

BY
THE
BAY



HOW TO BALLOT

A NONPARTISAN & NONBORING VOTER GUIDE
FOR THE 2018 MIDTERM ELECTION



SAN FRANCISCO



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SF VOTER GUIDE AT:

bythebay.cool



DESIGNED BY:



**WORKING
HARD**
OAKLAND, CA

WORK-WORK-WORK.COM

We try to convey all relevant arguments as fairly and factually as possible. We are human though – so email us at hi@bythebay.cool if you see anything that needs some tender loving correction.

By The Bay is a nonpartisan media company based in SF. It's led by Jimmy Chion and Yvonne Leow, two San Franciscans, who love almost all things Californian.

Our mission is to transform residents into citizens. We think local issues like housing, homelessness, and public transit affect us everyday, but it's hard to know how to participate. By The Bay is our way of changing that, beginning with elections.

This guide is not a ballot

You might have noticed there isn't space for you to vote. You also don't have to mail this guide back to us when you're done. Instead, share it with a friend, keep it on your bookshelf, or use it as stuffing for a Halloween costume.

We know there are a lot of local propositions and races so we made a digital guide *and* a digital ballot guide so you don't have to memorize them. Check out the link below, pick your favorite props and candidates, save your ballot, and use it on Election Day, November 6.

Remember this guide isn't an official ballot, but it's real helpful.

CREATE YOUR BALLOT AT

bythebay.cool

It turns out it was just an allergic reaction to a huge quantity of guac.

So how are we going to talk about local politics without being boring?

I think it worked well with ballot.fyi

Yea, when people can vote on whether to put condoms on pornstars, it's not hard.

Pun?



You don't need to know a lot to be dangerous, especially for the midterms

What are we making?

A guide to help people understand what they're voting for

Why elections?

It's when people get spammed by politicians and get a thickkk voter guide in the mail. We'll help them sort through the madness.

And then trap them into reading SMS convos

Prop A is for augmenting the seawall



WHAT'S UP WITH OUR SEAWALL?

It ain't doing so hot. SF's Embarcadero seawall is slowly falling apart, which is why the Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to put Prop A, a \$425M bond measure, on the ballot. The goal is to protect our waterfront from potential earthquake damage and flooding, but the measure only covers 85% of a proposed \$500M three-part renovation project. A complete overhaul of the seawall would cost up to \$5B.

HOW'S THIS GOING TO BE PAID FOR?

Prop A proposes paying for seawall repairs with another good 'ole general obligation bond, which is when the City basically says, "Hey, we need to spend \$425M, but don't want to charge everyone all at once. So we'll borrow the money from investors instead, and set up a payment plan, so ya'll can pay it back over time (with interest)."

For Prop A, payments would average about \$30M a year over the next 25 years, paid for by a property tax assessment that would cost about 76¢ per \$1,000 of assessed property value. For instance, a \$1M property would pay an extra \$76.70 of taxes every year. Keep in mind: the City doesn't actually expect property taxes to increase because Prop A bonds would strategically replace other bonds that are about to expire.

OKAY, WHY ARE WE DOING THIS NOW?

Well, we built our seawall over a 100 years ago on a layer of foundation called "young bay mud." It turns out YBM is especially unstable during earthquakes, and the Port of SF found that if we get hit by The Next Big One, we're kind of screwed, or more specifically, the Seawall could collapse, take down thousands of waterfront properties, cause flooding, and prevent an effective emergency response.



Oh, and officials also think a combination of stronger storms and rising sea levels (climate change yada yada) could threaten our seawall *and* flood the Transbay Tube and other BART/MUNI tunnels.

ARE THERE DOWNSIDES?

For sure. SF's Libertarian Party argues the Port of San Francisco is poorly managed and we shouldn't trust them with such a large sum of money. They also make the point that the City should have started planning and saving for seawall construction long before Prop A rather than propose it as an "emergency measure." Moreover, critics say the seawall mostly protects wealthy businesses along the waterfront, not the rest of the city; any improvements should be paid for by those who directly benefit from the investment.

That being said, a lot of people support Prop A too, including the SF Democratic Party and the SF Republican Party, Mayor London Breed, the Police Chief, Fire Chief, and the Sheriff, the San Francisco Chamber of Commerce, the Sierra Club, Save the Bay, the Affordable Housing Alliance, the leaders of BART and San Francisco's Municipal Transportation Agency...okay, we'll stop there.

Prop B is for bolstering privacy 🙄

WHAT DID FACEBOOK DO NOW?

Prop B was proposed largely as a reaction to recent reports of data breaches and user privacy concerns at tech companies, like the Cambridge Analytica scandal and the Equifax data breach. But given Facebook's most recent data breach of over 50 million accounts, Prop B's proposal to rewrite the City's user privacy guidelines has become particularly timely.

