



# City of San Antonio

## Agenda Memorandum

**File Number:**19-2969

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**Agenda Item Number:** 23.

**Agenda Date:** 4/4/2019

**In Control:** City Council A Session

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**DEPARTMENT:** Government and Public Affairs

**DEPARTMENT HEAD:** Jeff Coyle

**COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED:** City Wide

### **SUBJECT:**

Resolution supporting nonpartisan municipal elections

### **SUMMARY:**

Resolution expressing support for nonpartisan municipal elections and opposing legislation making these elections partisan.

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

The City Council approved State Legislative Program for the 86<sup>th</sup> 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 local elections to be partisan.

Nonpartisan municipal and county elections are common throughout the United States. According to the National League of Cities, 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.

The Intergovernmental Relations Council Committee is scheduled to consider this resolution on March 28, 2019.

#### **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 this bill and any others that threaten the nonpartisan nature of municipal elections.

#### **ALTERNATIVES:**

City Council could decide not to pass the proposed resolution.

#### **FISCAL IMPACT:**

This resolution poses no direct fiscal impact.

#### **RECOMMENDATION:**

City staff recommends approval of the proposed resolution supporting nonpartisan municipal elections.