

## LARA WEISIGER

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**From:** sjslauson <sslau99950@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 05, 2020 1:07 PM  
**To:** City Clerk; announcements@alamedacitizenstaskforce.org  
**Subject:** Against Item 6-D May 5, 2020 City Council Meeting Agenda-Potential Measures Amending City Charter

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Mayor Ashcraft and Council Members:

This email is in opposition to Agenda Item 6-D.

Any discussion of this item during the pandemic is unlawful and unconstitutional, because it restricts the usual citizen participation in the process. The item is defective in that it fails to provide sufficient and appropriate data to allow public input into the proposal made therein.

The basis is as follows:

1. The CRSR o,its a financial impact analysis.
2. Fails to inform the public of the current compensation of the Mayor and Councilmembers.
3. Fails to properly disclose current officer elected health benefits.
4. Fails to inform the impact of the proposed Charter language.
5. Fails to provide any discussion of the rational for the proposals.

Request is made to reschedule the item when it can be discussed with full public participation in a normal City Hall meeting.

Thank You

Stephen Slauson  
2426 Otis Drive

## LARA WEISIGER

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**From:** margie <barongcat@yahoo.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 04, 2020 8:37 PM  
**To:** Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft; John Knox White; Tony Daysog; Malia Vella; Jim Oddie  
**Cc:** Eric Levitt; LARA WEISIGER  
**Subject:** Outraged at attempt to amend City Charter during pandemic

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I have just learned that the Council is moving ahead with efforts to amend the City Charter by stealth. This is completely undemocratic. I had no idea the Council was planning to do this until alerted by friends

In a recent essay published in the ALAMEDA SUN, I pointed out that lower income people will NOT benefit by for-profit construction of apartment buildings, that population growth in California has leveled and may even have stopped, and that there is plenty of "market rate" housing. The recent proliferation of "For Rent" signs gives credence to my argument.

There is NO hurry to amend the charter. Put this appalling idea off until after the current emergency is over. You have enough on your plate

## LARA WEISIGER

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**From:** Catherine Bierwith <catherine@grr8lif.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 04, 2020 4:58 PM  
**To:** Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft; John Knox White; Tony Daysog; Malia Vella; Jim Oddie  
**Cc:** Eric Levitt; LARA WEISIGER  
**Subject:** Charter changes

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Subject: Charter changes

Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

I strongly object to the Council considering significant Charter changes during the Shelter in Place orders. I think these issues need to be discussed in open session with the public being able to weigh in. I realize you may be trying to make an election date deadline but matters of this importance should not be rushed through. I ask you to please reconsider your decision to go forward with these changes until the public is able to address you in person and not have a one sided conversation. We are all having to wait to get on with our lives and this matter is not so urgent that it can't wait as well. Thank you.

Regards,  
Catherine Bierwith  
catherine@grr8lif.com  
510.418.3731

## LARA WEISIGER

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**From:** karenmillercrs@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Monday, May 04, 2020 2:26 PM  
**To:** Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft; John Knox White; Tony Daysog; Malia Vella; Jim Oddie  
**Cc:** Eric Levitt; LARA WEISIGER  
**Subject:** Charter changes

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Dear Mayor and Councilmembers,

I strongly object to the Council considering significant Charter changes during the Shelter in Place orders. I think these issues need to be discussed in open session with the public being able to weigh in. I realize you may be trying to make an election date deadline but matters of this importance should not be rushed through. I ask you to please reconsider your decision to go forward with these changes until the public is able to address you in person and not have a one sided conversation. We are all having to wait to get on with our lives and this matter is not so urgent that it can't wait as well. Thank you.

