

Member, Board of Supervisors
District 9



City and County of San Francisco

HILLARY RONEN

July 16, 2024

Re: Resignation from Chairwomanship of the Rules Committee

Dear Board President Peskin,

I resign my Chairwomanship of the Rules Committee, effective immediately. Let me explain why I am doing so and why I believe your leadership of the Board during this time is setting a sad and dangerous precedent for the future of this body.

As Chair of the Rules Committee, I spent the last month analyzing proposed ballot measures that would have collectively cost taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars if enacted. This is during a period when the City is facing the worst budget crisis in over a decade. With this in mind, I pared down the number and fiscal impact of local measures being placed on the November ballot.

Most importantly, I did not move forward a measure creating a Deferred Retirement Option Program (DROP) that would have allowed a small number of retirement-age police officers to more than double their salaries in exchange for delaying retirement for up to 5 years – a benefit no other City employee receives. This is directly after the Board of Supervisors approved a \$166M increase to SFPD for higher salaries and hiring bonuses, and approved increases in the police budget by \$200M over the last few years. A previous version of the DROP was deemed a [significant and expensive failure](#) by both the Controller and the Board of Supervisors in 2011. Neither the author of this proposed measure nor SFPD could provide basic data needed to assess whether an amended DROP program would work any better today.

Additionally, I removed a portion of a measure that would have allowed firefighters to resume “pension spiking” – a highly expensive practice that calculates an employee’s pension based on the last year of their salary instead of an average of the last 3 years of salary. Pension spiking was eliminated by pension reform for all City workers in 2011 because the practice was widely abused. Removing the pension spiking portion of this measure will reduce the cost to the City by over \$5.5M for each of the next 15-20 years. I will note that I did vote in favor of an amendment to lower the retirement age of firefighters from 58 years to 55 years due to the carcinogens they are exposed to regularly on the job.

Ironically, at the beginning of this year, you appointed me as Rules Committee Chair to replace Supervisor Dorsey because you said you needed an experienced leader to oversee the Charter Amendment process. My staff and I took this responsibility seriously, spending hours analyzing proposed legislation, organizing committee meetings to meet the schedules of all Committee members and Charter Amendment authors, coordinating between the Clerk's office and City Attorney, holding long Committee meetings, and making difficult judgment calls to ensure the voters are getting a collection of measures that are honest, well thought out, and fiscally responsible. It's relevant that I am one of very few members of the Board of Supervisors who is not running for elected office and have attempted to protect the public from politicized legislation that does not serve the public interest.

Sadly, you and Supervisor Dorsey are going to extraordinary lengths to propose multiple special meetings and to waive every Board rule and procedural protection in place to overturn the majority ruling made by the Rules Committee. By doing so you are undermining the credibility of the institution of the Board, rendering advice from the Clerk's office meaningless, and reducing the role of Committee Chair to merely a symbolic post.

I will not contribute to lowering the esteem of this important body, and therefore resign my Rules Chairwomanship, effective immediately.

I hope that after November, this Board and its leaders will remember that we are servants of the people of San Francisco, elected to uphold their interests, including the responsible investment of public funds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Hillary Ronen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Hillary" and last name "Ronen" clearly distinguishable.

Hillary Ronen
District 9 Supervisor

cc: Angela Calvillo, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors