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California State Senate

SENATOR
ELOISE GÓMEZ REYES
TWENTY-NINTH SENATE DISTRICT



COMMITTEES:
EDUCATION
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
HOUSING
JUDICIARY
LEGISLATIVE ETHICS
RULES

February 2, 2026

Mayor Helen Tran
City of San Bernardino
290 North D Street
San Bernardino, CA 92401

Councilmember Fred Shorett
City of San Bernardino
290 North D Street
San Bernardino, CA 92401

Councilmember Theodore Sanchez
City of San Bernardino
290 North D Street
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Mayor Pro Tem Kimberly Knaus
City of San Bernardino
290 North D Street
San Bernardino, CA 92401

Councilmember Sandra Ibarra
City of San Bernardino
290 North D Street
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Councilmember Mario Flores
City of San Bernardino
290 North D Street
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Councilmember Juan Figueroa
City of San Bernardino
290 North D Street
San Bernardino, CA 92401

Councilmember Dr. Treasure Ortiz
City of San Bernardino
290 North D Street
San Bernardino, CA 92401

RE: Agenda Item No. 1- Proposed Charter Amendment

Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council:

I am writing to share my perspective regarding Agenda Item No. 1, which proposes directing staff to prepare a charter amendment for placement on the June 2, 2026, Primary Election ballot related to term limits, the elimination of primary elections, and the elimination of the directly elected office of Mayor.

While I may support a form of the proposal to establish reasonable term limits for City Councilmembers because this can strengthen accountability, encourage civic participation, and help maintain public trust in local government; and while I may support a form of changes in election structure that simplify the process to increase voter turnout; San Bernardino has a

Charter Review Committee established in 2017. This should be the first step in any proposed charter changes.

On another note, please know that I oppose the proposal to eliminate the directly elected Mayor of the City of San Bernardino.

San Bernardino is a large and growing city, home to more than 224,000 residents and is the 18th most populous cities in California. Cities of this size and complexity benefit from strong, visible leadership that is directly accountable to voters across the entire city. A full-time, directly elected Mayor provides a clear point of accountability and serves as an essential advocate for residents, businesses, and workers.

As the regional hub of the Inland Empire, San Bernardino plays a critical role in economic development, transportation, housing, and workforce growth. Maintaining a directly elected Mayor strengthens the City's ability to compete regionally for investment, infrastructure funding, and public-private partnerships, and ensures the Inland Empire has a strong and consistent voice in state and regional decision-making.

While alternative governance structures may function for smaller cities, San Bernardino's size, regional significance, and ongoing efforts toward economic revitalization makes it necessary to preserve our current model that allows residents to directly choose their chief executive. Doing so supports voter choice and a stable, forward-looking leadership.

To note, any fundamental Charter changes, as mentioned earlier, of this scale should include the elimination of primary elections and the removal of a directly elected Mayor, must be reviewed through the City's established Charter Review Committee. This nine-member body, created by Resolution No. 2017-243, is specifically tasked with conducting a periodic review of the City Charter, studying potential amendments, suggesting improvements, and, where appropriate, proposing alternatives for public consideration. Utilizing this process ensures changes are evaluated transparently, thoughtfully, and with meaningful public input before being placed before the voters.

For these reasons, I strongly urge the City Council to reject any charter amendment that would eliminate the directly elected office of Mayor and to refer any proposed charter changes of this magnitude to the City's Charter Review Committee before further consideration.

Thank you for your continued leadership and your partnership in serving the residents of San Bernardino. I look forward to our continued work together on behalf of the Inland Empire. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact my office at (909) 888-5360.

Sincerely,



ELOISE GÓMEZ REYES
Senator, 29th District