

## **COMPREHENSIVE DISTRICT VOTING AMENDMENTS**

Article II Section 200. Districts;

Article VI. Section 601. Councilmembers; Section 602. The Mayor; Section 606. Term Limits: Elective Officers

Article VII Section 703. Nominating Papers; Section 704. Primary and General Election Candidates

Article XI. Section 1100. Mayor; Section 1102. Powers and Duties; Section 1103. Vice Mayor

### **ARGUMENT IN FAVOR**

Since passage of the California Voting Rights Act of 2001, election methods using at large voting to choose city council members have been successfully challenged, most recently in Visalia. By returning to district voting, Stockton will be able to avoid costly litigation and stay compliant with the Voting Rights Act. Additionally, election costs will be lowered and the power of special interest money to control elections will diminish.

Stockton's council-manager form of government is favored by most cities in the United States. This form provides the benefit of the collective common sense of elected council members. The City Manager runs the city under Council direction. The mayor's power is one vote on the Council. Nonetheless, our charter describes the mayor's position as full-time while assigning only part-time duties. This "full-time" description discourages some of our most capable citizens from becoming candidates. We should not limit the choice of mayor to those who are retired, career politicians or unemployed.

These amendments require that the mayor first gain experience as an elected council-member. The requirement that candidates serve at least 2 years as councilmembers before becoming eligible to be mayor enables the mayor to "hit the ground running" after gaining valuable experience governing the city and working with other council members. Numerous cities in California choose their mayor by Council election. It leads to better government and pursuit of a common purpose. Our charter specifies that the mayor be the inspirational leader of the members of the City Council as well as the citizens of Stockton. Conflict with the City Council occurs when the mayor seeks to assert more power than the charter provides. Making the mayor accountable to the City Council as well as the citizens of Stockton helps assure the election of an inspirational leader called for by our Charter.

Word Count: 300