Regards,  
Karen Miller

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This email has been checked for viruses by Avast antivirus software.  
<https://www.avast.com/antivirus>

## LARA WEISIGER

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**From:** Alameda Citizens Task Force <announcements@alamedacitizenstaskforce.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, May 04, 2020 11:18 AM  
**To:** Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft; John Knox White; Jim Oddie; Malia Vella; Tony\_Daysog  
**Cc:** Eric Levitt; Yibin Shen; LARA WEISIGER  
**Subject:** Item 6-D May 5, 2020 City Council Agenda-Potential Measures Amending City Charter

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# ACT

## Alameda Citizens Task Force

Vigilance, Truth, Civility

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Dear Mayor Ashcraft and Councilmembers Knox-White, Vella, Daysog, and Oddie

We last wrote to you on the above captioned matter on April 19, 2020. With reintroduction of a pared down version of the Charter Review Subcommittee Report (CRSR) we have reviewed our conclusions with the benefit of more information that we have since acquired. To assist you in reviewing this letter we have presented any language that is substantially different from our April 19 comments in boldface. Note that all elected officer compensation and benefit amounts below are based on 2018 data provided by transparentcalifornia.org.

We continue to object to considering any amendments to the Charter during the current pandemic because it will inhibit the usual citizen participation in the process. Further delay could well eliminate the placement of these proposals on the November ballot, but these are not critical time sensitive matters. We now add to our reasoning for delay the fact that the (CRSR) report does not contain appropriate data to allow informed public input into the proposals made therein. The basis for this conclusion follows.

1. The CRSR omits a financial impact analysis and instead states that it will be forthcoming when Council directs the staff as to which proposals to pursue. How is Council or the public to judge these proposals without a current analysis of the comparative financial impact of each proposal?
2. The Council compensation item fails to inform the public that the current compensation is \$3,600 per year for the Mayor and \$1,200 per year for the other four Councilmembers. It also fails to cite the source of the assertion that the current Bay Area median income is \$72,000. At least one site we have viewed reports a median salary of over \$107,000. **Also, the item speaks of a "maximum" salary limit but hides from the public that the repeal of the current compensation provision the Charter would result in compensation being set by Council, rather than the Charter up to the maximum.**
3. The proposal to eliminate family health benefits fails to make clear that every elected officer currently has the option of family health benefits, adding compensation of more than \$20,000 per year to each officer claiming said benefit. It also fails to inform how many elected officers are receiving said benefit. As of 2018, only three of the seven elected officers elected to receive said benefit.

4. The item that proposes to, “Add language to allow City Prosecutor to prosecute crimes without prior District Attorney request and acceptance.” fails to inform of the job description of this recently created position and the impact of the proposed Charter language.

In addition, a fault common to all the above items is the failure of the CRSR to provide any discussion of the rationale for their proposals.

Notwithstanding the above we must address the possibility that Council will reject our advice and act on the proposed Charter revisions. What follows are our comments concerning the merits of the proposals.

**Council Compensation:** We support raising the salaries of Council. However, the devil is in the details. The most obvious issue is the abandoning of the practice of paying the Mayor more than the rest of Council. The Mayor’s duties as the chairperson of meetings and the primary spokesperson for the City (nowhere more evident than Mayor Ashcraft’s leadership during the current pandemic) require that the Mayor receive significant additional compensation.

We also question placing the maximum salaries on a sliding scale of 30% of the Bay Area median individual income. We are given no definition of “Bay Area” or the source of the current \$72,000 calculation, nor are we given any rationale for this formula. We do appreciate that the CRS is trying to establish a maximum compensation formula that is not influenced by Council discretion. However, the proposed formula, in the light of the Bay Area historical trends, almost guarantees significant annual raises forever, a benefit which we doubt any employee in the country enjoys.

**We urge Council to consider a formula approach that would lead to more conservative results like having increases based on the CPI or on an average of the annual increases provided to City employees.**

**Health Benefits:** The proposal states, “Clarify that health benefits are for Councilmembers only (remove family coverage)” This is very misleading language. It creates the impression that health benefits are currently only available to Councilmembers. That is not the case. As stated above, health benefits are currently available to the Treasurer and Auditor and both are receiving family health benefits valued at more than \$20,000 each. **Therefore, while your proposal to raise the compensation of Councilmembers will most likely result in the loss of family health benefits being offset by the compensation increase, the removal of health benefits to the Treasurer and Auditor will reduce their compensation from close to \$30,000 per year to \$3,600 per year! We believe that their total compensation package should, at the very least, remain intact, whether reflected in salary or health benefits as outlined in the following paragraph.**

We do agree with the CRSR that family health coverage should be removed from all elected officials. In fact, we are not averse with also removing individual coverage, but believe that salaries should be increased to compensate for that loss. The current health benefit system creates very inequitable results, especially regarding our current Council. As of 2018, only one of our five Councilmembers elected to receive family health benefits, probably due to having coverage in their full time jobs. Thus, the one officer who elected the benefits receives a total compensation package far more than his/her peers.

