call a special election on an ordinance from 10% of the votes cast for Mayor in the last election to 10% of the registered voters in San Francisco. Currently, this is about 53,100 signatures.

Proposition __ would allow signature initiatives to be withdrawn up to 102 days before the election.

Proposition __ would also change the requirements to put measures on the ballot by:

- Removing the ability of four or more Board members to place a measure on the ballot without a Board vote;
- Removing the ability of the Mayor to independently place a measure on the ballot;

The Board could still place measures on the ballot by a majority vote.

A "YES" Vote Means: If you vote “yes,” you want to increase the requirements for signature initiatives from 2% to 8% of registered voters (currently from about 10,600 to about 42,500 signatures), increase the requirements for special elections, allow signature initiatives to be withdrawn, and remove the ability of a minority of Board members or the Mayor to place measures on the ballot.

A "NO" Vote Means: If you vote “no,” you do not want to make these changes.

**Working title, for identification only. The Director of Elections determines the title of each local ballot measure; measure titles are not considered during Ballot Simplification Committee meetings.*