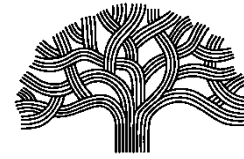


CITY OF OAKLAND



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Office of the Mayor
Libby Schaaf
Mayor

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July 7, 2022

Dear Council President Bas and members of the Oakland City Council,

I write to express my concerns about Councilmember Kalb's proposed amendments to our City's Charter. I attach for your consideration the concerns submitted by the good government groups SPUR and Make Oakland Better Now, as well as remind the Council of the League of Women Voters stated concerns over lack of public participation, process, and transparency.

The City of Oakland's Charter is our Constitution and may only be amended by a vote of the people. Any changes to it should be necessary, thoughtful, and broadly supported after thorough and inclusive public vetting. In the past, the Council and Mayor have created Charter Review Commissions to perform this work. Several respected groups are calling for this process now. I join them.

To the extent the Council does decide to move forward now with charter amendments on the upcoming ballot, I urge you to remove two provisions that I believe could be particularly detrimental to the functionality and success of Oakland's city government.

First, the proposed provision allowing the City Council to terminate the City Administrator would further weaken what has already been classified as an unusually weak strong-Mayor form of government. Where most governmental executives must approve budgets and have veto powers over legislation, Oakland's does not, creating a disconnect between accountability and authority. After a two-year, broad-based community input process and research effort, SPUR concluded this structure was an impediment to better governance for Oakland. If the City Council wishes to revert to a City Manager-Council form of government, then they should place that question more clearly on the ballot.

More importantly, this provision will make it more difficult for Oakland to attract and retain the best City Administrators because it would create such a confusing and cumbersome authority structure. Oakland is a complex city that needs the most skilled and experienced administrators.

Second, I ask that you not adopt today the proposed section 601(b) that would add another process for appointing boards and commissions whenever Council nominations are required. The proposal would require any commission that the Council so-designates to keep seats vacant for 60 days whenever a

Councilmember does not bring forth a nomination. I'm worried this could have the unintended consequence of impeding the work of commissions. Vacancies can stop critical commission work whenever they make it harder for the commissions to meet quorum requirements.

It's not clear this requirement necessary, as currently Councilmembers may request more time to bring forward nominations and, if such request is not granted, reject or postpone a Mayoral appointment through the Council's ultimate scheduling and confirmation authority.

The work of keeping Oakland's many Boards and Commissions fully staffed and appointed, reflective of Oakland's diversity, in compliance with each unique set of requirements, trained, and performing their duties, requires a tremendous amount of time and attention. Adding the proposed additional timeframes to track to the appointments process would be cumbersome and may have the unintended consequence of impeding the actual work of the commissions. As the final authority that must confirm all appointments, the City Council already holds the ultimate authority to reject an appointment, or to delay it if more time or Council input is needed. I ask that you give this provision more time for consideration and not bring the newly proposed section 601(b) forward in this set of Charter amendments.

I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Libby Schaaf". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Libby Schaaf
Mayor of Oakland

Attachments: Letters from Oakland Good Government Groups