

# MEASURE X - GOVT REFORM CHARTER AMENDMENTS

## THE QUESTION

Shall a measure to amend the Charter to, among other things,

- establish Councilmember term limits,
  - require two hearings before Council places certain measures on the ballot;
  - count Councilmember abstentions and absences as "no" votes in determining whether Mayor may break a tie;
  - provide Public Ethics Commission discretion in setting Councilmember salaries; authorize the Commission to set City Attorney and Auditor salaries; and
  - add and detail duties and provide minimum staffing for the Auditor,
- be adopted?



## THE SITUATION

The Oakland City Charter now provides that:

- there are no term limits for City Councilmembers
- measures may be placed on the ballot after only one hearing
- Councilmembers may abstain or absent themselves from a vote without triggering a tie
- that would allow the Mayor to cast a deciding vote
- the Public Ethics Commission (PEC) sets the salaries of Councilmembers according to a formula
- Councilmembers set the salaries of City Auditor and City Attorney according to a formula
- the City Auditor and City Attorney may contribute to, endorse, or participate in the campaigns of candidates and campaigns for ballot measures in Oakland elections
- there are certain requirements and qualifications for the City Auditor's position, but no minimum staffing level for the department.

## THE PROPOSAL

Measure X proposes to amend the City Charter to:


- limit Councilmembers to three consecutive terms
- require two hearings before a measure is placed on the ballot
- count Councilmembers' abstentions or absences as "No" votes
- have the PEC set Councilmembers' salaries every two years using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and a ceiling of 5% per year unless the CPI in the prior two years was greater than 5%
- have the PEC set the City Attorney's and City Auditor's salaries referring to the highest paid professional in the respective office, the salaries of other heads of City departments, and comparable salaries in other California jurisdictions
- prohibit the City Attorney and the City Auditor from contributing to, endorsing, or participating in campaigns of candidates or for ballot measures in Oakland elections
- assign additional authority to the City Auditor and require that the Auditor have experience in the public sector and that the Auditor's office have a minimum staffing of 14 fulltime positions and
- make certain changes to procedures regarding the filling of vacancies on boards and commissions.

## FISCAL EFFECT




Staff costs will increase by an estimated \$858,199. annually.

## REASONS TO SUPPORT

- Measure X remedies certain shortcomings in governance and operations.
- Increases in the City Auditor's staff will enable that office to fulfill increasing requests for financial and performance audits. 
- Increasing the salaries of City Auditor and City Attorney may help Oakland attract and retain more qualified candidates.

## REASONS TO OPPOSE

- Governmental reform should follow from a comprehensive view of best practices in municipal government and incorporate the widest possible input from community organizations, not be a piecemeal approach to certain perceived shortcomings. 
- Bundling disparate reforms together does not give voters the option to vote for particular reforms, but reject others.
- Term limits are not absolute because Councilmembers can seek re-election after sitting out one term of office.

## A YES VOTE MEANS

that the proposed changes to Oakland City government will be enacted.

## A NO VOTE MEANS

means that Charter provisions regarding City government will not change.