

RON NIRENBERG
OFFICE OF CITY COUNCILMAN
DISTRICT 8

October 5, 2015

State Representative Lyle Larson Texas House of Representatives 2 Mecca Drive San Antonio, TX 78232

Dear Rep. Larson:

Thank you for your continued leadership and service to the residents of San Antonio.

Section 41.0052(a) of the Texas Election Code allows municipalities to change their election dates to November, but only if such a change happened before December 31, 2012. I hope you will sponsor legislation to remove the arbitrary date limitation and allow municipalities to maintain control over how and when their elections are conducted. This legislation will remove regulatory barriers and enable City leaders to engage in a local debate about how to best increase voter turnout.

Civic disengagement is the most pressing challenge facing our nation, and its impact in San Antonio is felt acutely in everything we do: from adopting an annual budget to building the comprehensive plan, from addressing public safety issues to debating new modes of transportation for the future. Each of these efforts would be far more fruitful with greater public participation. That participation begins and ends with voting.

The numbers are bleak. The May 9, 2015 general election—on a ballot that contained a mayoral race and six ballot propositions—drew only 12% of registered voters. This number is not an anomaly, but indicative of a larger trend. A core tenant of representative democracy is that legitimacy is borne by participation. Higher turnout will yield a more effective, responsive City Hall. The City of Austin recently switched its municipal elections from May to November, yielding an increase in voter participation from 10.7% to 40.4%.

A vote cast is an investment in our future. Let's ensure greater participation in municipal elections by giving the City of San Antonio the option to pursue nonpartisan municipal elections to coincide with other November elections.

Thank you for your leadership and your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Ron Nirenberg, Councilman

District 8
CITY HALL

P.O. BOX 839966 SAN ANTONIO, TX 78283-3966 OFFICE: 210-207-7086 FAX: 210-207-7027 DISTRICT8@SANANTONIO.GOV