

**RESOLUTION NO.**

**WHEREAS**, the Austin City Council has previously voted to support holding a city charter amendment election in November 2012;

**WHEREAS**, the Austin City Council desires to allow Austin citizens to vote on city charter reforms to help promote increased participation in elections and improve Austin's system of representation and governance; and

**WHEREAS**, the federal Voting Rights Act and corresponding judicial interpretation require maps of voting districts to be drawn based on minority representation, communities of interest, and compactness; **NOW**,

**THEREFORE**,

**BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF AUSTIN:**

The Austin City Council requests that the City Manager prepare draft city charter amendments to accomplish the following reforms and present the draft amendments to the City Council for review within 90 days:

**A. ELECTIONS**

1. Add geographic representation to the Austin City Council; the City Council should consist of six members elected from geographic districts, two members elected at large, and a mayor elected at large.

2. Move Austin's municipal elections from the uniform election date in May to the uniform election date in November of odd-numbered years only.
3. Change Austin City Council terms of office from 3 years to 4 years.
4. Eliminate staggered City Council terms; all City Council seats should be elected at once every 4 years, other than special elections for unexpired terms.
5. Maintain the current individual campaign contribution limit for geographic seats; set and maintain the individual campaign contribution limit for at-large seats at twice the limit for geographic seats; maintain the current incremental contribution limit adjustments tied to the Consumer Price Index for geographic representatives.
6. Create a new 30-day fundraising period immediately following each regular, run-off or special election, applicable only to the candidates in that election, for the purpose of retiring campaign debt and funding officeholder accounts.
7. Increase the limit for officeholder accounts to \$40,000.
8. Create a redistricting process to occur immediately following each decennial census in which city staff delivers a proposed redistricting map to a Council-appointed, 7-member citizen Redistricting

Commission, vested with the authority to approve a final map; the Redistricting Commission must be constituted no later than January 1 of the year in which census results are to be delivered; the Redistricting Commission must approve a redistricting map no later than June 1 of the same year; if the Redistricting Commission fails to approve a final map, authority to approve a final map transfers to a 3-member Redistricting Review Board comprised of the Mayor, Mayor Pro Tem, and the elected Chair of the Redistricting Commission; the Redistricting Review Board must approve a map within 30 days.

## B. GOVERNANCE

1. Change the reporting structure of the City Attorney to report directly to the City Council.
2. Authorize the direct appointment of City Council staff by City Council members.
3. Authorize the direct appointment of Deputy Clerks by the City Clerk.
4. Authorize the direct appointment of Deputy Auditors by the City Auditor.
5. Authorize the direct appointment of Deputy City Attorneys by the City Attorney, should the city charter be amended to make the City Attorney a direct report to the City Council.

### C. IMPLEMENTATION

All proposed charter revisions related to governance should be drafted for implementation immediately upon passage. All charter revisions related to elections should be drafted for implementation 180 days prior the November 2013 uniform election date. All revisions related to the election date should allow the first election under the new system of representation to occur on the uniform election date in November 2013.

#### **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The Austin City Council further requests that the City Manager prepare a draft map comprised of six City Council districts and present the draft map to the City Council for review within 90 days.

#### **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The Austin City Council directs the Ethics Review Commission to undertake a comprehensive review of the “Austin Fair Campaign Chapter” of the City Code and forward to the City Council within 90 days any recommendations for reform as may be deemed beneficial.

#### **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED:**

The Austin City Council requests that the City Manager determine whether Texas state law would allow Austin to implement Instant Runoff Voting and report back to the City Council within 90 days; and

The Austin City Council requests that the City Manager explore anticipated cost-sharing arrangements with the State of Texas should Austin move to November elections and report back to the City Council within 90 days.

**ADOPTED:** \_\_\_\_\_, 2011    **ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_  
Shirley A. Gentry  
City Clerk

DRAFT