Notwithstanding the above we recognize that those who have elected to take the health coverage are most likely getting better and less expensive coverage by being included in the City plan. Therefore, we are not averse to allowing them to continue their coverage with their salary reduced to cover the cost to the City of their plan.

**Measure 2:** As stated in our March 13 email we support Measure 2 which expands the authority of our City Prosecutor and are open to considering other miscellaneous provisions suggested in Measure 2.

Sincerely,

Alameda Citizens Task Force Steering Committee



## LARA WEISIGER

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**From:** Dorothy Freeman <dfreeman@pacbell.net>  
**Sent:** Friday, May 01, 2020 11:34 AM  
**To:** Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft; John Knox White; Tony Daysog; Jim Oddie; Malia Vella; LARA WEISIGER; Manager Manager  
**Subject:** Proposed changes to City Charter

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Dear Mayor Ashcraft and City Council members;

Making changes to the City Charter during a national emergency is not good governance. The citizens of Alameda are presently worried about things that are of a more urgent nature than these proposals. None of the proposed changes to the City Charter are of such an urgent nature that they cannot be delayed until the 2020 national election.

The ability to get proper information out to the public between now and the November election is very much in doubt. Campaigning will be very difficult for any item on the November ballot. We don't even know that our local newspaper will be able to survive this economic downturn. Not having a local newspaper will inhibit the ability to get pro and con information out. We also know that a return to "normal" is going to take a lot longer than just removing the Shelter In Place order. People will remain in turmoil for an extended period as they work to recover from this disruption to every aspect of our lives. I doubt that changes to the City of Alameda Charter will be high on their list of things they need to be concerned with.

I strongly urge the City Council to delay all discussions of Charter changes and any plans to place any Charter changes on the 2020 national election ballot. We need to have full participation of our citizens in making these very important decisions.

Respectfully,  
Dorothy Freeman



## LARA WEISIGER

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**From:** Karen Butter <karenbutter@comcast.net>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 21, 2020 11:04 AM  
**To:** Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft; John Knox White; TONY\_DAYSOG@ALUM.BERKELEY.EDU; Malia Vella; Jim Oddie  
**Cc:** LARA WEISIGER; Susan Hauser; Karen Butter  
**Subject:** Public Comment -- Agenda 6B

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April 21, 2020

Honorable Mayor Ashcraft, Vice-Mayor Knox White and Council Members Daysog, Oddie, and Vella

The League of Women Voters of Alameda has worked with the Subcommittee of the City Council to encourage public comment on a number of proposed changes to the City Charter. While we are pleased to see the item on the April 21 Council Agenda we are concerned this is not the right time for a thoughtful public discussion. While the changes to the Charter are of high interest to the Council the public is focused on the Pandemic. We also suggest that the additional time would allow for a more complete staff report outlining the issues.

We urge you to postpone this discussion for a later time that will allow broad public attention and input.

Susan Hauser, President  
LWV Alameda

## LARA WEISIGER

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**From:** traderdave@teamhart.net  
**Sent:** Monday, April 20, 2020 12:28 PM  
**To:** City Clerk; Jim Oddie; Tony Daysog; Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft; John Knox White; Malia Vella  
**Subject:** April 21 Council meeting

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Please read this into the record at the council meeting this week:

Members of Council:

I write to you about agenda item 6B of the 4/21/20 city council meeting. Specifically, I ask you to remove this item and table it until actual in-person public comments can be heard in council chambers. A charter amendment on any matter deserves as much air & light as possible. That is a basic standard of good government. A charter amendment in which council is voting to increase its own pay is especially important and heightened scrutiny is very much called for.

