



NATHAN FLETCHER

**SUPERVISOR, FOURTH DISTRICT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

AGENDA ITEM

DATE: January 12, 2020

TO: Board of Supervisors

SUBJECT

**FRAMEWORK FOR OUR FUTURE: REFORMING THE COUNTY LEGISLATIVE
AGENDA (DISTRICTS: ALL)**

OVERVIEW

The County's Legislative Agenda is the basis on which the Office of Strategy and Intergovernmental Affairs (OSIA) advocates on the County's behalf for local, state and federal legislation and related actions. The Legislative Agenda is made up of 1) the Legislative Program which is approved by the Board of Supervisors annually; 2) Board Legislative Policies, as outlined in Section M of the Board of Supervisors Policy Manual; and 3) any additional specific Board direction. The Legislative Agenda should reflect the values and priorities of the Board of Supervisors.

On October 27, 2020, the Board of Supervisors approved the 2021 Legislative Program. A week later, San Diegans voted in three new members of the Board of Supervisors. The voters of San Diego County have spoken, and a majority of Supervisors on the Board now represent different priorities and values than the Board of the last few decades.

The existing Legislative Agenda is made up of unwieldy documents that prioritize outdated policy initiatives that do not reflect the ideologies of the majority of the current Board of Supervisors. The Legislative Agenda should be re-framed to emphasize priorities of inclusion, equity, and fairness for all and allow staff to advocate efficiently for the County in these areas.

If approved, the recommendations in this board letter would direct the Chief Administrative Officer to suspend the 2021 Legislative Program; draft a new 2021 Legislative Agenda based on guidelines and priorities outlined in this board letter; review and calibrate the roles and responsibilities of OSIA staff and functions; modify BOS Policy M-1 and M-2 accordingly; and work with OSIA to create an annual process to review the County's future legislative programs, with a community-involved process component.

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**RECOMMENDATION(S)
SUPERVISOR NATHAN FLETCHER**

- 1.) Suspend 2021 Legislative Guidelines, Priorities, and Board Legislative Policies (M-3- M-61).
- 2.) Direct the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) to draft abbreviated guiding principles and key legislative initiatives based on priorities outlined in this board letter to serve as a new 2021 Legislative Agenda and return to the Board with the Draft Legislative Agenda for approval at the January 26, 2020 Board meeting.
- 3.) Direct the CAO to review and calibrate the roles and responsibilities of the Office of Strategy and Intergovernmental Affairs staff and functions according to the new legislative program approach focused on proactive action and nimble advocacy of adopted guiding principles and legislative priorities. These changes should be reflected in the modification of BOS Policy M-1 and M-2 and brought to the Board for approval at the next board meeting on January 26, 2020.
- 4.) Direct the CAO to work with the Office of Strategy and Intergovernmental Affairs to create an annual process to review the County’s legislative program, with a component that includes a community-involved process for feedback and input and return to the Board with an updated process within 90 days.

FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact associated with the proposed action. There will be no change in net General Fund costs and no additional staff years.

BUSINESS IMPACT STATEMENT

N/A

ADVISORY BOARD STATEMENT

N/A

BACKGROUND

The Office of Strategy and Intergovernmental Affairs (OSIA) responds to federal, state, and local legislation and related actions that may impact the County and advocates on behalf of the County for or against such actions. The roles of the OSIA are outlined in Sections M-1 and M-2 of the Board of Supervisors Policy Manual. OSIA exists within the Finance and General Government Group of the County of San Diego and under the authority of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). OSIA’s authority to advocate is guided by the Board of Supervisors, specifically through three avenues that make up the County’s Legislative Agenda. These three components are:

1. The Legislative Program (made of Sponsorship Proposals, Priority Issues, and Policy Guidelines), approved by the Board of Supervisors annually.

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2. Board Legislative Policies, Section M of the Board of Supervisors Policy Manual, which outlines legislative priorities.
3. Specific Board Direction, if the Board directs the OSIA to advocate on an issue.

Each year, the Board of Supervisors adopts a Legislative Program containing statements and guidance that allows the County, through the OSIA, to take positions and advocate in response to potential local, state, and federal action that could impact the County. The Legislative Program contains a legislative sponsorship platform, state and federal legislative priorities, and policy guidelines for the upcoming calendar year. These components reflect the values and policy priorities of the Supervisors.

Two of the documents included within the Legislative Program are cumulative in nature and have grown to unwieldy documents. The documents that make up the 2021 Legislative Program total 118 pages, which does not even include the Board Legislative Policies, Section M of the Board of Supervisors Policy Manual. The Legislative Program is meant to allow OSIA to respond quickly to actions that may impact the County; instead, the size and nature of these documents make it difficult for OSIA to act quickly and know what legislative priorities should take precedence.

