



Memorandum

To: Elections Commission
From: John Arntz, Director
Date: September 13, 2019
RE: Director's Report: September 18, 2019, 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 Elections Commission meeting on August 21, 2019.

- I. **The Department continues to identify and procure resources and to hire and onboard temporary personnel necessary to conduct the November 5 election.**
 - A. Following Department of Human Resources' (DHR) procedures, the Department hired and onboarded nearly 160 temporary employees to aid the full-time staff with maintenance of voter records, securing of polling places supplies, production of the official ballot and Voter Information Pamphlet, and conducting outreach events. Over the next two months, the Department expects to hire nearly 200 additional temporary employees to assist with signature comparison on vote-by-mail ballot envelopes, preparation of polling place supplies, facilitating voting during the early voting period, ballot processing, and post-election Official Canvass.
 - B. In accordance with the City's procurement policies, the Department continues to purchase materials and supplies and procure services required for the upcoming election.

- II. **In accordance with state and local law, the Department continues to facilitate candidate and measure filings for the November 5 and March 3 elections.**
 - A. The Department facilitated the intake of the ballot arguments (proponents', opponents', rebuttal, and paid) for publication in the November 5 Voter Information Pamphlet. Following each submission deadline, the Department provided for a 10-day public examination period, with the last examination period concluding on August 30.
 - B. Commencing on September 9, and through late October, the Department will facilitate the filing period for candidates seeking to run as write-in candidates in any local contests appearing on the November 5 ballot. Filing activities for the November 5 election will draw to a close on October 22, which is the deadline for any write-in candidates to file their Declarations of Write-in Candidacy and nomination paperwork.
 - C. September 12 marked the first date in the filing process for the March 3 election – the signatures-in-lieu-of-filing-fee period for judges of the Superior Court will continue through November 8.

- III. **The Department continues to plan and administer the many processes required to conduct the November 5 election.**
 - A. The Department has been collaborating with the Sheriff's Department Prisoner Legal Services Unit (PLS) to facilitate an Incarcerated-Person Voting (IPV) Program for the upcoming election. Through this program, the Department provides election services, such as tailored outreach and materials, registration forms, and ballot delivery, to those in county jail or otherwise involved in the justice system who are eligible to participate in elections.
 - B. The Department has been developing instructional materials and reviewing voter records in preparation for sending ballots to voters serving in the military or residing overseas. Ballots to this group of voters will be sent no later than September 21 via the voters' selected method of delivery (email, postal mail, or fax).

- C. The Department has completed the layout and proofing of all precinct-specific and ballot-typed versions of the paper ballot, including the version with only the Board of Education contest that will be used to facilitate voting for non-citizen voters. In addition to paper ballots, the Department has been working on producing touchscreen and audio versions of the ballot for the accessible Ballot-Marking Devices used at polling places and Voting Centers, and the remote accessible version of the ballot that can be accessed online by voters with disabilities and those serving in the military or residing overseas.
 - i. A legal challenge was filed with relation to the language used by the Ballot Simplification Committee to describe Proposition C in the ballot question and the Voter Information Pamphlet. The judge presiding over the case drafted a final version of the question and ordered changes to the ballot and the Voter Information Pamphlet. The court's decision was due after the Department's usual deadline to submit ballots to the printer. To counteract the delays brought on by this challenge and the resulting additional workload, the Department has adjusted timelines and staffing resources as needed to remain on schedule with production and mailing of the ballots and the Voter Information Pamphlet.
- D. The Department has secured all facilities to serve as 453 polling places on Election Day, November 5, and is currently working on locating additional sites to support 588 polling places in the March 2020 election.
- E. The Department has begun the recruitment of poll workers through various means such as contacting those who have served in prior elections, distributing flyers and applications at outreach events, and advertising the opportunity to become a poll worker in local newspapers, on local radio stations and social media sites. To engage high school students in volunteering as poll workers, the Department has begun conducting in-person outreach at San Francisco schools, attending social studies, civics, and history classes, and circulating applications at high school assemblies. To date, over 1,000 people signed up to join the poll worker team for the November 5 election.
 - i. The Department has invited students from San Francisco high schools to participate in the High School Student Ambassador program to occur during the last two weeks in September, designated as "High School Voter Education Weeks". Through collaboration with teachers and school administrators, the Department enlists students to promote civic education and the opportunity for their peers to volunteer as a poll worker or pre-register to vote. Prior to the start of the program, the Department invites the ambassadors to learn about voter registration procedures and approaches for promoting civic engagement through face-to-face interaction and social media. Throughout the duration of the program, ambassadors receive email communication from the Department to assist them in their efforts and to cultivate a positive experience participating in the program.

IV. The Department continues to provide information to City residents about the new voting system, new ranked-choice voting (RCV) ballot format, and the two upcoming elections.

- A. The Department has been engaged in supporting organizations that were awarded grants to assist in providing information about the new RCV ballot format and the new voting system through a Request for Proposals issued earlier this year. In addition to conducting training sessions in August to help grantees develop knowledge of the new voting equipment and the new ballot format, the Department has been communicating regularly with grantees to assist them in their outreach efforts, provide guidance and answer questions on various election- and voting-related topics, and distribute additional outreach materials.

- B. In late September, the Department will send an educational mailer to approximately 227,000 households in San Francisco. The focus of the citywide mailer will be on the new ballot format with increased number of rankings in RCV contests as well as the many resources available to voters to learn more about RCV.
- i. The mailer will feature the Department's new outreach theme *Make a Note. Plan to Vote*. This theme is designed to prompt City residents to integrate the action of voting into an everyday, personal to-do list and to highlight the accessible nature of voting. To maximize the *Make a Note. Plan to Vote* theme's impact through consistent and frequent messaging, the Department has incorporated the theme into a wide variety of advertisements and materials including Muni and BART ads that will be featured in October and the cover of the Voter Information Pamphlet (VIP) sent to all voters in October.
- C. The Department's Outreach Team continues to organize and participate in community events throughout the City to demonstrate the new ballot format and the new voting equipment. At these events, the Outreach team distributes informational materials and demonstration ballots, and facilitates hands-on practice sessions using the new voting equipment. The schedule of past and upcoming outreach events is available at sfelections.org/outreach/calendar.
- i. Every Friday in the next two months, from 11 a.m. – 2 p.m., the Department's Outreach Team will host demonstrations of the new voting equipment and the new RCV ballot outside San Francisco City Hall on Van Ness Avenue.
 - ii. In recognition of National Voter Registration Day on September 24, the Department has been collaborating with several community partners, including City College of San Francisco, the San Francisco Unified School District, and the San Francisco Public Library to conduct registration events in various locations in the City. To draw attention to voter registration and the new voting system, the Department's Outreach Team will travel to several neighborhoods in a "cable car" bus and host registration and poll worker recruitment pop-up events, provide demonstrations of the voting equipment, and facilitate opportunities to mark RCV demonstration ballots.
- D. The Department is in the final preparation stages to host its Voting Accessibility Advisory Committee (VAAC) and Language Accessibility Advisory Committee (LAAC) meetings in September. The focus of both meetings will be on equipping committee members with information about the new voting system and the expanded number of rankings in RCV contests, who in turn could assist in disseminating such information to the community members served by their organizations. VAAC members will also receive a preview of an accessible vote-by-mail system integrated with Dominion's Democracy Suite 5.10 currently being reviewed by the Secretary of State's office.