In short, Prop B would establish privacy guidelines to govern how City Hall, SF companies, and local government contractors can collect, store, share, and use our personal information ("PI").

Just to name a few guidelines, Prop B would:

- Require the City and contractors with the city to inform us of their data policies
- Solicit consent for the collection and storage of PI
- Allow users to access collected data
- Discourage the collection of demographic data (e.g. race, religion, sexual orientation)
- Establish processes for government agencies requesting PI
- Allow people to move and organize throughout the City without being tracked without their consent

Note that Prop B is non-binding and merely serves as a set of principles that may shape future policies. However, the measure requires the City to propose binding privacy legislation by May 31, 2019.

IS THIS LIKE THE EU'S GDPR?

Totes. Prop B is modeled, in part, on the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in the European Union and in California. Both policies established new standards and protections for individuals' PI so users know what data is being collected about them and how they can request to delete it. SF's proposed policy would not only provide more data protections for residents, but because SF is the City of Tech, any policy that affects businesses in the city could have a national and global impact.

WHAT ARE THE DRAWBACKS?

Critics of Prop B, including the SF Republican Party, the SF Labor Council, and the Society of Professional Journalists, strongly oppose the policy because they argue it will empower the Board of Supervisors to tamper with the City's Sunshine Ordinance, which ensures easy access to public records and mandates many City meetings be openly conducted.

At issue is a provision in Prop B that grants the BoS the power "to amend voter-approved ordinances regarding privacy, open meetings, or public records, provided that any such amendment is not inconsistent with the purpose or intent of the voter-approved ordinance [Prop B]."

Proponents argue that the requirement to be consistent with the purpose or intent of voter-approved ordinances would only strengthen, not weaken, the Sunshine Ordinance.



Prop C is for the chronically homeless



WHAT'S THE PLAN?

Prop C would implement an additional 0.5% tax on SF businesses that make more than \$50M a year in revenue. The tax is predicted to generate around \$250-300M annually, which would fund a variety of homeless services, including:

\$150M/yr

FOR SECURING
PERMANENT HOUSING

\$30M/yr

FOR HOMELESS
SHELTERS

\$45M/yr

FOR PREVENTING
AT-RISK POPULATIONS FROM
BECOMING HOMELESS

\$25M/yr

FOR MENTAL HEALTH
SERVICES

Prop C's tax would only affect about 300-400 businesses. Those same companies pay about 40% of SF's total business taxes.

HOW ARE WE TACKLING HOMELESSNESS NOW?

SF's current homeless population is about 7.5K people, down from a peak of 8.6K people in 2004. Since 2014, SF has doubled its spending on homelessness, but its homeless population has stayed relatively constant over the same period of time. While some argue this demonstrates the City's inability to effectively solve the problem, others contend that the City's homeless population would be far worse if it wasn't for the extra funding.

Most of SF's current homeless services budget is dedicated to keeping at-risk populations in their homes rather than getting additional people off the streets and into housing.

A major challenge in solving SF's homelessness problem is finding sustainable solutions for the chronically homeless – people who live outside all or most of the time and suffer from multiple problems. About 30%, or roughly 2,000, of SF's homeless population is chronically homeless and each individual costs the City about \$80K a year in police, ambulance, hospital, and other emergency services.

The City has determined that the best route to assisting the chronically homeless has been to place them in supportive housing, where services like mental health and employment counseling are provided on-site. But it costs about \$400K/unit to construct and about \$20K/year to lease or maintain a unit.

IS MORE MONEY GOING TO SOLVE THE PROBLEM?

Opponents say that Prop C sets broad goals and spending categories without outlining specific tactics for achieving them. They argue SF should be focusing on finding flaws and efficiencies in the current system rather than rushing to pour more money into an already expensive system. They also point out that SF's nonprofit ecosystem (which collectively sponsored Prop C) is attempting to increase their funding without additional accountability.

Proponents of Prop C argue its aggressive spending will enable the City to shift from defensive to offensive strategies for tackling homelessness.

Prop D is for doobie tax

AH, A POT TAX.

Actually, Prop D is a twofer! Yes it'd establish an additional tax on businesses selling cannabis and other related products (medical marijuana is exempt) and tax companies that do business in SF but aren't actually located in the city.

The initiative wouldn't kick in until January 2021. In the meantime, let's dive into the weeds:



First, Prop D proposes a gross receipts tax that would exempt a cannabis business' first \$500K in sales revenue, while revenue generated up to \$1M would be taxed at an additional 2.5% and revenue greater than \$1M would be taxed at an additional 5%. Other cannabis business activities, like growing, manufacturing, processing, storing, labeling or distributing pot, would be taxed between 1% for up to \$1M in revenue and 1.5% for more than \$1M in revenue.



