

**From:** [JOSEPH FERRETTI](#)  
**To:** [City Council](#)  
**Cc:** [Board and Council Messages](#)  
**Subject:** Support for Term Referendum  
**Date:** Monday, June 10, 2024 10:06:40 AM  
**Attachments:** [Landmark City Council TermsDecision.docx](#)

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Esteemed City Council Members,  
Please see attached for the support of your directive in putting Council terms from three to four years to a referendum.  
Thank you for your unprecedented service,  
Joe Ferretti  
433 Harbor Dr. S.  
Venice, FL.

**From:** [Christine Robinson](#)  
**To:** [City Council](#)  
**Cc:** [Board and Council Messages](#)  
**Subject:** City Election Dates  
**Date:** Monday, June 10, 2024 7:46:51 PM  
**Importance:** High

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Dear Honorable Mayor Pachota and Honorable Venice City Council members,

The Argus Foundation is writing you today in support of placing the question on the ballot of changing the date of city elections to coincide with county, state, and federal elections.

The Argus Foundation was a member of Change the Date Sarasota which supported the 2018 referendum for city commissioner elections and also the 2022 referendum which also extended the same change to city charter amendments.

The Change the Date Sarasota Coalition was a bipartisan effort comprised of The Sarasota Chamber, the NAACP, The Argus Foundation, ACLU Sarasota, Gulf Coast Builders Exchange, Sarasota Manatee Young Democrats, Sarasota Republican Party, International Union of Police Associations, ACLU Florida, Realtors Association of Sarasota and Manatee, and many others. It was co-chaired by Democrat and former Sarasota City Mayor Suzanne Atwell and Republican Public Defender Larry Eger.

The 2018 referendum occurred at the same time that a vote also occurred in Gainesville. They also changed their elections to regular election cycles.

Change the Date Sarasota was necessary because the City Commission in Fall of 2017 wouldn't do the right thing. That commission, back then, refused to place the question on the ballot of moving the city commission election dates.

As a result of that decision, one of the most diverse movements in this city of Sarasota's history was born. That group went around that city commission's decision and, with a time-consuming and costly petition campaign which received almost 1,000 more petitions than needed, got the question to the voters on a regular election date. Once asked, the voters overwhelmingly responded with over 63% of the vote to change the date of their city commission elections.

Based upon the vote, and the results, not a single argument against Change the Date Sarasota back in 2018 came to fruition and every prediction the Change the Date coalition had about

the results came true or exceeded expectations. It was wrong for that commission to not put this question forward to the voters on their own, and that commission will forever be on the wrong side of history for trying to keep the question from the voters.

Your goal as an elected body should be to have the highest turnout possible for the least amount of money in your elections. Increasing voter turnout makes the City Council more responsive to the entire community, not just the super minority of voters who vote in off election cycles. Voter composition is more reflective of the community in regular election cycles. In the city of Sarasota, in the first election after the change was implemented, participation by racial minorities more than doubled.

Change the Date Coalition Co-Chair Mayor Suzanne Atwell once gave a speech that we are going to use some language from and tailor for this situation: Any conscious decision to remain rooted in a past that so obviously limits inclusion of more voters having a say in the representative democracy of their local government is of questionable merit. There is no trade off that is more valuable than bringing together a broad representation of all voices of the city to determine its future. Keeping anything of this magnitude off the general election ballot tells those collective voices that you would rather have a city council elected without them. That's not the message local government should be delivering to citizens about their vote.

The Argus Foundation urges you to let the voters decide if they want more participation in their city elections for less cost. We ask you to place this question on the general election ballot and let the voters decide. Don't block this important question from voters.

Best Regards,  
Christine  
Christine Robinson, Executive Director



The Argus Foundation applies business leadership to important community issues.

PO Box 49361, Sarasota, FL 34230, [941-365-4886](tel:941-365-4886)  
[www.ArgusFoundation.org](http://www.ArgusFoundation.org)

**From:** [Joan Roscoe](#)  
**To:** [City Council](#)  
**Cc:** [Board and Council Messages](#)  
**Subject:** Change The Election Date  
**Date:** Monday, June 10, 2024 6:59:44 PM

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North Port was brought up at a previous meeting as an example of a local city changing their elections. Our team researched this and here's what we learned:

- The North Port Charter Review Advisory Board conducted publicly-noticed meetings from November 2015 to January 2017 to review their entire charter – this was a 14-month review.
- The City Commission AND the Charter Review Advisory Board then conducted dual meetings to gain additional input on proposed changes to the charter – this was an additional 18-month review.
- The specific proposed changes to the election of city commissioners allowed for the election of Seats 1-2-3 to be held in 2018 and Seats 4-5 to be held in 2020; all of them 4-year terms.
- No extension of any then-current elected official's terms was discussed and there were ample opportunities to review at these many public meetings.
- The changes were voted on as a ballot referendum in November of 2018 and passed. Copies of the old and new charter were placed at every polling station so citizens could inspect, in detail, what the changes were. Graphs were also produced summarizing the old vs. new at the polling stations.
- Granted, North Port's term changes were part of a larger package of charter changes than what is being proposed in Venice. However, similarities can still be drawn.

**Our team was so impressed after researching this – North Port conducted a detailed, inclusive, thorough, multi-month process. This seems to us to be best practice. We hope the Venice City Council slows down and adopts the same process.**

**----Venice Thrives**



**From:** [Mary Taylor](#)  
**To:** [City Council](#)  
**Cc:** [Board and Council Messages](#)  
**Subject:** election terms vote  
**Date:** Monday, June 10, 2024 2:32:14 PM

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Dear Mayor and City Council members,

We oppose your decision to extend your election terms and add to our November 2024 ballot. This is not our decision but yours. Please vote against this decision on Tuesday June 11<sup>th</sup>.

Thank you

Mary Taylor  
113 Asti Ct.  
North Venice