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SUMMER STEPHAN
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Meeting Date: May 19, 2026
Agenda Item No. 25
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RACHEL SOLOV
ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY

May 19, 2026

San Diego County Board of Supervisors
1600 Pacific Highway, Room 331
San Diego, CA 92101

Honorable San Diego County Board of Supervisors,

As San Diego County's District Attorney responsible for safeguarding the rights of all communities in each of your respective districts, I want to be sure that reforms to the county charter are truthful, transparent, lawful and enhance the good of the people. Some of the provisions in Chair Lawson-Remer's proposal are positive additions to good government, such as the creation of an independent ethics commission. However, the Chair's proposal also contains errors and misrepresentations that are corrected by Supervisor Anderson's proposal. For this reason, I support ITEM 25 on the May 19 San Diego Board of Supervisors agenda **"Adopting a Revised Resolution of the Board of Supervisors Proposing Amendments to the Charter of the County of San Diego entitled 'A Transparent, Accountable, Modern County Government,' and Amending the Ordinance 'Modernizing The San Diego County Charter to Strengthen Transparency, Accountability and Independent Oversight' "** voted by this board on April 21.

These amendments create a win for the People we serve by keeping the best of the provisions proposed by Chair Lawson-Remer, while also ensuring independent functions related to contracting and purchasing essential to ethical functioning of government, removing self-serving term expansions, and correcting inaccurate and unlawful language regarding terms of service. Essentially, this is how good government is supposed to function by working together to produce an initiative that serves the best interests of the People by incorporating discussion and feedback from all the supervisors, leaders and community.

While the original proposed charter amendment includes several good ideas that I support, especially the creation of an Ethics Commission, there are serious concerns about the way this proposal was created behind closed doors and is now being rushed through a process where there has been no meaningful opportunity to study the details and debate the changes. It is troubling that Chair Lawson-Remer begins her proposal by promoting the creation of an ethics commission while simultaneously advancing language that would unethically expand her own paid term in office. Even more concerning is the deceptive measure that describes setting a three-term limit when voters already set a two-term limit in 2010.

If the Board of Supervisors wants voters to make an informed choice of what they are voting on, then the language should be clear and state the intent to expand existing term limits from two terms to three

terms. The initiative should also clearly specify that this extension would apply to the current supervisors who are advancing the proposal, allowing them to directly benefit from it.

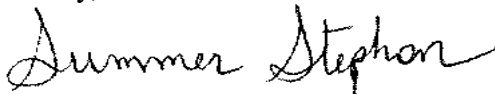
This original proposal would also allow the board to confirm and remove senior staff and civil servants. It grants the board a role in influencing multi-million dollar purchasing and contracting decisions, shifting authority and autonomy from public administrators into the hands of politicians, weakening checks and balances that provide the public with the best value and service.

Modernizing the County Charter through the initiative process requires honesty and full transparency so voters clearly understand what they are being asked to approve. Done right, reform builds trust; done incorrectly, it erodes it. Burying self-serving and misleading proposals within a mix of good proposals lacks both transparency and honesty.

Item 25 brings clarity and transparency by removing self-serving term expansions and preventing hidden political power grabs that would give supervisors greater control over independent county staff, purchasing, and contracting. It focuses decisions on good governance and public good rather than political considerations and allows county staff to do their jobs without the interference of political agendas. The proposal also avoids potential voter confusion by removing unlawful and misleading language regarding term limits for the constitutional offices of Sheriff, District Attorney and Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk as the Supreme Court determined this exceeds the County's authority.

Good reform should not have to rely on misleading messaging; San Diego voters deserve better. Revisions in ITEM 25 protect communities against misinformation, guard the integrity of the initiative process and help ensure reforms serve the people, not special or self-interests.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Summer Stephan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

SUMMER STEPHAN

San Diego County District Attorney

Cc: Kelly A. Martinez, Sherriff, San Diego County
Jordan Z. Marks, Assessor/Recorder/County Clerk
Andrew Potter, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors