



Memorandum

To: Elections Commission
From: John Arntz, Director
Date: May 23, 2025
RE: Director's Report: May 28, 2025, Elections Commission Meeting

Following is a brief listing of the work and related information in which the Department of Elections (Department) has been engaged since the previous report issued in relation to the Elections Commission meeting on April 16, 2025.

I. The Department continues to carry out its operations and administrative functions.

- A. The Department's budget proposals for Fiscal Years (FY) 2025-26 and 2026-27 are currently under review by the Mayor's Budget Office, and a reduction to the budget is anticipated.
 - i. The Mayor's Budget Office is expected to complete and release the citywide proposed budget by June 1, 2025, after which the proposal will be reviewed and finalized by members of the Board of Supervisors.
 - ii. As part of the regular budget cycle, the Department is compiling data in response to a recent request from the Board of Supervisors' Budget and Legislative Analyst regarding potential additional budget savings.
 - iii. The Director will address several budget-related questions submitted by the Chair of the Budget and Finance Committee during hearings scheduled for early June 2025, at which time the Department's final budget proposals for FY 2025-26 and 2026-27 will be considered.
- B. The Department is currently facilitating the Health Service System Board (non-public) election to fill a vacant seat.
 - i. On May 6, the Department mailed ballot packets to all eligible active and retired voting members.
 - ii. On June 3, the Department will count all valid ballots received and announce final election results.
 - iii. The Department posted additional information about this election at: <https://www.sf.gov/2025-health-service-board-election>.
- C. The Director's report for the April 16, 2025, Elections Commission meeting noted that the Office of Racial Equity (ORE) had indicated a Racial Equity Progress Report template would be provided in late April. Since then, ORE has issued another update stating that the template is still under review and has been further delayed, with no release date provided. Departments will have four months to complete their reports once the template is released.
- D. On May 22, 2025, the Department received a petition to recall the District 4 Member of the Board of Supervisors and has begun the initial "raw count" of the petition signatures to determine whether the petition meets the threshold of 9,911 valid signatures required to advance to the next phase of processing.
 - i. If the threshold is met, the Department will verify a random 5% sample of the submitted signatures.

- ii. If more than 110% of the randomly selected signatures are valid, the Department will certify the petition as sufficient. If fewer than 90% are valid, the petition will be deemed insufficient. If the validity rate falls between 90% and 110%, the Department will conduct a full check of all signatures.
 - iii. The Department has 60 business days from the filing date to complete signature verification.
 - iv. If the petition is insufficient, no further action will be taken. If found sufficient, the Department will call a special election, which must be held 105-120 days from the date the election is called.
 - v. Per San Francisco Municipal Elections Code §110, a local recall is included in the definition of a “measure.” If a recall election is held, the Department will be required to convene Ballot Simplification Committee meetings and facilitate the submission and processing of ballot arguments.
- E. The Department is updating its supply inventory procedures by implementing a web-enabled, real-time inventory system. This system will give all divisions immediate access to the inventory of polling place supplies and election materials, while also enabling the Department to more accurately project future supply needs for budgeting purposes.
- F. In preparation for Vietnamese becoming an official language of the City in 2026, the Department has revised its [Voter Portal](#) to include a targeted message for voters born in Vietnam who have not yet selected Vietnamese as their preferred language.
- i. When such voters log in, the portal now displays the following message: *“Starting in 2026, you can receive election materials, including the ballot and Voter Information Pamphlet, in Vietnamese. To receive materials in this language, go to the ‘Submit My Language Preference’ tab and update your language choice.”*
 - ii. This message serves as a call to action, encouraging voters to update their language preference to ensure they receive Vietnamese-language election materials for the June 2026 election. In the coming months, the Department will continue to implement additional projects to raise awareness of Vietnamese language access.
- G. The Department continues its voter roll maintenance to ensure that voter records remain accurate and up to date. This work includes processing registration updates and cancellations, issuing voter notices and address confirmation postcards, and integrating data from state and local agencies. As part of this process, the Department incorporates updates from the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), which captures address changes and new voter registrations, information from the National Change of Address (NCOA) system, which provides address updates for voters who have moved, reports from the Department of Public Health that identify records of deceased individuals, and weekly updates from the Secretary of State that include information on prison commitments and conservatorships.
- H. As part of its Employee Wellbeing initiative, the Department continues to prioritize staff wellness through an active partnership with the San Francisco Health Service System, supporting both mental and physical health programs.
- i. On May 13, the Department hosted a Mental Health Awareness webinar that provided resources and strategies to help employees recognize signs of emotional distress and support colleagues in need. The session was well received, with 24 employees in attendance. Building on this effort, the Department has scheduled a second webinar titled “Desk Workers” for June 3, with the focus on healthy habits and ergonomic practices for employees in desk-based roles.

