

Secondary Analysis of San Francisco Department of Elections Voter Information Pamphlet Production Costs

Paid Ballot Argument Fees Analysis — Six Recent Elections

	Mid-Term (Fall) Elections			Primary (Spring) Elections			Average of 6 Elections
	11/5/2024	11/8/2022	11/3/2020	6/2/2026	3/5/2024	6/7/2022	
Voter Guide Production Cost Categories							
Typesetting	\$ 247,923	\$ 153,614	\$ 110,000	\$ 65,770	\$ 108,570	\$ 120,670	\$ 134,425
Printing	\$ 1,953,607	\$ 1,345,790	\$ 1,107,123	\$ 689,150	\$ 1,130,009	\$ 758,730	\$ 1,164,068
Mailing	\$ 268,591	\$ 206,407	\$ 131,150	\$ 103,339	\$ 222,210	\$ 111,239	\$ 173,823
Total Cost of Voter Guide:	\$ 2,470,121	\$ 1,705,811	\$ 1,348,273	\$ 858,259	\$ 1,460,789	\$ 990,639	\$ 1,472,315
% of \$16 Billion Dollar City Budget	0.04117%	0.02843%	0.02247%	0.01430%	0.02435%	0.01651%	0.02454%
Total Size of Voter Guide							
Total Voter Guide Pages (less the front-and-back covers)	296	256	232	96	152	136	195
Average Cost Per Page	\$ 8,345	\$ 6,663	\$ 5,812	\$ 8,940	\$ 9,610	\$ 7,284	\$ 7,776
Total Ballot Measures	15	13	12	4	7	8	10
Legal Text of Ballot Measures							
Total Pages Legal Text	78	57	50	14	21	20	40
Savings If All Legal Text Pages Eliminated	\$ 650,910	\$ 379,809	\$ 290,576	\$ 125,163	\$ 201,820	\$ 145,682	\$ 298,993
% of \$16 Billion Dollar City Budget	0.01085%	0.00633%	0.00484%	0.00209%	0.00336%	0.00243%	0.00498%
Total Production Cost Paid Arguments Pages Only							
Paid Arguments Costs to Total Voter Guide Costs	24.7%	27.0%	24.6%	19.8%	24.3%	25.7%	24.3%
Paid Balot Arguments							
Number of Pages of Paid Ballot Arguments	73	69	57	19	37	35	48
Number of Paid Ballot Arguments	207	204	192	55	94	98	142
Filing Fees Collected \$200 per Ballot Argument	\$ 41,400	\$ 40,800	\$ 38,400	\$ 11,000	\$ 18,800	\$ 19,600	\$ 28,333
Filing Fees If Raised \$1,000 to per Ballot Argument	\$ 207,000	\$ 204,000	\$ 192,000	\$ 55,000	\$ 94,000	\$ 98,000	\$ 141,667
Increased Revenue if Filing Fee Increased	\$ 165,600	\$ 163,200	\$ 153,600	\$ 44,000	\$ 75,200	\$ 78,400	\$ 113,333
Word Count Submitted	31,667	27,547	21,507	13,739	16,065	13,615	20,690
Word Count Fees Collected @ \$2.00 per word	\$ 63,334	\$ 55,094	\$ 43,014	\$ 27,478	\$ 32,130	\$ 27,230	\$ 41,380
Word Count Fees if Raised to \$10.00 per word	\$ 316,670	\$ 275,470	\$ 215,070	\$ 137,390	\$ 160,650	\$ 136,150	\$ 206,900
Increased Revenue if Per-Word Fee Increased	\$ 253,336	\$ 220,376	\$ 172,056	\$ 109,912	\$ 128,520	\$ 108,920	\$ 165,520
TOTAL INCREASED REVENUE IF FEES INCREASED							
% of \$16 Billion Dollar City Budget	0.00698%	0.00639%	0.00543%	0.00257%	0.00340%	0.00312%	0.00465%

Source: Department of Elections PowerPoint Presentation “Municipal Elections Code – Ballot Argument Fees” to Budget and Appropriations Committee, December 10, 2025 plus June 2, 2026 data.