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## Print This Story

By CHRISTIAN M. WADE

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Two years ago, Hillsborough County voters approved a referendum bestowing far-reaching veto powers to an elected county mayor, if that position is ever created.

But members of Hillsborough County's charter review board, which is appointed by the county commission, argue that what voters approved was unconstitutional. They want to put another referendum on the ballot in the Nov. 2 election repealing the provision.

Before they do that, however, the board needs to hear from the voters.

So they've scheduled public hearings on June 29 and July 13 to discuss the proposed referendum, which would require at least 10 votes to put it on the ballot.

The charter board's review was prompted by a legal opinion by County Attorney Renee Lee, who said the veto provision violates the state constitution because only the county commission can pass annual budgets and set countywide property tax rates.

In 2008, Hillsborough voters approved the veto amendment by 53 percent. A companion proposal creating the position was knocked off the ballot after a lengthy court challenge.

Tampa lawyer Mary Ann Stiles, chairwoman of the Elected County Mayor Political Committee Inc., says the veto powers provision is constitutional and has called the charter board's review a thinly veiled attempt to derail the county mayor initiative.

Stiles' group is busy gathering the 40,000 signatures required to get the county mayor question on the ballot in the Nov. 2 election.

The referendum would ask voters whether they want to replace the appointed county administrator with an elected county mayor.

At the public hearings, the review board will also discuss a proposal from Hillsborough County Circuit Clerk Pat Frank to eliminate the office of internal auditor, which voters created in the 2002 elections to bring efficiency and cost savings to county departments.

Both hearings begin at 6 p.m. at the Fred B. Karl County Center in Tampa.

**Should The Hillsborough County Commission Be Expanded To Provide More Diversity Among Its Members?**

05/25/10 Robert Lorei

Listen to this entire show:

Tags:

Should the Hillsborough County Commission be expanded by two members in order to better represent the people of Hillsborough County? Our next guest testified yesterday before the Hillsborough Charter Review Board- saying that Hillsborough County is larger than seven states and that county government needs to better represent its citizens.

Patrick Manteiga is editor and publisher of the newspaper La Gaceta and he argues that the county population is so big that a commissioner elected county-wide represents more people than the governors of seven states. Manteiga believes that expanding the number of single member districts on the commission from four to six would ensure that commissioners would be more in touch with the issues in their community. And, he says, there would be a greater opportunity to elect a Hispanic member to the commission. Manteiga says there have only been two Latinos elected to the county commission in the last three decades but that there is a sizable Hispanic population in the county that is under-served by the current makeup of the commission.

*Submitted  
into the  
Record  
by Gerald White  
(Charter Review Board)  
6/21/10*

# Metro

## County reviewing mayor's veto powers

Voters authorized the trump card in a charter amendment in 2008.

By **CHRISTIAN M. WADE**  
cwade@tampatrib.com

TAMPA » Hillsborough County's charter review board is considering a move that could strip the veto powers of an elected county mayor, if that position is created.

The review board, which is appointed by the county commission, plans to hold public hearings asking voters if they want to repeal a charter amendment, approved two years ago, that gives a county mayor veto powers over the seven-member commission.

Board member Jan Platt said the review was prompted by a legal opinion by County Attorney Renee Lee, who argued that the veto provision violates the state constitution because only the county commission can pass budgets and set property tax rates.

"Unfortunately, the voters didn't know



Platt



Stiles

what they were voting on was unconstitutional," Platt said. "We need to resolve that now, or someone else will do it with a lawsuit."

Tampa lawyer Mary Ann Stiles, chairwoman of the Elected County Mayor Political Committee Inc., said there are no discrepancies between the proposed charter amendment and the veto provision. She called the move an attempt to derail the county mayor campaign

"They have a clear agenda," Stiles said "They really don't care what the people of this county think; only the commissioners who appointed them. It's complete arrogance."

In 2008, Hillsborough voters approved the veto amendment by 53 percent. A companion proposal creating the position was knocked off the ballot after a lengthy

court challenge.

Shortly after the referendum passed, Lee advised commissioners that they should file the lawsuit to remove the provision, but board members backed away from her suggestion, saying they did not want it to appear to be undermining the will of the county's voters.

