

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council
From: League of Women Voters of San Diego
Date: April 4, 2005
Re: Item - 150: Write-In Candidates

Why is the City Council wasting precious time and resources by looking for ways to limit public participation in local government? Why are you attempting to clamp down rather than open up the democratic process in San Diego?

The League of Women Voters is dumbfounded by your proposal to eliminate the prerogative of legally adding a write-in candidate's name on any election day ballot.

If the question you are trying to address is as simple as bringing the city charter and municipal code into harmony, the principled way of achieving that goal is to bring the city charter into conformance with the existing municipal code that permits write-in candidates in all elections. That action would signify your respect for the voting rights of your constituents.

If the question you are addressing involves streamlining as well as cleaning up discrepancies in the system, we suggest you use this opportunity to initiate public debate about the merits of alternatives like instant runoff elections. This is an alternative worth exploring since it always ensures a majority vote for the winner, while it greatly reduces city costs and campaign expenditures by merging the primary and general elections. San Francisco just established this system and many private and nonprofit corporations use this method when voting for their boards of directors.

These are already the worst of times for San Diego. Jeopardizing voters' rights will only discredit us further. We urge you to take the high road by enhancing, and doing nothing to diminish, the process of selecting and electing our city officials.