

Stephanie Vallejo, M.S.
Reform Whittier
PO Box 6181 Whittier, CA 90609

May 5, 2026

City of Whittier City Council
13230 Penn Street
Whittier, CA 90602



RE: Request to Align Whittier Local Elections with California Statewide Election Dates

Dear Mayor James Becerra and Councilmembers,

First and foremost, on behalf of our members and I, we congratulate you and welcome our newly elected city council members. As you may be aware, Reform Whittier is a local organization made up of numerous Whittier residents. In 2023, we initiated a ballot measure aimed at establishing term limits for the Whittier city council and aligning our elections with our state.

Regrettably, we were unable to gather the necessary signatures. This shortfall was not due to a lack of interest among our residents, but rather a deficiency in resources to tackle such a significant undertaking.

The purpose of this letter is to kindly request that you consider revisiting the issues of term limits, but more importantly election alignment. We provide you with some information to support this request but also welcome a meeting to collaborate or provide input to achieve this goal.

Rationale

Increase voter turnout: Consolidating election dates reduces voter fatigue and typically results in higher participation compared with stand-alone municipal elections. In 2020, when our city was forced to align its election due to Senate Bill 415, we saw a significant increase in voter turnout. Our voter turnout almost tripled.

Reduce costs: Holding fewer separate elections lowers administrative, staffing expenses, expenses related to updating equipment, and reduces the financial burden on the city.

Improve representation: Higher turnout generally produces a governing body that better reflects the community's preferences and needs.

Streamline administration: Our city clerk could continue to be our designated election official who coordinates with the Los Angeles County Registrar Recorder Office. Coordinating with county election schedules simplifies logistics and management. It will also help our Whittier employees stay focused on their primary daily roles and responsibilities without the added pressure of preparing for an election.

Proposed Action

As our representatives, you could direct staff to draft an ordinance to shift municipal elections to the statewide election calendar, we recommend the primary. A ballot measure is required because a charter amendment is needed.

We suggest that the ballot measure be placed on the next feasible state election date. We suggest an outreach plan explaining the change to voters. Coordinate with the County Registrar of Voters to set effective dates and ensure compliance with state election law. Finally, allow the voters to make the final decision.

In closing, aligning our local elections with California’s primary election dates will strengthen civic participation, reduce city costs, and improve the legitimacy of local governance. I urge the Council to initiate the necessary steps at your earliest convenience. In the future, time permitting, we would ask that you revisit term limits and perhaps consider having five districts instead of four.

Our members and I thank you for considering this request. I am available to discuss or provide further information.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Vallejo, M.S.

Reform Whittier, Principal Officer

Reform Whittier