



# The League of Women Voters of Tulsa

**A VOTER GUIDE TO THE FOUR BALLOT PROPOSALS THAT WILL BE ON THE NOVEMBER 8, 2011, CITY OF TULSA GENERAL ELECTION BALLOT.**

**THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OPPOSES ALL FOUR BALLOT PROPOSALS.**

*In addition to providing nonpartisan voter information on issues, the League has a long and distinguished history of research and study leading to membership consensus and a position statement on important public policies. The League's position on good government leads it to OPPOSE all four proposed amendments to the City of Tulsa Charter.*

note: There are two propositions titled *Proposition No. 1* that will appear on the November 8, 2011 ballot.

## **CITY COUNCIL - CITY MANAGER FORM OF GOVERNMENT, WITH THE MAYOR AS A MEMBER OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

### **PROPOSITION NO. 1**

This Resolution proposes to change how the City of Tulsa is managed by making the Mayor part of the City Council and vesting all executive and administrative decision-making in a City Manager. The City Manager would be appointed by the City Council to serve at its pleasure.

In addition to appointing a City Manager, the City Council would also be given the power to appoint and determine the duties of the City Attorney, City Auditor, City Clerk, City Treasurer and Municipal Judges. To remove the City Manager, City Attorney, City Auditor, City Clerk, City Treasurer, or a Municipal Judge from their appointment would require a super-majority, or 2/3 of the entire Council. The City Manager would replace the Mayor as a member of the Airport Authority, the Utility Board, and the Parks and Recreation Board.

The City Council would be comprised of a Mayor and nine (9) Councilors. The Mayor would be the titular representative of the City of Tulsa and would have no veto power over the legislative acts of the Council. The Mayor and the Councilors would run without declaring a political party preference (known as non-partisan elections). The term of office for the mayor, who would run at-large, and the nine (9) Councilors would be four (4) years. The terms of office for the Councilors are to be staggered. The staggering of terms will cause city elections to be held every two years. The Mayor and each City Councilor will be limited to serving no more than twelve (12) years on the Council.

The City Council would be given the authority to “repeal all portions of the existing charter” not part of this proposition or “continued” by this proposition.

### **THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OPPOSES THIS PROPOSITION BECAUSE:**

- The current Mayor-Council form of government is fundamentally sound and representative with sufficient separation of powers to provide an adequate system of checks and balances.
- The proposed changes may not significantly strengthen City government nor resolve perceived problems.
- There has been inadequate time to study each of the proposed changes and the impact the changes would have on how the City functions.
- There are too many changes incorporated into one proposition and, as such, this proposal is confusing to the average voter.
- Granting the City Council the authority to “repeal all portions of the existing charter” not part of this proposition is both overly broad and vague and has the potential of vesting powers reserved to the people in the City Council.
- There is uncertainty how this proposition would interact with other Charter change proposals should any one or all be adopted.

### **INITIATIVE PETITION PROPOSITION NO. 1**

This Proposition would amend the Charter of the City of Tulsa to restructure the City Council making the Mayor a member of the Council and its Chairman. The Mayor would only cast a vote to break a tie. The Mayor would have veto power over any proposal adopted by the Council. Additionally, the Mayor would possess the power to create the agenda for the Council, call special sessions, request the purpose of any decision or action of the Council and send messages and recommendations to the Council.

Aside from the Mayor, the Council would be comprised of twelve (12) Councilors, three of whom would be elected from at-large districts encompassing the entire city. The remaining nine (9) Councilors would be elected by districts.

Unless voters approve Initiative Petition Proposition No. 2 and No. 3, the date of City elections would remain the same, the term of office for the Mayor and Councilors would not change and there would continue to be partisan elections.

#### **THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OPPOSES THIS PROPOSITION BECAUSE:**

- There has been insufficient time to study the effects of this change on the daily operation of the city.
- There has been inadequate input from citizen groups and the community as a whole.
- In the event this Proposition is adopted and the competing proposal creating a City Manager form of government is also adopted, it is unclear how the conflicting provisions from each would be resolved.
- The current Mayor-Council form of government is fundamentally sound and representative with sufficient separation of powers to provide an adequate system of checks and balances.
- The proposed changes may not significantly strengthen City government nor resolve perceived problems.

### **INITIATIVE PETITION PROPOSITION NO. 2**

Proposition No. 2 would change the timing of the City elections to coincide with election cycle established for state and federal elections. In order to accommodate such a change the term of office for various elected office holders for the City of Tulsa would be temporarily altered. After the temporary terms are completed the Mayor will be elected for a four (4) year term, the City Auditor and Councilors would be elected for a term of two (2) years.

#### **THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OPPOSES THIS PROPOSITION BECAUSE:**

- There has been insufficient time to study the effects of this change on voter turnout and the financing of campaigns.
- There has been inadequate input from citizen groups and the community as a whole.
- Further examination of this Proposition is needed to determine if the electorate will be able to sufficiently understand the issues and recognize the positions of the various candidates in the midst of state and federal campaigns.
- There is uncertainty how this proposition would interact with the Charter change proposal establishing the City Manager form of government for the City of Tulsa.

### **INITIATIVE PETITION PROPOSITION NO. 3**

This proposed amendment to the City Charter would eliminate partisan elections for City officers.

#### **THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OPPOSES THIS PROPOSITION BECAUSE:**

- There has been inadequate input from citizen groups, interest groups, political parties and the community as a whole.
- Additional study of the impact on various candidates' ability to finance campaigns, procure campaign volunteers, the willingness of candidates to run for office and the impact on voter turnout is needed.
- The proposed change may not significantly strengthen City government nor resolve perceived problems.