Stiles' group needs to gather more than 40,000 signatures from registered voters and submit them to the Hillsborough County Elections Supervisor by July 31.

If the group is successful, voters would be asked in the Nov. 2 elections whether they want to replace the appointed county administrator with a partisan, elected county mayor.

No date has been set for the public hearings. The 14-member board would need a super majority of 10 votes to put a proposed repeal of the veto amendment on the ballot.

Reporter Christian M. Wade can be reached at (813) 259-7679.

*Submitted into the Record  
by Gerald White  
(Charter Review Board)  
6/21/10*

# TAMPA BAY



## Auditor slot seems headed to ballot

The Charter Review Board votes for public hearings on the issue.

BY BILL VARIAN  
Times Staff Writer

TAMPA — A November ballot already crowded with political races and proposed constitutional changes could grow longer for Hillsborough County voters.

A review panel has tentatively agreed to ask voters to reconsider actions they previously approved — creation of a county internal performance auditor, and giving an elected county mayor veto power over commission decisions should that post ever be created.

Technically, the Charter Review Board members voted

Monday to hold a required pair of public hearings on the questions. But they did so by margins that indicate the questions could make the ballot.

One would ask voters, who approved creation of the county's internal performance auditor position eight years ago, whether they think the post should be eliminated since it has been a source of controversy.

County commissioners voted to fire the second person to hold the job, Jim Barnes, last month after questions about his competence.

Board members voted

12-1 to take the question to public hearing. Ten members of the 14-person review panel must approve placing the question on the ballot. One seat is vacant, but is expected to be filled.

"The internal performance auditor's office seemingly has been embroiled and embittered since it was initiated," said review board member James Tokley, adding that the clerk of the circuit court can do the work.

The Charter Review Board is appointed every five years by county commissioners to consider possible changes to the

» See CHARTER, 3B

» CHARTER continued from 1B

## Auditor slot appears headed to ballot

County Charter, its constitution of sorts. The same board, with mostly different members, is the group that put creating an auditor on the ballot a decade ago.

Board members also voted 11-2 to hold public hearings on whether to ask voters to remove a provision that would give an elected county mayor veto power if that position is created. Voters approved that measure two years ago.

The public veto vote in 2008 had been paired with a companion ballot question on whether to create an elected county mayor. That question was thrown off the ballot in court, but the veto question remained and passed.

Supporters are gathering petition sig-

natures from the public to get the mayor question on the ballot in November.

"Why would they do that now before the elected county mayor is on the ballot?" asked Mary Ann Stiles, leader of Elected County Mayor Political Committee Inc. "That's just pure arrogance."

Review board members said that, with no elected county mayor in the charter now, the veto provision makes no sense.

"We need to clean up the charter," said Beth Leytham.

The review board also voted 7-6 to consider expanding the County Commission from seven members to nine, but the close margin of the vote suggests a tough fight for supporters.

Submitted into the Record  
by Gerald White (Charter Review Board)  
6/2/10

THE NATION'S ONLY TRI-LINGUAL NEWSPAPER • SERVING TAMPA & THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES

ENGLISH • ESPAÑOL • ITALIANO

# LA GACETA

Our 88th Year

PRECIO: 50 CENTAVOS

VIERNES, 11 DE JUNIO DE 2010

AÑO 88-NUMERO 24

BY PATRICK MANTEIGA  
**AS WE HEARD IT**

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On Monday, the Hillsborough County Charter Review Board (CRB) considered a proposal made by this writer to increase the county commission by two single-member district commissioners.

We hoped the change from our

current three-countywide/four single-member district system to a three-countywide/six single-member district. We feel this would make single-member district commissioners more responsive to constituents by reducing their districts from a 300,000 population to 200,000.

We felt adding more districts would provide greater racial and geographic diversity on the commission.

We also hoped that it would move us from the current system where the entire voting population of the county elects the majority of the commission. A majority electing the majority plan is discriminatory and has often been repudiated by this state and large urban counties.

Years ago, State Senators and State Representatives were voted on countywide instead of by just their district. Years ago, all of our school board members were voted on by the whole county. Years ago, all of our county commissioners were voted on by the entire county. All of these voting systems were changed because they were discriminatory.

