Fair Vote

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February 23, 2016

The Honorable Edwin M. Lee, Mayor of San Francisco
San Francisco Board of Supervisors
City Hall. 1 Dr. Carlton B. Goodlett Place, Room 48
San Francisco, CA 94102   *RE: Budget Support for Open Source Voting System*

Dear Mayor Lee and Members of the Board of Supervisors

I am writing to encourage you to fully fund in this year's budget the start of a project to develop and certify an open source voting system for use in San Francisco elections starting in 2020, as described by the Elections Commission's unanimous November 18, 2015 resolution. We thank the Board of Supervisors for its past leadership on this issue, given its unanimous approval in December 2014 of a resolution supporting the creation of an open source voting system.

FairVote is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit engaged in making elections across the country more free, fair, and fully representative. We work on these issues through research and advocacy, demonstrating the impact of electoral reforms such as ranked choice voting on democracy and advocating for ranked choice voting and similar reforms. Our board members include former Nirvana bassist Krist Novoselic, New Yorker writer Hendrik Hertzberg, Wind River co-founder David Wilner and Advancement Project general counsel Edward Hailes.

FairVote strongly supports the city's development and adoption of an open source voting system. Elections are public processes and the foundation of our democracy. An open source system would be more transparent, and ultimately a more cost-effective flexible solution for the City of San Francisco. It makes sense for our voting equipment to be a shared and fully transparent public resource.

San Francisco has become a leader in public policy and good government, and the Bay Area is a world-wide center for technology and innovation. Open source voting is at the intersection of both of these areas. The city has a tremendous opportunity through this project to improve not just its elections, but to improve elections across the nation. Your voting system would be open and affordable to all jurisdictions, allowing them to adapt it to their local needs.

On behalf of FairVote I encourage you to fully fund open source voting in this year's budget.

Sincerely,

Rob Richie
Executive Director of FairVote

Cc: San Francisco Elections Commission; Christopher Jerdonek, Elections Commission Vice President; John Arntz, Director of Elections

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