



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:19-2938

Agenda Item Number: 2.

Agenda Date: 3/28/2019

In Control: Intergovernmental Relations Committee

DEPARTMENT: Government and Public Affairs

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Jeff Coyle

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City Wide

SUBJECT:

Resolution supporting nonpartisan municipal elections

SUMMARY:

The Intergovernmental Relations Committee will receive a briefing on proposed legislation that would mandate partisan municipal elections and will consider a proposed resolution expressing support for nonpartisan municipal elections and opposition to this legislation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The City Council approved State Legislative Program for the 86th Legislative Session outlines the City's legislative priorities. The "Protection of Municipal Interests" section of the program includes a statement in support of legislation that would clearly benefit the City and opposition for legislation that would be detrimental to the City's interests, including legislation that undermines the principles of self-government. House Bill 3432 by Representative Scott Sanford would require municipal elections to be partisan.

Nonpartisan municipal and county elections are common throughout the United States. According to the National League of Cities website, 22 of the 30 most populous US Cities have non-partisan elections. There are numerous benefits to maintaining nonpartisan municipal elections. Nonpartisan elections foster an environment of collaboration and cooperation, encouraging members to work together on issues of concern for the community. City business is focused on delivery of quality of life services such as public safety, streets & sidewalks, parks, libraries and animal care services. The delivery of these services does not require engagement of partisan politics.

ISSUE:

In accordance with the Texas Elections Code, the City of San Antonio holds independent, nonpartisan elections. HB 3432 by Representative Scott Sanford would require a candidate running for city office to declare a party affiliation on their application to become a candidate. The bill would also require the party affiliation for each candidate to be listed on the ballot. Passage of this legislation would restrict the ability of cities to self-govern and maintain nonpartisan elections.

The proposed resolution supports the continuation of nonpartisan municipal elections and voices opposition to legislation that threatens the ability of the City to maintain nonpartisan elections.

ALTERNATIVES:

The Intergovernmental Relations Committee could decide not to pass the proposed resolution.

FISCAL IMPACT:

This resolution poses no direct fiscal impact.

RECOMMENDATION:

City staff recommends the Intergovernmental Relations Committee approve the proposed resolution supporting nonpartisan municipal elections.