



PUBLIC WORKS COMMISSION
CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

London N. Breed, Mayor

Correspondence Log

June 15, 2024, through September 3, 2024

Date Received	From	Subject
July 29, 2024	Douglas Engmann	The Ax to SF Commissions Established by Voters Over the Years.

THE AX TO SF COMMISSIONS ESTABLISHED BY THE VOTERS OVER THE YEARS.

Together SF has filed a Charter Amendment for the November ballot that dissolves all but 22 commissions and advisory bodies within 16 months of its effective date. The Charter provisions establishing the following Commissions are specifically repealed in the initiative, though they maybe reestablished by the Board of Supervisors legislatively, though not in the Charter.

Human Rights	Health
Human Services	Entertainment
Environment	Status of Women
Building Inspection	Youth
Homelessness Oversight	Small Business
Historic Preservation	Sheriff's Department Oversight
Sanitation and Streets	Public Works
Arts	Juvenile Probation
Library	MTA Citizens Advisory Committee
PUC Citizens Advisory Committee	PUC Rate Fairness Board
Open Space Advisory Committee	Children, Youth and Families Advisory Committee
Our Children, Our Families Council	Dignity Fund Oversight Committee

The remaining 100+ commissions could be reauthorized after review by a five-member task force of city officials over the following 16 months, but the total number of all commissions could not exceed 65. The mayor would be granted super-majority appointments to all commissions including Planning, Board of Appeals, Police, and those appointees would no longer be subject to confirmation by the Board of Supervisors. The Police Commission would be prohibited from adopting "rules, regulations, or policies that impose any requirement or prohibition on the conduct of Police Department employees." The Charter amendment also prohibits the payment of any compensation or benefits to any commissioner just because they are a commissioner.

Together SF claims that these Charter reforms are necessary because the number of commissions "undermines good governance" and fosters an "inability to effectively deliver on improved street conditions, public safety, homelessness, and economic recovery." Further, it argues we have "far more [commissions] than most other large cities in the United States," citing the *cities* of Los Angeles and San Diego as examples with fewer than 50. Add in the numbers for those cities' *counties* and combined, San Diego has more than 150 commissions (more than SF's 130) while LA has more than 250.

Some commissions have undoubtedly surpassed their utility since the last review as part of the Charter Reform project in 1996. It maybe time for a comprehensive review of all existing commissions, to see which are needed, which might need change, and which can be eliminated without diminishing citizen oversight and opportunities for public engagement.

Aaron Peskin has introduced an alternative Charter amendment that provides for a public review of Commissions without arbitrary limits prior to any Charter provisions removing voter-approved commissions, or setting an arbitrary limit on their number. This alternative to the secretive approach of TogetherSF for the meat-ax cutting of our commissions is a much better process for good government.

Committee for Real Reform, a coalition of small businesses, neighbors and Aaron Peskin.

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