Secondly, Prop D amends our tax code to expand which businesses pay the city's gross receipts tax. In addition to doing business in the city, companies that have gross receipts in the city of over \$500K would also be taxed, aka e-commerce companies like Etsy, Amazon, and others.

Prop D is expected to generate about \$7-16M annually by 2021, which would be added to SF's General Fund.

SHOULD WE PUFF OR PASS?

PUFF

Prop D supporters say more than 45% of all SF dispensaries actually earn less than \$1M, which only comprises of 3% of the total potential revenue. This initiative gives mom and pop cannabis shops a break, and time for the cannabis industry to adjust to new tax rates.

Prop D supporters also say it gives businesses time to adapt to the new tax rates while also allowing the Board to Supervisors to amend the tax rate overtime.

PASS

Prop D critics say regulating cannabis businesses only works if the legal market replaces the black market. Since cannabis businesses are already taxed 25%, Prop D opponents are concerned that an additional tax would push pot consumers to turn to the black market. Many cannabis businesses are also still trying to adapt to an ever-changing regulatory structure, and critics argue that another tax might endanger the fledgling cannabis industry before it can stabilize.



Prop E is for enhancing the arts

SO, I LIKE PRETTY THINGS.

The City does too! Back in 1961, SF established a hotel room tax to help fund its arts industries. Due to an economic downturn in the early 2000s, however, the city reduced and eventually eliminated parts of its arts budget. This year, the Board of Supervisors unanimously voted to put Prop E on the ballot because they want to allocate 1.5% of SF's now 14% hotel room tax to fund arts and cultural programs again.

The prop would generate at least \$35M a year to specifically fund:

\$16M

NONPROFIT CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS

\$16M

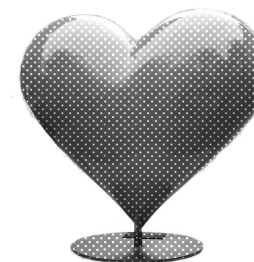
CULTURAL EQUITY ARTS PROGRAMS

\$3M

THE ARTS COMMISSION TO HELP CULTURAL CENTERS CONTINUE OPERATING

\$3M

THE MAYOR'S OFFICE OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FOR CULTURAL DISTRICTS TO ADDRESS DESTABILIZATION FOR RESIDENTS LIVING IN THOSE AREAS



WHY DO WE NEED A BALLOT INITIATIVE TO FUND THE ARTS?

Technically, we don't. Prop E doesn't raise taxes or generate additional revenue, so the Mayor and Board of Supervisors could allocate similar funding to arts programs through SF's annual budget process. They'd be able to adjust annual funding for arts programs based on emerging priorities and challenges.

The downside of working through the budget process is that programs might get cut or defunded over the years. Prop E enshrines the \$35M/year for arts and cultural programs in the City's tax code so that the Board of Supervisors can't divert the funding for other purposes, even if suddenly something else seems more important.

ARE THERE OTHER DOWNSIDES?

Prop E reallocates \$35M/year into a set-aside fund for the arts, but it's not as if this money was sitting around. Rather, it was funding other priorities previously approved by voters. In fact, if Prop E passes, at least \$8M would have to be reallocated from funding public transit, youth services, libraries, schools, and other services. It's plausible that the budgetary pressure from these reallocations could cause the City to ask for a tax increase in the near future, but it's hard to predict how the economy will shake out.

BUT IT'S THE ARTS!

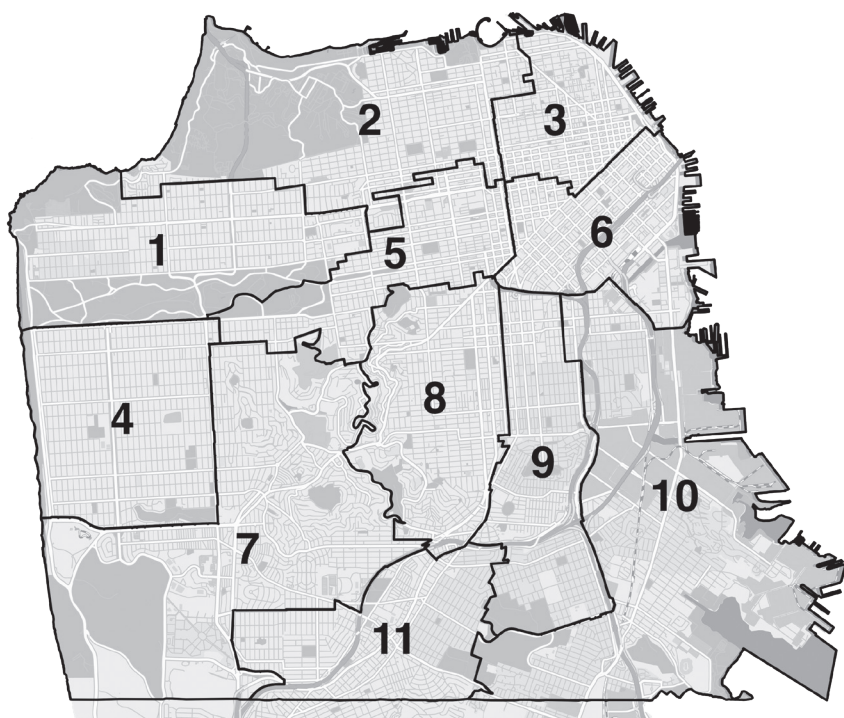
Word. Over 70 organizations worked with the Board to craft and support Prop E, and the initiative has been endorsed by organizations ranging from the United Educators of SF to the LGBT Democratic Club.

