



VOTER INFORMATION PAMPHLET

PROPOSITION 3



PROPOSITION: Shall a study committee be appointed to consider and possibly recommend a change in Weber County's form of government?

ARGUMENT FOR

Weber County voters have advocated to put the question of whether to study the form of government to a vote. We ask that you **Vote "FOR"** Proposition 3 to appoint a volunteer, one-year, non-partisan study committee that can help us know which form of County government is the best for Weber County. This committee will be charged with providing voters a clear and actionable understanding of the four forms of government allowed under Utah State law and which form can best serve our diverse county and its growing population.

The study will give us a clear understanding of our needs and options so that we are able to determine and select the best form of government for Weber County. The committee will hold open meetings to make the process inclusive and transparent to all residents.

The questions that this study committee must answer are complex and require a non-partisan and disciplined investigation. For example, under our current three-county commissioner form of government the county commissioners have both executive and legislative responsibilities. We need to ask if those responsibilities should be separated and why? Should we increase the number of commissioners to adequately represent the growing county population? This in-depth study may answer questions like those and the following:

- Which forms of government are most cost effective
- Which form is most practical for running county operations?
- Which form creates the best citizen participation and representation?
- What is the experience of other counties that have already changed their form of government?

If the committee finds that a change in Weber government structure will significantly benefit the citizens of Weber County there will be a second public vote. If no change is recommended the current three-commissioner legislative body structure of government will remain in place in Weber County.

Public hearings and community forums will educate Weber County residents during this one year study period. Residents are encouraged to actively engage in these study meetings. We must remember that actively involved and well-informed citizens are invaluable for good government. This study will be a good step to stimulate public discussion which will help us determine the most suitable government for Weber County residents.

Sponsors: Oscar L. Mata, Robert A. Hunter, Jennie Taylor, Jan Zogmaister, & Angelika Spaey

ARGUMENT AGAINST

Proposition 3 sounds harmless on the surface, but it will set off a chain reaction of potential unintended consequences. Currently we have a three-member commission that has worked effectively for Weber County for decades. A small private group which would be appointed to study a potential change could wield tremendous influence and could **spend hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars without any financial oversight**. Their recommendation could create **a shift of authority from "full-time elected officials" to appointed bureaucrats**. A quick study of state code 17-52A, sections 100 to 500 will verify this.

Below are some harmful consequences of Prop 3:

This **private study group would be formed by politicians or their appointees**, with virtually no public accountability, and would set up its own rules. Do we want to give our voice to such a small private group of unelected political appointees?

County taxpayers must pay for the private group's "necessary expenses," including hiring lawyers, clerks, and "professional consultants." With **little oversight and no spending limits**, this private group could continue to rack up expenses for at least a year. A hired attorney could cost several hundred thousand dollars to oversee the recommendations. Professional consultants could cost even more.

The private group's recommendation could shift elected legislative offices from full time to part time. On the surface, this may sound good. But what you really have is a **shift in power from elected full-time officials to unelected employees who are not directly accountable to the public**. This is exactly what happened when Summit County changed from a full-time three-member commission to a five-member part-time council. Their county now has an appointed County Manager whose office has swelled from three people to over twenty people. Since the County Manager is appointed, he only reports to the part-time council. On a day-to-day basis, the County Manager becomes the executive body of government, with no accountability to the public. **The citizens are left out of the process to vote on the county's most important position**. The County Council only meets once a week and gets most of their information and recommendations from the appointed County Manager.

If the private group takes more than nine months to submit the report, the resulting election would be held during a municipal election year, **costing county taxpayers another \$80,000**.

In summary, some people may say that voting to establish a study committee is harmless. **But a closer look at Prop 3 uncovers a substantial loss of citizen power, a potential increase in taxes to pay for lawyers and professional consultants, a shift from elected public servants to appointed bureaucrats, and wasted taxpayer dollars**. As the last study found, our current form of government is efficient and accessible via the ballot box, where we hold our elected officials accountable.

Sponsors: Gary Boyer, Bruce Burrows, Adele Kammeyer, & Mark Bischoff