Since I'm not a politician, it's a bit curious that I feel the need to give council members political advice but these are extraordinary times:

It's probably best for your collective political futures to drop consideration of a council pay raise. What is on the table amounts to possibly as much as a 10-fold increase in council pay, though that multiple can vary depending on one's definition of 30% of Bay area median income. That's a very bad look at any time, but it's particularly egregious in this period of skyrocketing unemployment.

Further, to consider such a raise for yourselves at the same meeting as agenda item 6D, which tables a discussion of raising the minimum wage, compounds the image problem. This is especially true regarding certain council members who frequently tout their ties to labor interests and their dedication to working people. It's difficult to conceive of a better way to publicly brand yourselves as hypocrites.

If you somehow feel that you must proceed with this very poor idea, you should at least add language to delay its implementation until after new council members have replaced the five of you, i.e. none of the current 5 can benefit from it. This could take a couple of election cycles. Adding such language would enable you to defend the action on principle, whereas voting to feather your own nest 10-fold would be indefensible and a colossally foolish mistake to make. It would be a gift to your next opponents' campaigns.

Think this through and do the right thing, for your own careers if not for the common good.

Dave Hart  
1623 Moreland Dr

## LARA WEISIGER

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**From:** Alameda Citizens Task Force <announcements@alamedacitizenstaskforce.org>  
**Sent:** Sunday, April 19, 2020 12:18 PM  
**To:** Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft; John Knox White; Malia Vella; tdaysog@alamedaca.com; Jim Oddie  
**Cc:** Eric Levitt; Yibin Shen; LARA WEISIGER  
**Subject:** City Council Agenda Item 6-B Recommendation to Provide Direction on Potential Measures Amending the City Charter.

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# ACT

## Alameda Citizens Task Force

Vigilance, Truth, Civility

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Dear Mayor Ashcraft and Councilmembers Knox-White, Vella, Daysog, and Oddie

We last wrote to you on the above captioned matter on March 13, 2020. With reintroduction of the issue we have reviewed our conclusions with the benefit of more information that we have independently acquired. It has led us to significantly change our views. Note that all elected officer compensation and benefit amounts below are based on 2018 data provided by [transparentcalifornia.org](http://transparentcalifornia.org).

We support the concept of Task Forces covering district elections and campaign ethics/financing and would be happy to provide knowledgeable individuals from our membership to serve on either of these bodies.

We continue to object to considering any amendments to the Charter during the current pandemic because it will inhibit the usual citizen participation in the process. Further delay could well eliminate the placement of these proposals on the November ballot, but these are not critical time sensitive matters. We now add to our reasoning for delay the fact that the Charter Review Subcommittee (CRS) report does not contain appropriate data to allow informed public input into the proposals made therein. The basis for this conclusion follows.

1. The report omits a financial impact analysis and instead states that it will be forthcoming when Council directs the staff as to which proposals to pursue. How is Council or the public to judge these proposals without a current analysis of the comparative financial impact of each proposal?
2. The Council term limits item fails to inform the public that the current term limits provided by the Sec. 2-14 of the Charter are "No person shall be eligible for the office held by that person for two complete consecutive terms immediately prior to the term for which the person seeks election or appointment. This section shall not apply to the office of Auditor or Treasurer..."

3. The Council compensation item fails to inform the public that the current compensation is \$3,600 per year for the Mayor and \$1,200 per year for the other four Councilmembers. It also fails to cite the source of the assertion that the current Bay Area median income is \$72,000. At least one site we have viewed reports a median salary of over \$107,000.

4. The Auditor/Treasurer compensation item misstates the compensation of these officers. It states that it proposes to, "Increase meeting stipend for Auditor and Treasurer to \$100/meeting for meetings in which they are presenting on agenda items related to their official duties." The current compensation of each of these officers is \$3,600 per year. Thus, the proposal reduces the their compensation.

