



October 12, 2020

## **VOTERS TO DECIDE ON FOUR CHARTER AMENDMENTS**

A total of four City Charter Amendments, introduced by the Honolulu City Council, are on the ballots and will be determined by O‘ahu voters in the November 3<sup>rd</sup> General Election. Two of them pertain to how the City Ethics Commission operates, while one establishes a Youth Commission and the other sets a term limit.

### Charter Question #1: Term Limits for the Prosecuting Attorney

***"Shall the Revised City Charter be amended to establish for the Prosecuting Attorney of the City and County a term limit of two consecutive full four-year terms, the same term limit as is applicable to the Mayor and the Councilmembers of the City and County of Honolulu?"***

Current Situation: There are no term limits for the Prosecuting Attorney.

The proposed Charter Amendment would establish a term limit of two consecutive full four-year terms, the same term limit that currently applies to both the Mayor and Councilmembers.

### Charter Question #2: Creation of a Youth Commission

***"Shall the Revised City Charter be amended to establish a Youth Commission under the Managing Director?"***

Current Situation: The Oahu Committee on Children and Youth (OCCY) was established then adopted by the Hawai‘i State Legislature in 1949 which mandated that each county appoint a committee concerning the needs of children and youth. However, in 1976, the State Legislature repealed the mandate for county children and youth committees and created a State Office of Children and Youth. Then the State Legislature disbanded the State Office of Children and Youth in 1996 and today, the Governor’s office is directly responsible for broad policy relating to children and youth while the State Department of Health and the Department of Human Services are responsible for direct service programs for children and youth.

The proposed Youth Commission would advise the City Council and the Mayor on issues relating to children and youth in order to give youth a greater role in the policymaking process and develop future leaders. Fifteen members, each between the ages of 14 to 24, at the time of their appointment, will make up the proposed Youth Commission. The Mayor would appoint six members and the City Council would appoint nine members (with each Councilmember responsible for appointing one member).

The proposed Youth Commission would be responsible for advising the City Council and the Mayor on the effects of policies, needs, assessments, priorities, programs, and budgets concerning

the children and youth of the City; expressing the priorities of the children and youth of the City; and responding to requests for comment and recommendation on matters referred to the Youth Commission by the City Council, the Mayor, and any officers, agencies including semi-autonomous agencies, and executive and legislative branch advisory committees of the City.

Charter Question #3: Ethics Commission Budgetary Control

***"Shall the Revised City Charter be amended to allow the Honolulu Ethics Commission to control its own budget after it has been enacted?"***

Current Situation: The Ethics Commission is administratively attached to the Department of the Corporation Counsel. The Department of the Corporation Counsel and the Mayor, through the Department of Budget and Fiscal Services, can currently impose spending restrictions on the budget approved by the City Council for the Ethics Commission. The City Charter generally authorizes the Mayor to impose spending restrictions on City departments and agencies during the fiscal year.

If approved, this Charter amendment would prevent the Mayor or others within the City Administration from withholding funding that had been approved by the City Council for the Ethics Commission. The Ethics Commission would remain administratively attached to the Department of the Corporation Counsel for other purposes.

Charter Question #4: Ethics Commission Staff

***"Shall the Revised City Charter be amended to require ethics commission staff to be appointed based on merit principles, but exempt them from the civil service position classification plan, and to have the salaries of all ethics commission staff set by the ethics commission, subject to specified limitations?"***

Current Situation: Ethics Commission staff are currently exempt from civil service, but they are not exempt from the civil service position classification plan. Therefore, when filling its staff positions, the Ethics Commission is limited to using generic City positions and must follow the pay plan that coincide with those positions.

If approved, this Charter amendment would exempt all Ethics Commission staff from the civil service position classification plan. This would allow the Ethics Commission to create specialized and unique positions according to the needs of the Ethics Commission, and would allow the Ethics Commission to determine the salaries, within limits, as well as establish certain conditions.

Attached to this email news release is a Summary from the Office of Council Services, which provides additional information about the four Charter Amendment questions. For more information about the Honolulu City Council, please go to the following web sites: <http://www.honolulucitycouncil.com> or <http://www.honolulu.gov/council>

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