



April 10, 2019

Honorable Mayor Sam Liccardo and City Council
City of San José
200 East Santa Clara Street
San José, CA 95113

Executive Committee

2019 BOARD CHAIR
Marc Parkinson
Petrinovich Pugh & Company

1st VICE CHAIR
Michael Bangs
Oracle Corporation

VICE CHAIR ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
Tony Miranda
Blach Construction Company

VICE CHAIR PUBLIC POLICY &
ADVOCACY
Cosme Fagundo
Wilco Management

VICE CHAIR
COMMUNITY ADVANCEMENT
Janikke Klem
Technology Credit Union

AT-LARGE

Traci Cornaglia
PayPal

Sean Cottle
Hoge Fenton

Claudia Folzman
Iron Construction

Michael Fox Jr.
Goodwill Silicon Valley

Tim Leets
BBSI

Jonathan Noble
Microsoft

Michael Turpin
Bay Area News Group

Rick Beatty
Lehigh Hanson

SVO PAC CHAIR
Anil Babbar
California Apartment Association

LEGAL COUNSEL
Eugene Ashley, Esq.
Hoge Fenton

TREASURER
Emily Ruvalcaba
Bridge Bank

IMMEDIATE PAST CHAIR
Lennies Gutierrez
Comcast

PRESIDENT & CEO
Matthew R. Mahood
The silicon valley organization

Re: Proposal to Shift Mayoral Elections – OPPOSE

Dear Mayor Liccardo and City Council:

On behalf of The Silicon Valley Organization (The SVO), I am writing in opposition to a proposal to move the timing of mayoral elections away from the gubernatorial election cycle. By way of background, The SVO is the Silicon Valley’s premier business advocacy organization representing nearly 1,200 companies that employ over 300,000 workers, and we represent our membership as the region’s largest Chamber of Commerce.

Voter engagement is absolutely fundamental to the strength and success of our democracy. While it is true that voter participation is consistently higher during presidential election years, we observed that the data does not prove that increased voter turnout would be a direct result of moving the timing of mayoral elections. Furthermore, it is not a guarantee that voters will vote down-ballot on mayoral races, especially when national politics will likely dominate news coverage and dialogue. Instead of political maneuvers to change the timing of mayoral elections which would have no measurable impact on voter turnout, the Council should focus on educating citizens about the critical importance of voting in every election – not that certain election cycles are more important than others. Every election matters.

We can focus on driving up voter turnout by partnering with the County of Santa Clara and the State of California. For example, ACA 8 (Low) would reduce the minimum voting age to 17 and allow younger voters to participate in our democracy. AB 59 (Kalra) would require that local election officials designate and give preference to implementing voting centers on university and college campuses, which would make it easier for young voters to participate in local elections. Furthermore, we can explore opportunities to partner with the county to implement a civic education campaign about the importance of voting. These legislative proposals and partnership opportunities would actually move the needle on increasing voter turnout.

In closing, we strongly urge the Council to vote against any proposal to shift the timing of mayoral elections and focus on real solutions that will actually increase voter turnout in every election. If you have any questions about The SVO’s position on this issue, please contact Eddie Truong, Director of Government and Community Relations, at 408-291-5267.

Sincerely,

Matthew R. Mahood
President & CEO