

Mayor of Providence

Jorge O. Elorza

August 5, 2022

The Honorable Members of the Providence City Council  
Providence City Hall  
25 Dorrance Street  
Providence, RI 02903

**Regarding: "Resolution forwarding Ballot Questions to the Secretary of State for placement on the November Ballot"**  
**Charter Recommendations**

Honorable Members of the City Council,

I thank the members of the Charter Review Commission for taking on this immensely important work. I thank them sincerely for their efforts.

During my tenure as Mayor, I have remained steadfast in my belief that improvements to Providence Public Schools will require transformative change. I know that the City Council wants to do what is best for our kids and assume that their recommendation is born out of a deep frustration with our public schools and the feeling that something dramatic needs to be done to turn things around.

**However, I believe that having elections for school board members is a terrible idea. That is why I am standing with education leaders, parents and community members to veto this proposal.**

First and foremost, there was limited community engagement and this was a decision that was driven by City Council members whom comprised a majority of the committee (5 out of 9 members). There was very limited outreach, such as proactive engagement with education leaders, parents and students, when crafting this proposal. Community members are correct to expect greater outreach and they have raised concerns of this proposal being designed without PPSD parents at the table.

This proposal would require candidates to run geographically large campaigns that would require significant resources. Successful campaigns will likely have to raise more money than Providence Council members, Representatives and State Senators. This significantly limits the pool of people who can realistically win a campaign and it could make the school board less reflective of our city.

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Also, the grave danger of electing school board members is that special interest groups will likely run their own candidates for these seats. This creates the very real risk that the interests pursued by these members will not be in the best interest of our children. We should avoid this at all cost.

I believe that the core problems with our public schools is that, in practice, the superintendent does not run the district, principals do not run their buildings, and teachers are not incentivized in the right way. The City Council's proposal will not change any of this.

I agree wholeheartedly that Providence public schools need radical change but disagree that a hybrid school board is the answer. There is no evidence showing that elected school boards are better than appointed ones in boosting student performance. And in fact, there's ample evidence showing that they are no better. I strongly believe that injecting more politics into our schools would be a terrible outcome.

There is too much at stake when it comes to our city's future and this recommendation will not help. I look forward to continue working with our city leaders to address the challenges facing our schools and providing our students the best opportunities to grow, learn and thrive.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Elorza", written over a horizontal line.

Jorge O. Elorza  
Mayor

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# RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL

No. 300

EFFECTIVE August 10, 2022

WHEREAS, On July 14, 2022, the 2022 Charter Review Commission submitted its report and recommended amendments to the Providence Home Rule Charter to the City Council; and

WHEREAS, The City Council accepted the 2022 Charter Review Commission Report on July 14, 2022, and scheduled three (3) Public Hearings on the recommended amendments; and

WHEREAS, The City Council conducted public hearings on July 25, 2022; July 26, 2022; and July 28, 2022; and

WHEREAS, The City Council considered various aspects of the 2022 Charter Review Commission Report and recommended amendments prior to action to adopt certain of the amendments on July 28, 2022; and

WHEREAS, The various amendments to the Providence Home Rule Charter adopted by the City Council must be transmitted to the Rhode Island Secretary of State no later than August 8, 2022 in order to appear on the ballot for the General Election to be held on November 8, 2022.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS RESOLVED, DECREED AND ORDERED:

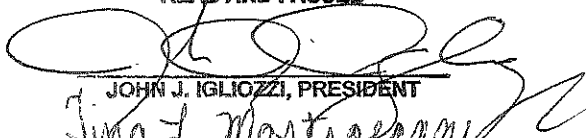
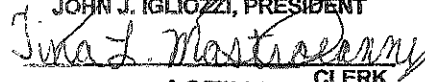
That the following ballot question be submitted to the Rhode Island Secretary of State, as adopted on July 28, 2022:

1. *Shall Department Directors be required to appear before the City Council for re-appointment every four years. [Amends Section 302 (b)]*
2. *Shall the City Council be allowed to hire consultants by vote of a simple majority. [Amends Section 401 (d)]*
3. *Shall the removal procedure for appointed officers be defined by ordinance and allow the City Council to remove council appointees by a vote of a simple majority. [Amends Section 403]*
4. *Shall the purchasing threshold be increased from five thousand (\$5,000.00) dollars to ten thousand (\$10,000.00) dollars for regular purchasing and twenty thousand (\$20,000.00) dollars for construction contracting. [Amends Section 1007 (c)(1)]*
5. *Shall the new position of General Manager of the Water Supply Board be established with oversight authority over all personnel matters of the Water Supply Board separate and apart from the position of Chief Engineer. [Amends Section 1101(a)(3)(4)(5)and(b)]*

6. *Shall the Charter clarify that all department heads and appointed officers are subject to all applicable personnel regulations of the City. [Amends Section 1201]*
7. *Shall the number and composition of school board members be increased from nine (9) to ten (10), to include five (5) members elected in a non-partisan manner at the November 2024 general election, one from each of five (5) equal electoral regions representing the North, South, East, West, and Central areas of the City; and five (5) members appointed by the mayor with the approval of the city council, with one appointee from each of the five (5) equal electoral regions. [Amends Section 701]*
8. *Shall the terms "chairman" and "vice-chairman" be replaced with the terms "chair" and "vice-chair" wherever they appears in the charter.*
9. *Shall the City Treasurer be provided direct access to records of all receipts, appropriations, and allotments of the City, and be required to ensure compliance with the City Charter and Code of Ordinances prior to issuing any payments. [Amends Section 602]*
10. *Shall the Composition of the City Plan Commission be amended to increase representation from the general citizenry of the City of Providence. [Amends Section 1013]*

IN CITY COUNCIL  
JUL 28 2022

READ AND PASSED

  
JOHN J. IGLIOZZI, PRESIDENT  
  
Tina L. Mastromarino  
ACTING CLERK

**VETO**

I HEREBY DISAPPROVE AND VETO.

DATE: 8/5/22 MAYOR

IN CITY COUNCIL  
AUG 10 2022

READ AND MAYOR'S VETO

NOT SUSTAINED

  
Tina L. Mastromarino  
CLERK