II. The Department continues voter outreach to promote voter registration, election services, and voter programs.

- A. The Department's outreach team continues to host and participate in events aimed at engaging vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations, including individuals with disabilities, language diverse communities, justice-involved residents, people experiencing housing insecurity, and youth. In April, outreach staff participated in several events serving these communities, such as pre-registration drive trainings for the District 3 Youth Council and voter resource tabling at the Latino Task Force Spring Career Resource Fair, Glide Memorial, the Cesar Chavez Festival, the San Francisco Pathways to Citizenship Initiative Workshop, hosted by the Office of Civic Engagement and Immigrant Affairs (OCEIA), the Annual Youth Action & Solidarity Summit, and Día de los Niños/Día de los Libros.
- B. In April, as part of Earth Month outreach efforts promoting the Department's *Go Paperless! Go Green!* campaign, approximately 500 voters opted to receive the Voter Information Pamphlet (VIP) digitally instead of by mail.
 - i. To support this initiative, the Department hosted voter resource tables at several Earth Day events, including the Yerba Buena Gardens Earth Day Festival, USF Earth Day, the EcoCenter's 15th Anniversary Celebration, and the Climate Action Youth Summit. Additionally, the Department issued a [press release](#) and sent emails to local registered voters who had not yet opted out of the mailed VIP, providing instructions on how to switch to digital delivery. Outreach staff will continue to promote this campaign at community events and resource tables throughout the City.
- C. The Department recently concluded the Spring 2025 High School Elections Ambassador program, which engaged 37 students from 12 public and private high schools: Abraham Lincoln, Balboa, Convent of the Sacred Heart, Gateway, George Washington, Independence School, Lick-Wilmerding, Lowell, Philip & Sala Burton, Proof School, University High School, and Waldorf High School.
 - i. Throughout the program, ambassadors organized more than 90 pre-registration and voter education events at their schools. Activities included hosting resource tables and registration drives, making announcements over school PA systems, and delivering presentations during assemblies.
 - ii. Collectively, the ambassadors pre-registered more than 150 future voters and shared information about civic engagement opportunities, including serving as high school student poll workers.
 - iii. To recognize these contributions, the Department hosted a celebration ceremony on May 12 for program participants and their families, expressing appreciation for the ambassadors' efforts to promote pre-registration and civic participation among San Francisco youth.
- D. The Department continues to collaborate with its advisory committees to refine language access programs and enhance voting accessibility for all communities.
 - i. On May 7, the Department held its second Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) meeting of 2025, bringing together interested members of the public and nonprofit and government agency stakeholders to review language access programs and materials and explore strategies to enhance voting access for residents with limited English proficiency.
 - ii. The agenda included discussion of the implementation of Vietnamese as an official language of the City beginning in 2026, as well as a review of new outreach resources, including the Department's Monthly

Community Newsletter and *Voting Made Simple* outreach presentation. Additional items included an update on the Department's 2025 outreach priorities and recent federal actions related to election administration. The meeting concluded with a feedback session during which LAAC members provided input on the recently revised draft polling place signage, with a focus on language accessibility.

- E. The Department continues to engage with community partners through its monthly *Outreach Community Newsletter*.
 - i. The April 2025 edition includes highlights from the Department's *Go Paperless! Go Green!* campaign and other Earth Month outreach efforts; updates on recent collaborations with Advisory Committees; a review of recent federal actions related to election administration; and an election topic spotlight on the importance of keeping signatures up to date with the Department of Elections. The April newsletter is available at <https://www.sf.gov/outreach-community-newsletter-april-2025>.

III. The Department provides an update on legislative matters.

- A. The Department has submitted an ordinance (File # 250510) proposing amendments to the San Francisco Municipal Elections Code to increase the filling fee and per-word fee for paid ballot arguments submitted for publication in the Voter Information Pamphlet. The Department also submitted a memorandum offering additional information for the Board of Supervisors to consider in evaluating the proposed fee increases, together with the legislative digest. The ordinance has been assigned to the Budget and Finance Committee under the 30-day rule. Both documents are available at: <https://sfgov.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=7396841&GUID=256CA9E3-B3A2-42F2-82B7-B3381B48DC80>.
- B. The administration of election processes and voter registration eligibility requirements remain unchanged at this time, despite the issuance of an Executive Order titled "Preserving and Protecting the Integrity of American Elections," signed by President Trump on March 25, 2025.
 - i. Since the order was signed, a federal judge in the District of Columbia has issued a preliminary injunction blocking the Election Assistance Commission (EAC) from enforcing the proof-of-citizenship requirement. Additionally, 19 states, including California, have filed lawsuits challenging the order, arguing that it infringes on state authority to conduct elections and imposes undue burdens on eligible voters.

IV. Responses to the Commission's request for information to be included in the Director's monthly report.

Data on registration rates and outreach events: 1) Total new registrations, 2) New registrations by supervisory districts, 3) Tactics employed (outreach, community engagement, grant funding, etc.) and in which districts, 4) Tactics employed by districts.

- A. Between April 1 and April 30, the Department processed a total of 1,992 affidavits of new registrants. The new registrants reside in the following Supervisorial Districts (SD): SD 1 – 146, SD 2 – 236, SD 3 – 227, SD 4 – 114, SD 5 – 219, SD 6 – 258, SD 7 – 132, SD 8 – 199, SD 9 – 164, SD 10 – 157, and SD 11 – 140.
- B. Between April 1 and April 30, the Department conducted 20 outreach events, reaching an estimated 4,529 attendees. These events were distributed across Supervisorial Districts (SD) as follows: SD 1 – 1, SD 3 – 1, SD 5 – 5, SD 6 – 3, SD 7 – 1, SD 9 – 8, and SD 10 – 1.