

Guest Letter

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Newport Beach City Council

Are voters being underestimated?



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Courtesy of City of Newport Beach

City Councilmember Joy Brenner

When a politician tells you, "It's very simple...I trust the voters" (to do what I say), be suspicious, be very suspicious! The elect your mayor campaign is a perfect example, with a lot of complexities not evident on the surface. We currently elect our mayors every two years when we choose city councilmembers who come from all parts of our city. Each generally serves as mayor for one or two years while on council, not for a total of two four-year terms or eight years as proposed in the June 7 ballot Measure B.

Historically, our most dedicated councilmembers have been citizens who want to give back and protect our quality of life in Newport Beach. Lately there have been many politicians who want to go on to a higher elected office and it often changes their perspective. This measure would serve a politician well while they build their reputation and war chest (lots of money) here in Newport Beach. And they only have to live here for about 30 days before running for council, or in this case, mayor. If this measure passes, we will have many politicians hoping to use us as their political stepping-stone.

I found that by taking any particular person out of my reasoning on this topic I was better able to look at the pros and cons. One important con is that big money special interests may find this desirable in order to just work with one powerful mayor.

We have seen that most of the money supporting B is coming from business interests, many outside our city. Convincing a majority of the council who have the responsibility to protect all parts of the community would be more difficult. However, even those with special interests who really love our city can see the danger of having one person with extreme power and a rigid perspective in this position.

Our system is not perfect but other cities, normally much larger, have big problems when they elect their mayor...corruption, bribery, bickering, fights, political machines and power-hungry politicians. Please VOTE NO on MEASURE B to preserve our citizen-based local government where everyone has direct access and can discuss issues with ALL councilmembers and lobby for the solutions which best serve our entire community!