



CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
DEPARTMENT OF ELECTIONS

John Arntz, Director

Memorandum

To: Elections Commission
From: John Arntz, Director
Date: October 15, 2021
RE: Director's Report: October 20, 2021, 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 22, 2021.

I. The Department concluded the Official Canvass and certified the September 14, 2021, California Gubernatorial Recall Election.

- A. During the official canvass period (September 14-October 4, 2021), the Department issued and posted 12 multi-format preliminary election results reports, as well as daily press releases, on sfelections.org.
- B. On October 5, 2021, the Department concluded the official canvass and certified San Francisco's results of the Gubernatorial Recall Election. The final turnout was 67.95%, with 341,055 of San Francisco's 501,919 registered voters casting their ballots.
- C. Following certification, the Department posted the Statement of the Vote, along with other detailed reports of final election results, voting equipment transaction logs, and images of all cast ballot cards, on sfelections.org.
- D. The Department is currently in the process of securing ballots and other vital election materials for the Gubernatorial Recall Election in its warehouse for the retention periods required under state law.

II. The Department is developing operational schedules and human resources proposals for upcoming elections.

- A. In preparation for elections anticipated to occur in 2022, the Department has begun developing hiring plans, each of which contemplates the recruitment, hiring, and onboarding of approximately 250 seasonal employees.
- B. In collaboration with its printing vendor, the Department has created a production schedule for the automatic mailing of approximately 500,000 vote-by-mail ballots to local voters in all of San Francisco's 2022 elections.
- C. The Department has begun drafting postal mailers to former poll workers and polling place hosts, inviting them to indicate their level of interest in participating in each of the anticipated 2022 elections.
- D. The Department has begun developing a plan and timelines for implementing the San Francisco Department of Human Resources' most recent COVID-19 Vaccination Policy which extends vaccination requirements to City volunteers. Under this policy, any poll worker serving in any future election will be required to show a proof of vaccination to the Department of Elections or be suspended of volunteer opportunity.

III. The Department continues the processing of local recall petitions.

- A. On September 7, 2021, the Department received petitions for the recall of three local School Board members, and per elections law, has until October 19, 2021 to complete the signature verification process for those petitions. If the Department finds a petition insufficient, no further action will be taken. If the Department finds a petition sufficient, the Department will notify the Board of Supervisors and call a special municipal election, which must be held not less than 105 nor more than 120 days from the date of calling.

- B. If the Department calls a special municipal election as a result of one or more of the local School Board recall petitions being found sufficient, the contest of who would serve the remainder of the current term for Assessor-Recorder (until November 8, 2022) could also be put on the ballot for that special election. This contest, per local law, would result from Mayor London Breed's February 2, 2021 appointment of Assessor-Recorder Carmen Chu to serve as City Administrator and her February 9, 2021 appointment of Joaquin Torres to serve as interim Assessor-Recorder.
- C. Similarly, Mayor London Breed's September 2021 appointment of Assembly Member David Chiu to serve as the next San Francisco City Attorney could result in the office of Member of State Assembly 17 being on the ballot of the potential special municipal election, assuming Governor Newsom calls the Assembly District 17 special election in time for the two elections to be consolidated.
- D. The Department expects to receive a petition to recall San Francisco's District Attorney by the October 25 submission deadline. Consequently, on or around that date, the Department will begin the initial review or "raw count" process of that recall petition's signatures to determine whether the petition meets the minimum threshold of 51,325 signatures required to proceed to the signature verification process.

IV. The Department has been incorporating new legal requirements into its operations and voter outreach programs.

- A. Assembly Bill (AB) 37, in addition to making permanent most of AB 860's temporary COVID-19 related changes to state election law, including the automatic mailing of vote-by-mail ballots to all registered voters, will require the Department to maintain at least one ballot drop box for every 30,000 voters in future elections. The Secretary of State (SOS) developed regulations codified in state election law, establishing detailed rules regarding the design, location, number, accessibility, security, hours, collection, and processing of ballots from such ballot drop boxes.
 - i. To provide maximum convenience to voters, the Department intends to operate 17 "unstaffed" ballot drop boxes, in locations to be determined and open 24 hours a day during a 29-day early voting period.
 - ii. The Department has been working on the four components necessary to implement this expanded service: a) Box Site Location and Permitting, b) Box Design Procurement and Installation, c) Ballot Collection Logistics, and d) Voter Outreach and Advertising. Specifically, Department staff have been engaged in identifying potential vendors that can provide legally compliant ballot boxes that meet security and accessibility requirements of the SOS regulations; identifying and surveying potential locations throughout the City at which boxes could be installed; developing and translating into all federal- and state-mandated languages all legally required text that will appear on boxes; developing legally compliant citywide ballot collection schedules and chain of custody plans; and developing outreach strategies to inform the public about this expanded service.
- B. On September 14, 2021, the Board of Supervisors introduced Ordinance File No. 20961, amending the Municipal Elections Code to reauthorize certain non-United States citizens to participate in all future elections for members of the Board of Education of the San Francisco Unified School District. If passed, this new law would make permanent the temporary provisions of Proposition N and require the Department to reflect this in both its operations and voter outreach programs. Among other things, passage of Ordinance File No. 20961 would necessitate the design and translation of registration and voting forms, ballots, voter guides, and other outreach and voting materials, as well as maintenance of a separate voter registration database for all future School Board elections.

C. As required under San Francisco Charter section 13.106, the Department concluded its analysis and provided a memorandum to the Board of Supervisors indicating that City's Supervisorial districts are not equal in population based on data released by the U.S. Census Bureau's in relation to the most recent decennial census. The Department continues to support the Redistricting Task Force by fulfilling its translation requests and has developed and been distributing a resource card that provides information on opportunities to participate in San Francisco redistricting process at outreach events.

V. The Department continues to provide information to the public and undertake other routine activities.

- A. The Department continues to conduct in-person public transactions at its City Hall office, respond to public inquiries received through email and its main phone line.
- B. The Department's Outreach team continues to identify opportunities to provide educational materials and election information at events across the City, partnering with several local organizations that provide correctional re-entry services to host small-group registration and voter education workshops for their clients and attending Sunday Streets Phoenix Day at Bayview, Excelsior, and Mission neighborhoods.
- C. The Department continues to maintain data in San Francisco's voter roll, processing registration affidavits, updating voter records based on official third-party notifications, and conducting other ongoing activities that ensure the continual accuracy of the voter roll in accordance with relevant laws.