

IMPARTIAL ANALYSIS OF MEASURE “Q”

(Filling City Council and/or Mayoral Vacancy – Charter Section 404)

If approved by a majority of the voters, this Measure would amend the Riverside City Charter to require the City Council to: appoint to fill a vacancy in elected office with up to one year remaining on the term; call a special election to fill a vacancy in elected office with over one year remaining on the term; call a special run-off election when no candidate receives a majority of the votes cast for the vacant office; and prohibit appointed officials from referencing “incumbent”, “member of the City Council”, or other designation indicating incumbency, in a subsequent election for the same seat.

The Riverside City Charter currently provides that a vacancy in an elected office, from whatever cause arising, except in the event of a successful recall, shall be filled by appointment by the City Council, such appointee to hold office until the first Tuesday following the next general municipal election and until his successor qualifies. The Riverside City Charter currently provides that if the City Council fails to fill a vacancy by appointment within 60 days after the office is declared vacant, then the City Council must cause an election to be held. The Riverside City Charter currently does not prohibit appointed officials from referencing “incumbent”, “member of the City Council”, or other designation indicating incumbency, in a subsequent election for the same seat.

If this Measure is approved, the fiscal impact would be the cost of calling each special election, which is currently estimated to be \$63,000.

This Measure is being placed on this ballot by the City Council of the City of Riverside, acting upon the recommendation of the Riverside Charter Review Committee.

This Impartial Analysis is hereby submitted to the Elections Official in conformance with Section 9280 of the Elections Code of the State of California. This Measure does not result in any new City powers.

Dated: August 17, 2020 By: Gary Geuss
City Attorney

ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE “Q”

Election of representative leadership is the cornerstone of American Democracy. In the event of a vacancy on the City Council with more than one year remaining in the term, Measure Q will ensure that the individual who fills that seat is voted in by the people and not appointed by local politicians.

As Riverside consolidates odd-numbered year elections with even-numbered year elections, residents will be voting every two years. As it stands, if a seat becomes vacant with two years left before the term expires, the City Council appoints a replacement to serve the remainder of the term. This is an excessive amount of allowable time for a non-elected person to represent the citizens of Riverside.

Decisions made at the local level often have the largest and most immediate impact on the daily lives of residents. From tackling our housing crisis to charting a path of recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, City leaders will play a fundamental role in shaping the future of Riverside. It is critical that these officials be vetted and elected by the people of Riverside – not appointed by their future political peers.

Measure Q is necessary to preserve our fundamental right to elect leadership. This amendment balances the right to elected leadership with the expense of elections. Any vacancy with less than a year remaining on the term will be appointed which can often spare the cost of a special election. However, any vacancy with more than a year remaining will be filled through an election.

Passing Measure Q will help assure that our local leadership truly represents the priorities and values of the electorate. We strongly encourage a “yes” vote on Measure Q.

By: Ronaldo Fierro, Councilmember
Chani Beeman, Charter Review Committee Member
Joan Donahue, President League of Women Voters - Riverside

NO ARGUMENT FILED AGAINST MEASURE “Q”