5. The proposal to eliminate family health benefits fails to make clear that every elected officer currently has the option of family health benefits, adding compensation in excess of \$20,000 per year to each officer claiming said benefit. It also fails to inform how many elected officers are receiving said benefit. As of 2018, only three of the seven elected officers elected to receive said benefit.

6. The item that proposes the replacement of the technology and transportation benefit fails to inform as to the amount of the current benefit. As of 2018, the Mayor and each Councilmember received an annual stipend of \$6,960.

7. The item that proposes to, "Add language to allow City Prosecutor to prosecute crimes without prior District Attorney request and acceptance." fails to inform of the job description of this recently created position and the impact of the proposed Charter language.

In addition, a fault common to all the above items is the failure of the CRS to provide any discussion of the rationale for their proposals.

Notwithstanding the above we must address the possibility that Council will reject our advice and act on the proposed Charter revisions. What follows are our comments concerning the merits of the proposals.

**Term Limits:** We see no merit in changing the current term limits. Regarding the Mayor and Council, we see no history of a negative impact of the current limit. Regarding the Auditor and Treasurer, we believe that the framers of the Charter were wise in exempting them from term limits. These are not "policy" positions. These officers perform the functions of a CPA and Financial Advisor, respectively, and only people certified in these fields are eligible to run for these offices under our Charter. (Sections 4-1 and 5-1) The more time these people are in office the more expertise they develop in the unique area of government finances. If we impose policy limits, we will lose this benefit and might find ourselves without qualified candidates to fill the vacancy.

If, notwithstanding our comments above, Council determines to put an amendment to term limits on the ballot, it should be drafted so as to only be applicable to officials serving their initial term of office on or after December 2020, so as to make in inapplicable to any current officials.

**Council Compensation:** We support raising the salaries of Council. However, the devil is in the details. The most obvious issue is the abandoning of the practice of paying the Mayor more than the rest of Council. The Mayor's duties as the chairperson of meetings and the primary spokesperson for the City (nowhere more evident than Mayor Ashcraft's leadership during the current pandemic) require that the Mayor receive significant additional compensation.

We also question placing the salaries on a sliding scale of 30% of the Bay Area median individual Income. We are given no definition of “Bay Area” or the source of the current \$72,000 calculation, nor are we given any rationale for this formula. We do appreciate that the CRS is trying to establish a compensation formula that is not influenced by Council discretion. However, the proposed formula, in the light of the Bay Area historical trends, almost guarantees significant annual raises forever, a benefit which we doubt any employee in the country enjoys.

We urge Council to consider leaving raises to the discretion of a super majority of Council or to consider a formula approach that would lead to more conservative results like having increases based on the CPI or on an average of the annual increases provided to City employees.

**Treasurer/Auditor Compensation:** The proposal is very troubling to us. The \$100 stipend per Council meeting where their attendance is required is not an increase, but a substantial reduction in their current compensation of \$3,600 per year. It also fails to recognize that these officers perform most of their services to the City outside of meetings. For instance, in the last year they have both worked with the City to produce amendments to the City budget caused by Covid 19. They have both worked to improve the function of the Finance Department after the Finance Director resigned a short time ago.

We believe that compensation should at the least be what they now receive in total benefits. In addition to their salaries they both have elected to take family health benefits which raises their compensation to close to \$30,000 per year. We are getting the services of highly qualified professionals who provide services far beyond their Charter required duties. We would also point out that the Charter provides that Council determines the compensation of these officers and that the best practice would be to leave that provision unchanged

**Health Benefits:** The proposal states, “Clarify that health benefits are for Councilmembers only (remove family coverage)” This is very misleading language. It creates the impression that health benefits are currently only available to Councilmembers. That is not the case. As stated above, health benefits are currently available to the Treasurer and Auditor and both are receiving family health benefits valued well in excess of \$20,000 each. Therefore, the removal of health benefits to the Treasurer and Auditor will reduce their compensation from close to \$30,000 per year to \$3,600 per year! As stated in the section above we believe that their total compensation package should, at the very least, remain intact.

