

Changes to Executive Branch Management*

Digest by the Ballot Simplification Committee

Status: Final Digest
On: Friday, July 24, 2026
Members: Packard, Wong, Bella, Paxton

The Way It Is Now: The Mayor is the chief executive officer of the City. The Mayor directly supervises nearly 50 City departments, which are established by Charter or ordinance. Most City departments are established by Charter.

- **Transfer of Functions:** The Mayor can transfer responsibilities between departments established by ordinance, as long as the Board of Supervisors (Board) does not object. The Mayor cannot transfer responsibilities for departments established by the Charter.
- **Deputy Mayors:** The Mayor cannot hire deputy mayors to supervise most departments established by the Charter.
- **Department Heads:** In most cases, the Mayor must select a department head from candidates recommended by the board or commission that oversees that department. Usually, the board or commission can fire the department head, but the Mayor cannot.
- **Commissioners:** In addition to the Mayor, the Board and other officials appoint members to City boards and commissions. Appointed members can usually only be suspended or removed if the member engaged in official misconduct or committed certain felonies.

The Proposal: Proposition ____ would amend the Charter to allow the Mayor to do the following:

- **Transfer of Functions:** Transfer responsibilities between most departments or combine departments under a single department head, regardless of whether the Department was established by ordinance or Charter and as long as the Board does not object. The Mayor cannot eliminate any responsibilities established by Charter. The Mayor could also assign the oversight of these transferred responsibilities to that department's commission. The Mayor cannot transfer responsibilities of these departments:
 - City Administrator, Controller, Board of Appeals, Port, Airport, Asian Art Museum, Fine Arts Museums, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency, Public Utilities Commission, Civil Service Commission, Department of Human Resources, Retirement Board, Health Service System, Department of Elections, Ethics Commission, or departments headed by other elected officials.

The responsibilities of the Department of Police Accountability cannot be transferred to the Police Department, and the responsibilities of the Sheriff's Inspector General cannot be transferred to the Sheriff.

- **Deputy Mayors:** Hire deputy mayors to supervise most departments established by the Charter.
- **Department Heads:** Hire some and fire most department heads without board or commission involvement. The Mayor cannot hire or fire certain department heads that are exempt (see *List of Exemptions* in Words You Need To Know).
- **Commissioners:** In addition to the Mayor, the Board and other officials who appoint board and commission members could remove them at any time without cause. This does not apply to the Board of Appeals, Civil Service Commission, or Ethics Commission. The Mayor cannot eliminate any board or commission established by the Charter.

A "YES" Vote Means: If you vote "yes," you want to expand the Mayor's authority to transfer responsibilities, hire deputy mayors, hire some and fire most department heads, and allow City officials to remove members of boards or commissions without cause.

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.*