San Francisco Races

People who do stuff
at the state level

FIND YOUR DISTRICT

WWW.BYTHEBAY.COOL/FIND-YOUR-DISTRICT/



DISTRICT SUPERVISOR

THE ROLE

The Board of Supervisors is essentially SF's City Council. It's comprised of eleven Supervisors, each of whom represent the interests of residents living in their specific district (see map 🗺️). They work in tandem, and sometimes butt heads, with the Mayor to get sh*t done. Supes champion legislation, fundraise for district initiatives, assess our annual budget, appoint residents to serve on our 122 advisory commissions, as well as other official duties. It's a four-year term.

THE RACE

If you live in an even numbered district, you get to vote in a contested Supervisor race. Here are all of the candidates (in alphabetical order):

DISTRICT	CANDIDATES	
2	John Dennis Schuyler Hudak	Nick Josefowitz Catherine Stefani
4	Lou Ann Bassan Jessica Ho Adam Kim Gordon Mar	Trevor McNeil Mike Murphy Tuan Anh Nguyen Arthur Tom
6	Matt Haney Christine Johnson	Sonja Trauss
8	Lawrence "Stark" Dagesse Rafael Mandelbaum	
10	Gloria Berry Theodore Ellington Uzuri Pease-Greene	Tony Kelly Shamann Walton

BOARD OF EDUCATION

THE ROLE

The Board of Education (often referred to as “the school board”) consists of 7 members and manages SF Unified School District (SFUSD), aka all of SF’s K-12 public schools. In addition to setting SFUSD’s budget, which is separate from SF’s annual budget, members of the Board of Education also appoint superintendents, approve vendors and union contracts. It’s a four-year term.

THE RACE

There are 28 candidates vying for 3 open spots 🗳️. One thing to note is that non-citizens can vote in the Board of Education race (and only this race). Here’s the field of candidates (in alphabetical order):

Armand Domalewski

Monica Chinchilla

Allison Collins

Phillip House

Paul Kangas

Phil Kim

Connor Krone

Lex Leifheit

Gabriela Lopez

Alida Fisher

Randy Menjivar

Faauga Moliga

Emily Murase

Michelle Parker

Leah Pimentel

Julia Prochnik

Martin Rawlings-Fein

Mia Satya

Roger Sinasohn

Jose Tengco

Lenette Thompson

Sarah Thompson-Peer

John D. Trasvina

Victoria Wylie

Josephine Zhao

CITY COLLEGE OF SAN FRANCISCO’S BOARD OF TRUSTEES

THE ROLE

SF elects a Board of Trustees to oversee City College, aka SF’s community college. They manage a budget of more than \$300M and sets all the policy for the public college, which had an enrollment of 65K students in 2017. Each board member serves a four-year term.

THE RACE

Four candidates, Victor Olivieri, Thea Selby, John Rizzo, and Brigitte Davila, are running for three open seats.

PUBLIC DEFENDER

THE ROLE

The public defender leads SF’s Public Defender’s Office, which offers legal representation to residents who are charged with a crime and unable to afford an attorney.

The Public Defender’s Office serves about 25K people every year. The public defender position is a four-year term.

Fun fact: SF’s public defender is the only publicly elected public defender in CA. Everyone else is appointed.

THE RACE

Jeff Adachi has been SF’s public defender for the past 16 years and he’s running unopposed in this year’s election.

ASSESSOR-RECORDER

THE ROLE

The Assessor-Recorder deals with all taxable properties in the city. He/she runs a department that's responsible for property assessment, establishing property tax values, and maintaining public records. It's a four-year term.

THE RACE

Paul Bellar, a high school biology teacher and owner of a real estate appraisal company, is challenging incumbent candidate Carmen Chu. Carmen was elected in 2014.