

Secondary Analysis of San Francisco Department of Elections Voter Information Pamphlet Production Costs
Paid Ballot Argument Fees Analysis — Six Recent Elections (Mid-Term vs. Primary Elections)

	Mid-Term (Fall) Elections				Primary (Spring) Elections			
	11/5/2024	11/8/2022	11/3/2020	Average of 3 Fall Elections	6/2/2026	3/5/2024	6/7/2022	Average of 3 Spring Elections
Voter Guide Production Cost Categories								
Typesetting	\$ 247,923	\$ 153,614	\$ 110,000	\$ 170,512	\$ 65,770	\$ 108,570	\$ 120,670	\$ 114,620
Printing	\$ 1,953,607	\$ 1,345,790	\$ 1,107,123	\$ 1,468,840	\$ 689,150	\$ 1,130,009	\$ 758,730	\$ 944,370
Mailing	\$ 268,591	\$ 206,407	\$ 131,150	\$ 202,049	\$ 103,339	\$ 222,210	\$ 111,239	\$ 166,725
Total Cost of Voter Guide:	\$ 2,470,121	\$ 1,705,811	\$ 1,348,273	\$ 1,841,402	\$ 858,259	\$ 1,460,789	\$ 990,639	\$ 1,225,714
% of \$16 Billion Dollar City Budget	0.04117%	0.02843%	0.02247%	0.03069%	0.01430%	0.02435%	0.01651%	0.02043%
Total Size of Voter Guide								
Total Voter Guide Pages per Elections Department)	296	256	232	261	96	152	136	144
Average Cost Per Page	\$ 8,345	\$ 6,663	\$ 5,812	\$ 6,940	\$ 8,940	\$ 9,610	\$ 7,284	\$ 8,447
Total Ballot Measures	15	13	12	13	4	7	8	6
Legal Text of Ballot Measures								
Total Pages Legal Text	78	57	50	62	14	21	20	18
Savings If All Legal Text Pages Eliminated	\$ 650,910	\$ 379,809	\$ 290,576	\$ 440,432	\$ 125,163	\$ 201,820	\$ 145,682	\$ 173,751
% of \$16 Billion Dollar City Budget	0.01085%	0.00633%	0.00484%	0.00734%	0.00209%	0.00336%	0.00243%	0.00290%
Total Production Cost Paid Arguments Pages Only	\$ 609,185	\$ 459,769	\$ 331,257	\$ 466,737	\$ 169,864	\$ 355,587	\$ 254,944	\$ 260,131
Paid Arguments Costs to Total Voter Guide Costs	24.7%	27.0%	24.6%	25.4%	19.8%	24.3%	25.7%	23.3%
Paid Balot Arguments								
Number of Pages of Paid Ballot Arguments	73	69	57	66	19	37	35	30
Number of Paid Ballot Arguments	207	204	192	201	55	94	98	82
Filing Fees Collected \$200 per Ballot Argument	\$ 41,400	\$ 40,800	\$ 38,400	\$ 40,200	\$ 11,000	\$ 18,800	\$ 19,600	\$ 16,467
Filing Fees If Raised \$1,000 to per Ballot Argument	\$ 207,000	\$ 204,000	\$ 192,000	\$ 201,000	\$ 55,000	\$ 94,000	\$ 98,000	\$ 82,333
Increased Revenue if Filing Fee Increased	\$ 165,600	\$ 163,200	\$ 153,600	\$ 160,800	\$ 44,000	\$ 75,200	\$ 78,400	\$ 65,867
Word Count Submitted	31,667	27,547	21,507	26,907	13,739	16,065	13,615	14,473
Word Count Fees Collected @ \$2.00 per word	\$ 63,334	\$ 55,094	\$ 43,014	\$ 53,814	\$ 27,478	\$ 32,130	\$ 27,230	\$ 28,946
Word Count Fees if Raised to \$10.00 per word	\$ 316,670	\$ 275,470	\$ 215,070	\$ 269,070	\$ 137,390	\$ 160,650	\$ 136,150	\$ 144,730
Increased Revenue if Per-Word Fee Increased	\$ 253,336	\$ 220,376	\$ 172,056	\$ 215,256	\$ 109,912	\$ 128,520	\$ 108,920	\$ 115,784
TOTAL INCREASED REVENUE IF FEES INCREASED	\$ 418,936	\$ 383,576	\$ 325,656	\$ 376,056	\$ 153,912	\$ 203,720	\$ 187,320	\$ 181,651
% of \$16 Billion Dollar City Budget	0.00698%	0.00639%	0.00543%	0.00627%	0.00257%	0.00340%	0.00312%	0.00303%

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.