We do agree with the CRS that family health coverage should be removed from all elected officials. In fact, we are not averse with also removing individual coverage, but believe that salaries should be increased to compensate for that loss. The current health benefit system creates very inequitable results, especially regarding our current Council. As of 2018, only one of our five Councilmembers elected to receive family health benefits, probably due to having coverage in their full time jobs. Thus, the one officer who elected the benefits receives a total compensation package far in excess of his/her peers.

Notwithstanding the above we recognize that those who have elected to take the health coverage are most likely getting better and less expensive coverage by being included in the City plan. Therefore, we are not averse to allowing them to continue their coverage with their salary reduced to cover the cost to the City of their plan.

**Removal of Transportation and Technology Stipends:** We are open to the proposal conditioned on receiving a comparative cost analysis.

**Measure 2:** As stated in our March 13 email we support Measure 2 which expands the authority of our City Prosecutor and are open to considering other miscellaneous provisions suggested in Measure 2.

Sincerely,

Alameda Citizens Task Force Steering Committee

## LARA WEISIGER

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**From:** Dorothy Freeman <dfreeman@pacbell.net>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 16, 2020 4:32 PM  
**To:** dfreeman@pacbell.net  
**Cc:** Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft; John Knox White; Tony Daysog; Jim Oddie; Malia Vella; LARA WEISIGER; Manager Manager  
**Subject:** City Council Meetings during "Shelter in Place" order

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Dear Mayor Ashcraft , Vice Mayor Knox-White, Council Member Daysog, Council Member Vella, Council Member Oddie;

In view of the current Coronavirus pandemic "Shelter in Place" order I urge you to suspend any further action on any critical city items especially any Charter revisions until proper in-person public comments can be received.

Respectfully  
Dorothy Freeman

cc. City Manager Mr. Levitt, City Clerk Ms.Weisiger



## LARA WEISIGER

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**From:** Alameda Citizens Task Force <announcements@alamedacitizenstaskforce.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, March 16, 2020 3:18 PM  
**To:** Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft; Malia Vella; tdaysog@alamedaca.com; Jim Oddie; John Knox White  
**Cc:** Eric Levitt; LARA WEISIGER  
**Subject:** Item 6-F March 17,2020 City Council Regular Meeting- Potential Measures for Revising City charter

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# ACT

## Alameda Citizens Task Force

Vigilance, Truth, Civility

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Dear Mayor Ashcraft and Council Members Knox-White, Vella, Oddie, and Daysog:

In view of the current Coronavirus pandemic we urge you to suspend any further action on any Charter revisions until proper in-person public comment can be received.

In the event that you do move forward with Item 6-F on March 17 we submit the following:

**Task Forces:** We heartily support both of the proposed Task Forces covering district elections and campaign ethics/financing and would be happy to provide knowledgeable individuals from our membership to serve on either of these bodies. With regard to campaign/ethics/financing, we suggest that a good model to provide a framework for discussion is the City of Berkeley Municipal Code Chapter 2.12 which comprehensively covers this subject.

**Measure 1:** We oppose changing the term limits. No rationale for this alternative is stated in the staff report. If such a ballot measure is presented it should include a provision that it only applies to Council Members whose initial term of office begins in December of 2020. This avoids any current Council Member being impacted positively or negatively by the new limitation.

We agree with the suggested pay raise for City Council, subject to a definitive statement from the City Attorney that no employment rights or employer contributions will attach thereto or a statement of the rights or contributions that would attach and the cost thereof. We recognize that Council Members are donating their time and energy to the welfare of the City. While this small amount does not nearly reflect the value of their services, it at least recognizes their efforts. If this increase in compensation is adopted we would support the removal of family health coverage. We also support the suggested stipend for our Treasurer and Auditor.

We are not familiar with the current transportation and technology stipends, but fear that the City providing technology directly to Council could be more expensive than the current system. We want the system which provides the lowest cost. Again, the staff report provides no rationale for this change, which makes it difficult to provide public input.

**Measure 2:** We fully support Measure 2.

Sincerely,

Alameda Citizens Task Force Steering Committee