

September 9, 2025

Argemira Flores Feng, Chair

Yaman Salahi, Vice Chair

David Tsai, Karen Bell Francois, Kevin Yeh

Regarding increasing contribution limit to \$1000

I am sorry I am having to make my comment during your General Public Comment but I have a meeting later this morning that I'm unable to change.

I urge you to remove Section 1.114 (a) Limits on Contributions and Candidates, which increases the campaign contribution from \$500 to \$1000.

Serving on the Ethics Commission, you are prohibited from participating in a local campaign. If you were not serving, **I ask how many of you can/would make a \$1000 contribution to a political campaign?**

I have served as a volunteer treasurer since 2016 and regularly participate in campaign committees calling supporters to donate to the Board of Supervisors candidate. \$500 is a hardship for most San Franciscans. Raising the donation limit to accommodate inflation is action in an imaginary world. Are voters knocking on Ethics Commission staff doors begging to be able to donate more than \$500? NO. Only staff from lobbyist groups.

The contribution limit was part of a ballot measure passed by voters, Proposition O, The Fair Elections Ordinance. It was placed on the ballot by the Ethics Commission and in particular the late former Commissioner, retired Superior Court Judge Isabella Grant and Commissioner Paul Melbostad. It created partial public financing for eligible candidates for Board of Supervisors. I campaigned for passage of Proposition O because I was acutely aware of the importance of money in a candidate being able to deliver information to voters about their qualifications. Candidates who do not have personal wealth are tremendously disadvantaged.

I am troubled with the current situation where billionaires are spending huge amounts of money to influence election outcomes. Our current mayor's winning strategy was a blank check.

Increasing the donation limit to \$1000 serves no purpose except increasing public sentiment that politics are for the elite few.

Sincerely,

Esther Marks