

El Dorado voters may decide fate of county's charter

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El Dorado County voters may be asked to decide three county charter-related issues in November, including whether to repeal the charter.

Following a special meeting last week to discuss recommendations of the charter review committee, the county supervisors directed staff members to further investigate issues and prepare language for three potential ballot measures, said Mike Applegarth, a spokesman for the county chief administrator's office.

The first, in keeping with recommendations of the charter review committee and the 2008-09 grand jury, would allow voters to decide whether to repeal the charter.

Government operations in most of California's 58 counties are defined by state law, but El Dorado is one of 14 counties, including Sacramento and Placer, that operates under a charter, which can provide more local control than is possible under general law.

El Dorado County's charter was approved by 60 percent of voters in 1994. But in a report issued last spring, the grand jury concluded that the document has been an impediment to efficient government.

The other measures would let voters decide whether to retain two provisions of the charter - term limits for the supervisors and the current method of determining and adjusting pay for Sheriff's Department employees.

Members of the Board of Supervisors currently are limited to two consecutive four-year terms.

Under the charter, salaries for various positions in the Sheriff's Department are based on the average of salaries for comparable positions in the South Lake Tahoe Police Department, Amador County Sheriff's Department and the California Highway Patrol.

Applegarth said staff members will present a report to the board in late April or early May.

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