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# Charter proposal's efficiency touted, doubted by analysts

By Rick Orlov  
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To its boosters, Measure 1 on Tuesday's ballot will create enough efficiencies at City Hall to more than offset any costs from a new Department of Neighborhood Empowerment or an expanded City Council.

To critics, the proposed new charter will do little more than create a powerful mayor with the ability to reward cronies with patronage jobs and seed the potential for corruption with contracts and a weakening of the civil service system.

"What we've tried to do is streamline the charter to make city government more efficient," said George Kieffer, chairman of the City Council-appointed

Charter Reform Commission.

"We've streamlined the charter by taking out the ancient stuff that's in there. We think there will be savings because of that and the increased oversight from the controller's powers for audits and the budget administration."

But other officials, such as Councilwoman Jackie Goldberg, worry about the ability of a mayor to have such wide control.

"There is much less of a check on the mayor's power," Goldberg said. The council would be in a weaker position, compared to the power it has under voter-approved Proposition 5 to overrule city commissions.

"We no longer have Proposition 5 when it deals with personnel issues. We can overturn some commission actions, but not as much as the people voted to give us some years ago."

Goldberg also is upset about changes the charter makes in the Animal Services Department, ignoring recent changes approved by voters to give the department's commission more authority over its director.

"I think once people see things like that, they will not approve of this new charter," Goldberg said. "I really don't think they want to go this far."

Rob Glushon, a member of the elected Charter Reform Commission, said the proposal does leave a great deal of power in the hands of the City Council and also gives them more flexibility.

"We took out a lot of things from the charter that required charter changes and now gives the council the power to make changes by ordinance," Glushon said. "It will make Los Angeles more efficient and flexible to changes."

Goldberg, however, said she did not believe the current charter — adopted in 1925 following years of corruption — was that difficult to live with. "In this state, in this city, there's an election every year," Goldberg said. "If something is really a problem, we have time to get it before voters."

Mayor Richard Riordan, the biggest booster of the new charter proposal, said he believes the savings will come from increased accountability.

The mayor has liked to cite the case of the \$800,000 in late fees paid by the city to the telephone company for failure to pay its bills on time. "And the problem is no one is held accountable," Riordan said. "With the charter, people could and should blame the mayor."

Theresa Patzakis, an assistant deputy mayor to Riordan who represented him before the charter commissions and is on a leave to work on the campaign, said there are other areas where there will be savings.

"Right now to process anything — for instance, an exempt (from civil service protection) position — takes 47 steps," Patzakis said. "The new charter will cut all that out and allow a general manager to hire someone if there are the funds available."

*This is the fourth and final story in a series explaining the charter proposals on Tuesday's ballot; the full series will be reprinted in Sunday's Daily News.*

