

July 25, 2026

Ballot Simplification Council
Via email: BSC.Clerk@SFGov.org
1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place
City Hall, Room 48
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear Chair Packard and Members of the Ballot Simplification Council:

Thank you for your work to ensure that San Francisco voters can more easily understand the ballot measures they are presented with. I am writing to respectfully request changes to the legislative digest pertaining to the measure covering the **Changes to Ballot Measure Process**. These requested changes would both help clarify the substance of the proposed measure and correct inaccuracies in the adopted digest.

Requested Change 1 (The Way It Is Now)

FROM:

- By a signature initiative (petition) signed by at least 2% of the registered voters in San Francisco, currently about 10,600 signatures.

TO (Tracked Changes):

- By a signature initiative (petition) signed by at least 2% of the registered voters in San Francisco; ~~currently about 10,600 signatures.~~

California's state standard for signature initiative ordinances is 10% of registered voters. Cities can set their own threshold in their charters. Currently San Francisco has over 530,000 registered voters, and 2% is about 10,600 signatures, and 10% is about 53,000.

TO (Clean):

- By a signature initiative (petition) signed by at least 2% of the registered voters in San Francisco.

California's state standard for signature initiative ordinances is 10% of registered voters. Cities can set their own threshold in their charters. Currently San Francisco has over 530,000 registered voters, and 2% is about 10,600 signatures, and 10% is about 53,000.

Rationale:

Adding the total number of registered voters gives voters important clarifying information. Providing the absolute number of signatures required without providing the total number of voters is confusing. It is the same as providing just the numerator and not the denominator of a fraction. Additionally, the measure's own Purpose section states the increase is to "eight (8) percent of registered voters, still below the statewide standard of ten (10) percent". California Elections Code section 9215 sets that 10%

general-law standard, and a major aim of the proposed measure is to align San Francisco more closely with, but still under, other cities across California. This provides context so that voters can understand the intended change.

Requested Change #2 (The Way It Is Now)

FROM:

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.

TO (Tracked Changes):

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. In the last election, about 390,000 votes were cast for all candidates for Mayor, and 10%Currently, this is about 39,000 signatures.

TO (Clean):

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. In the last election, about 390,000 votes were cast for all candidates for Mayor, and 10% is about 39,000 signatures.

Rationale:

Providing the absolute number without providing the total number is difficult for voters to understand.

Requested Change #3 (The Proposal)

FROM:

Proposition ____ would amend the Charter to increase the requirements to put measures on the ballot by:

TO (Tracked Changes):

Proposition ____ would amend the Charter to ~~increase~~ change the requirements to put measures on the ballot by:

TO (Clean):

Proposition ____ would amend the Charter to change the requirements to put measures on the ballot by:

Rationale:

The word ‘increase’ implies additional, new requirements are being added to the Charter, but not all of the changes involve an increase. For example, the change to the Mayor’s authority simply closes off the Mayor’s independent authority to place a measure on the ballot. The word “increase” is therefore inaccurate and potentially misleading.

Requested Change #4 (The Proposal)

FROM:

- 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.

TO (Tracked Changes):

- 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 (currently over 530,000).

TO (Clean):

- 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 (currently over 530,000).

Rationale:

Providing the percentage numbers without providing the total number is difficult for voters to understand.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your service to San Francisco voters.

Sincerely,

Alicia John-Baptiste