Additionally, the existing Legislative Program has accumulated policy priorities over the past thirty years that are now outdated and reflect ideologies that are antithetical to the views of the majority of the Board of Supervisors. These policies include promoting extreme fiscal conservatism, creating higher barriers to voting, interfering with the sovereignty of local tribes, anti-state rhetoric, and excluding individuals from county services to protect against mostly unfounded fears of fraud and abuse. These policies have been the playbook for county staff to use when developing procedures, programs, and services.

On October 27, 2020, the Board of Supervisors approved the 2021 Legislative Program. A week later, San Diegans voted in three new members of the Board of Supervisors. The voters of San Diego County have spoken, and a majority of Supervisors on the Board now represent different priorities and values than the Board of the last few decades. Supervisors who had served for decades have now been replaced with new voices and perspectives on the issues.

The County's Legislative Agenda should reflect the values and priorities of the policymakers elected to govern and be the voice of the people, who, in turn, give authority to OSIA to advocate on the County's behalf. As such, it is appropriate to rethink and restructure legislative documents to reflect the Board's new direction.

While the old documents on which OSIA's authority stems are convoluted and unwieldy, instead, we should base all legislative priorities on clear and concise directives reflecting the values and priorities of the Board. These documents will act as a more efficient tool for OSIA staff to act quickly in response to legislative action that could impact the County.

If the recommendations in this Board Letter are approved, I strongly recommend including the following priorities and guiding principles in an updated Legislative Agenda.

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Statement of Values and Purpose:

The County of San Diego will actively engage in advocacy efforts in the following areas at the local, state, federal, and international levels to ensure that legislation and related actions benefit the constituents we serve while maintaining County operations.

Priorities: Direct OSIA to Act on These Priorities

- COVID-19 Response and Recovery
- Behavioral Health Services
- Homelessness
- Affordable Housing
- Environmental Justice and Protection
- Equity and Racial Justice
- Public Health Infrastructure
- Data Infrastructure
- Habitat Conservation and Climate Adaptation
- Transit Infrastructure and Low-Carbon Transportation Options

Guidelines: Overarching Principles

- Partnering Collaboratively with the State
- Work Collaboratively with the 18 Incorporated Cities
- Respect the Sovereignty of, and Work Collaboratively with, the Tribal Nations within San Diego County
- Work Collaboratively on Issues of Binational Concern with the City of Tijuana, the State of Baja California Norte, and the Country of Mexico
- Protect Fiscal Integrity of the County
- Equity in All Policies and Resource Allocation
- Community-Based Approach to Public Safety
- Government Transparency and Access to Information for All San Diegans

If approved, the recommendations in this board letter would Direct the CAO to 1) suspend the 2021 Legislative Program; 2) draft guiding principles and key legislative initiatives based on priorities outlined in this board letter to serve as a new 2021 Legislative Agenda and return to the board for approval; 3) review and calibrate the roles and responsibilities of OSIA staff and functions according to the new approach and modify BOS Policy M 1 and M 2 accordingly; and 4) work with the Office of Strategy and Intergovernmental Affairs to create an annual process to review the County’s future legislative programs, with a component that includes a community-involved process for feedback and input.

The Legislative Agenda should work for the people of the county of San Diego. I urge your support to rethink and re-frame our legislative priorities to emphasize the importance of inclusion, equity and fairness for all and make staff able to advocate on the County’s behalf in these areas.

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LINKAGE TO THE COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO STRATEGIC PLAN

Today's proposed action to rethink and reframe San Diego County advocacy and legislative priorities supports the Healthy Families, Safe Communities, Sustainable Environments, and Operational Excellence Strategic Initiatives in the County of San Diego's 2020-25 Strategic Plan by ensuring that the County's legislative priorities reflect the will of the voters.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nathan Fletcher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

NATHAN FLETCHER
Supervisor, Fourth District

ATTACHMENT(S)

N/A

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AGENDA ITEM INFORMATION SHEET

REQUIRES FOUR VOTES: Yes No

WRITTEN DISCLOSURE PER COUNTY CHARTER SECTION 1000.1 REQUIRED

Yes No

PREVIOUS RELEVANT BOARD ACTIONS:

Item 23, 10/27/2020, 2021 Legislative Program

BOARD POLICIES APPLICABLE:

Board Legislative Policies, M-1-M-61

BOARD POLICY STATEMENTS:

N/A

MANDATORY COMPLIANCE:

N/A

ORACLE AWARD NUMBER(S) AND CONTRACT AND/OR REQUISITION NUMBER(S):

N/A

ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT: District 4

OTHER CONCURRENCE(S): N/A

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