




**COUNCILMEMBER CHRIS CATE  
CITY OF SAN DIEGO  
SIXTH DISTRICT**

**M E M O R A N D U M**

**DATE:** January 11, 2021

**TO:** Council President Campbell, Chair, Committee on Rules

**FROM:** Councilmember Chris Cate 

**SUBJECT:** 2021 Rules Committee Priorities

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I appreciate the opportunity to share my goals and priorities for 2021. I look forward to working collaboratively to move toward a more efficient, effective, and transparent San Diego to provide the best quality of life possible for our citizens.

**Consider a Ballot Measure to Implement Ranked Choice Voting in November General Elections Only**

As a result of San Diego voters approving Measures K and L in 2016, the City of San Diego has drastically changed its local election process regarding ballot measures and candidate elections. These reforms were advocated by a constituency that hoped to decrease the influence of money in local political races and increase voter participation through the elimination of an outright winner in municipal primary elections. However, these ballot measures maintain a June primary election, thus ensuring a longer campaign season that will require continual financial support and solicitation. Furthermore, June primary voters will have the ability to decide the top two vote-getters, continuing the influence over November-only voters who are forced to decide between one of the two pre-determined candidates. This Committee should consider a ballot measure that would eliminate an unnecessary June primary and implement Ranked Choice Voting in November general elections only. Last year, there was an effort to propose a similar ballot measure to implement Ranked Choice Voting, but it kept the June Primary. This effort was not successful, but it did garner significant support. This year, the Committee should reconsider a similar proposal for Ranked Choice Voting, but also eliminate the unnecessary June primary. Ranked Choice provides voters the opportunity to rank candidates in order of preference until one secures a majority after the conclusion of multiple voting rounds. This voting model would give San Diegans the ability to choose from a wider selection of candidates in a single general election, thus increasing voter participation and eliminating an unnecessary primary.

**Consider a Ballot Measure to Allow Educational Use in City Park Space**

The COVID-19 Pandemic has presented families with immense challenges regarding education options for their children. Our office has explored a number of potential educational and childcare uses to occur in City park space. It has been opined that educational activity in City parks is not expressly a permitted use in the City Charter and therefore not an allowable use. To allow for further flexibility, we request this Committee

work with the Parks and Recreation Department and City Attorney's Office to craft a ballot measure which would expressly allow education and other instruction-based activity to occur in City park space.

**Establish a Minimum Standard for Public Outreach and Notification of City Projects**

Increasing communication with the public about City construction projects taking place in their communities that have the potential to affect their daily lives is critical to maintaining good relations with the public and ensuring a greater quality of life for San Diegans. Currently, each City department has its own standards and manners in which they provide information to the public about upcoming projects. This committee should work with the City departments who schedule, execute, and manage construction projects, as well as the Communications Department to establish uniform communication collateral materials, and a minimum standard of required outreach and communication efforts to the public about projects affecting neighborhoods.

**Explore Existing Standards of Customer Service Within City Departments**

The City of San Diego has a duty to provide its residents with a high level of customer service and information availability. It would be prudent for this committee to request information and reports from City staff in departments that actively interact with customers to determine what standards for customer service are currently in place and how well those standards are being met. Additionally, receiving a report from the Performance and Analytics Department regarding any data collected on customer service would be helpful in aiding this discussion and effort to provide the highest possible level of customer service to San Diego residents.

**Boards and Commissions**

Guidance, input, and leadership from a diverse group of residents serving on the City's many Boards and Commissions is critical to ensuring oversight, accountability, and equity. While proper vetting of candidates is vital, it is also imperative this process is conducted as quickly and efficiently as possible in order to be courteous and respectful of residents who are volunteering their time and serving their communities. This committee should continue the work of streamlining the appointment process for Boards and Commissions and increasing communication among applicants.

CC:jeh