On Monday, the Charter Review Board appeared ready to move the 3/6 plan to a public meeting that could have eventually had the issue placed on the ballot, but an amendment by CRB member Jan Platt was passed to change the plan to a four-countywide/five single-member district plan. This increased the county commission by two, but still kept the old-fashioned and discriminatory system of the majority electing the majority.

Dividing the county by five districts instead of four could lead to a prominent Hispanic district, but it fails to move the county forward.

*Submitted into the Record by Gerald White (Charter Review Board) 6/21/10*

Celebrating 65 Years In The Tampa Bay Area

# Florida Sentinel Bulletin



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FLORIDA SENTINEL-BULLETIN PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY AND FRIDAY

## Welcome Back, Attorney Renee Lee

**D**o we sound partisan? Then let us sound partisan! Congratulations to Hillsborough County Commission for its 5 to 2 vote to reinstate Renee Lee to her seat as County Attorney. Without a shadow of a doubt, the County Commission has done the right thing.

You may remember County Attorney Renee Lee was suspended along with County Administrator Pat Bean for specified and unspecified wrong-doings, at work. You may also remember that for the next weeks, County Commissioners fought back and forth between each other, the press and the public in a thus far elusive attempt to pinpoint or at least pigeon-hole both Bean and Lee into accusations that stuck and that were, therefore, feasible for firing.

This week County Administrator, Pat Bean was fired "WITH CAUSE". In the case of Renee Lee, no concrete evidence of wrong-doing had been found against her. So, she and her case simply stirred in the pot . . . until this past Wednesday, when a motion was made and seconded to set Lee free to restore her in full to her present position. The motion carried. The people of Hillsborough breathed a sigh of relief!

Once again, we thank our County Commissioners Rose Ferlita, Kevin White, Ken Hagan, Jim Norman and Al Higginbotham for realizing Hillsborough County is still a place where at least one person is innocent until found guilty. Otherwise, who in his or her right mind would ever consider working here!

*Submitted into  
the Record  
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6/21/10*

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# LA GACETA

Our  
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Year

PRECIO: 50 CENTAVOS

VIERNES, 18 DE JUNIO DE 2010

AÑO 88-NUMERO 25

## AS WE HEARD IT

by PATRICK MANTEIGA

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County Commissioner Ken Hagan will appoint Ariel J. Quintela to the Charter Review Board (CRB). He is to replace David Canton, who resigned. This is the first and only Hispanic appointed to the CRB, which has 14 members.

We suggested that an Hispanic be added to the board a few weeks ago and appreciate Hagan's effort to support diversity.

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*Submitted unto the  
Record by Gerald White  
(Charter Review Board)  
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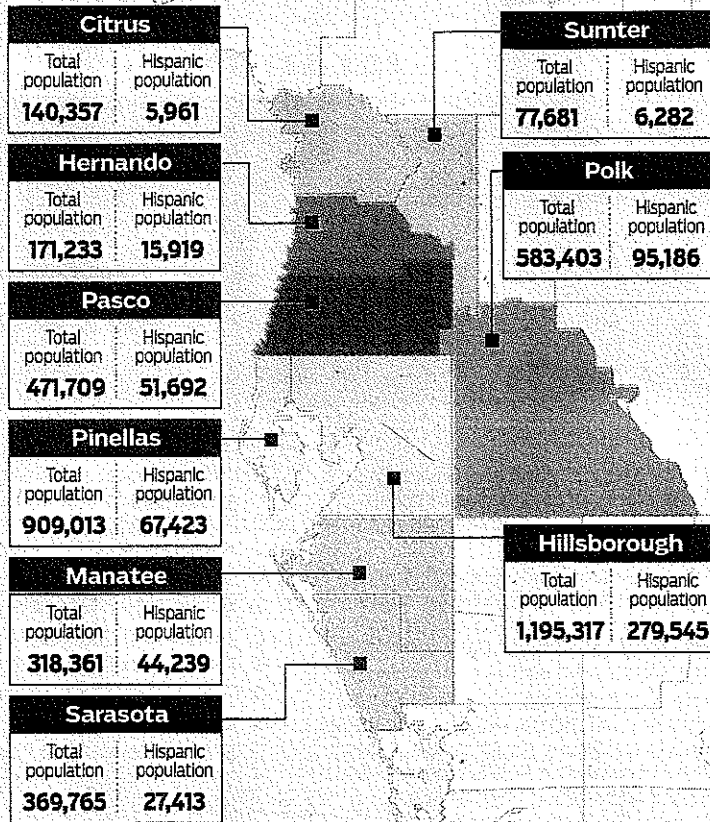
# TAMPA TRIBUNE

