



Memorandum

To: Elections Commission
From: John Arntz, Director
Date: October 11, 2019
RE: Director's Report: October 16, 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 report issued in relation to the Elections Commission meeting on September 18, 2019.

- I. **The Department continues to identify and procure resources and to hire, onboard, and organize temporary personnel necessary to conduct the November 5 and March 3 elections.**
 - A. Following Department of Human Resources' (DHR) procedures, the Department hired and onboarded nearly 300 temporary employees to aid the full-time staff with maintenance of voter records, signature comparison on vote-by-mail ballot envelopes, preparation of polling place supplies, facilitating voting during the early voting period, ballot processing, and Official Canvass. Many temporary employees will continue their employment with the Department after the November election, transitioning to assisting with the processes required to conduct the March 3 election.
 - B. In accordance with the City's procurement policies, the Department continues to purchase materials and supplies and procure services required for the November 5 and March 3 elections.

- II. **The Department continues to plan and administer the many processes required to conduct the November 5 election.**
 - A. The Department issued approximately 350,000 ballots to permanent vote-by-mail voters and those who requested to vote by mail only in the November election, and nearly 8,000 ballots to voters serving in the military or residing overseas. The Department began processing and reviewing signatures on the returned ballot envelopes. The opening of accepted envelopes, ballot adjudication and remake will commence on October 22 and will be livestreamed on sfelections.org/observe.
 - B. Corresponding to the mailing of vote-by-mail ballots, the Department activated the accessible vote-by-mail portal at sfelections.org/access through which voters with disabilities can download and mark their ballots in a screen-readable format from any computer with internet access. Marked ballots must be printed and returned to the Department using one of the return options.
 - C. The Department opened the City Hall Voting Center where all San Francisco residents, including eligible non-citizens who wish to participate in the Board of Education Election, can register to vote, update registration information, cast ballots, or obtain replacement ballots. The Department is in the final preparation stages to open a Voting Center at the San Francisco State University (SFSU) on November 2. The SFSU Voting Center will provide the same services that are provided to visitors at the City Hall Voting Center.
 - D. The Department began the Logic and Accuracy testing of all voting equipment to be used in the November election and expects to complete the testing by October 17. Testing is being streamed on sfelections.org/observe.
 - E. To date, the Department recruited nearly 2,200 poll workers and commenced poll worker training to prepare volunteers for their service on Election Day. Traditional lectures in the training classes for both inspectors and clerks

are followed by one hour of equipment practice, *Practice Makes Perfect* workshops, where poll workers can practice setting up and operating the new voting equipment. The Poll Worker Training Manual is posted on sfelections.sfgov.org/sites/default/files/Documents/GetInvolved/N19_PW_Manual.pdf with printed copies being distributed in training classes.

- F. The Department has expanded its phone and email assistance staff with a ten-member team tasked specifically with answering telephone inquiries and managing email correspondence through Election Day. The Department's telephone lines will be open during regular business hours as well as the two weekends before Election Day.

III. The Department continues to engage residents in participating in the November 5 election and to provide voters and potential registrants with information about election services and programs, and key dates.

- A. The Department mailed the Voter Information Pamphlet (VIP) to nearly 467,000 voters. Inside the VIP, voters will find a sample ballot, as well as information about candidates and measures, voting options, and election dates and deadlines. The Pamphlet also includes a Ballot Worksheet, a tool to help voters mark their selections in advance to save time and prevent mistakes when marking the official ballots.
- B. The Department launched a Voter Portal that consolidates various online tools and voter resources that the Department has provided for several elections in one centralized place.
 - i. When visiting the Voter Portal, voters can review their party preferences, language preferences, and other information in their registration files; apply for vote-by-mail ballots; track their ballots as the ballots move through signature verification and counting; locate their polling places; view sample ballots in various formats; check their voting districts and elected officials; and choose how they want to receive their Voter Information Pamphlets.
 - ii. The Voter Portal provides relevant information and functionalities that are tailored to attributes of the voter using the tool. For example, voters with inactive status who access the portal are provided steps to reactivate their voter record. Military and overseas voters who access the portal can request a "one-time" ballot by fax or mail. In situations in which the Department cannot count a ballot (such as when the envelope is not signed), the portal provides the reason and action the voter must take to resolve the issue. For the March 2020 election, voters with No Party Preference will be able to request a crossover ballot through this tool. All voters who access the Voter Portal prior to the March election will receive information about primary rules pertinent to their party preference, or lack thereof, on file with the Department.
 - iii. The Voter Portal is available in English, Chinese, Spanish, Filipino, and can be accessed from various pages on the Department's website, including the homepage, or by visiting sfelections.org/voterportal.
- 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. Another focus of the Outreach Team has been on conducting presentations and distributing resources at health care facilities to share information about accessible voting services. Last month, the Department mailed informational packets to nearly 130 local hospitals and other health care facilities and has since been collaborating with facility coordinators to provide relevant election information to patients and those in residential care.

IV. The Department is preparing for implementation of Senate Bill (SB) 72 and Assembly Bill (AB) 681

- A. With the signing of SB 72, the Department will undertake the necessary planning to offer conditional voter registration and voting at all polling places and voting centers, commencing with the March 2020 election. The expansion of conditional voter registration means that voters will now be allowed to register or update their

registration information on Election Day at any polling place in San Francisco, and are no longer required to visit a Voting Center to do so.

- B. With the likely signing of Assembly Bill (AB) 681 into law that would take effect immediately, the Department is working on developing informational postcards to be sent to voters.
 - i. The Department intends to mail a first round of postcards shortly after the November election to approximately 500,000 voters informing them of their current party preference, contests that they will be able to vote on based on their current party preference, and instructions on how to change their party preference and request a crossover ballot if the voter is registered as No Party Preference (NPP).
 - ii. The Department intends to mail a second round of postcards in early December to approximately 160,000 NPP voters who have not yet requested crossover ballots.
 - iii. The Department is planning the staffing resources necessary to process returned postcards and answer voter inquiries resulting from the mailings, and is working with its mailing vendor on logistics and timelines.
- C. When implementing both SB 72 and AB 681, the Department will be required to make a number of changes to its processes in time for the March 2020 election. For example, the Department will need to develop new outreach materials, adjust certain processes, and revise training materials for Department personnel and poll workers to reflect that voters would now be allowed to change their party preference after the registration deadline up through Election Day and to receive a ballot of the chosen party regardless of the voting method: by mail, at a voting center or polling place.