

To: San Diego City Council
From: San Diego League of Women Voters
Date: March 3, 2009
Re: Item 200 – Amendments to the Permanent Rules of the Council

The LWV supports legislative rules and actions that increase greater political accountability to the public. For this reason, we support the election of the council president at a time that would include newly-elected councilmembers, namely, in December. We also support alternative council meeting times that would encourage greater public attendance, namely, evening meetings, if additional costs are not unreasonable. Finally, we support greater flexibility in the docketing of agenda items to enable a wider range of proposals and perspectives to be aired at public hearings, namely, docketing items proposed by 3 councilmembers.

However, we have serious concerns about Rule 8.4, the proposal to modify the transcription of closed sessions by exempting "matters involving personnel decisions" from being recorded.

The problem is, we cannot determine from the wording presented to us whether "matters involving personnel decisions" refers only to single individuals or whether it might also include classes of individuals in matters of labor negotiations, benefits, pensions, lay-offs, etc.

While we might not have objections to exempting personnel matters involving a single individual, we would strongly object to eliminating written transcripts of closed session hearings concerning groups or classes of individuals employed by the city.

We urge you to clarify this issue before taking any action on it.

Thank you.