and The Tampa Times

Slowly, more diverse

Hispanics lead the Bay area's burst in minority growth, but the region still has Florida's lowest proportion of minorities.

Percentage Hispanic growth 2000-2009  
 50-75% 76-100% 101-125% 126-150% 151-175%



The minority population in the Tampa Bay area grew tremendously in the past decade, with Hispanics leading the way, according to recently released census estimates.

The figures, pegged to July 1, 2009, are the last before the 2010 census results roll out in the spring. The numbers show the counties of west-central Florida became more diverse as they grew over the course of the last decade. In many cases, minority groups grew several times faster than the general population.

Historically, the Tampa Bay region has had the lowest proportion of minorities of any region in the state. That hasn't changed, but Hispanics and other minority groups have become a larger share of the population.

Miami-Dade is the only Florida county where Hispanics make up a majority of the population — 62 percent. That proportion has stayed fairly stable since the 2000 census.

Kevin Wiatrowski



Keyword: Hispanic growth, for an interactive map of minority growth in Florida

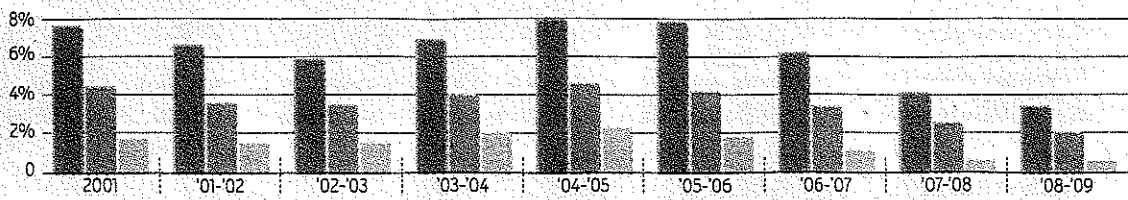
## MINORITY GROWTH IN TAMPA BAY

The Tampa Bay region grew in racial and ethnic diversity in the past decade. The population of racial minorities -- defined as blacks, Asians, American Indians, Pacific Islanders and those of mixed heritage -- grew at double the pace of the general population. The region's Hispanic population grew at more than triple the pace.

### Growth percentage in Hillsborough, Pinellas, Pasco and Polk counties

\*Hispanics Racial minorities Total population

\*The Census Bureau defines Hispanic identity, which derives from having language or culture rooted in Spain and Portugal as an ethnicity. People of different races can share Hispanic ancestry.



Submitted into the Record by: Herald White, Sr. 6/29/10

# THE TAMPA TRIBUNE

and The Tampa Times

## 2 public hearings set on county mayor veto power

Review board: It's unconstitutional.

By CHRISTIAN M. WADE  
cwade@tampatrib.com

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Before they do that, however, the board needs to hear from the voters.

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Reporter Christian M. Wade can be reached at (813) 259-7679

Submitted into the Record by: Gerald White, Sr. 6/29/10

Celebrating 65 Years In The Tampa Bay Area

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## Charter Review Board Public Hearings

**W**hat's your opinion about Hillsborough County having a county mayoral system? How do you feel about the number of County Commissioners being expanded from seven to nine? Do you agree with *La Gaceta* publisher Patrick Manteiga that Latin Hispanics have never been represented on County Commission? What are your opinions about the direction our county should take and what its charter should look like, for years to come? If you do, have an opinion, the Hillsborough County Charter Review Board is having Public Hearings.

Scheduled for Tuesday, 6 o'clock, on June 29<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday, 6 o'clock, July 13<sup>th</sup>, at the Board of County Commission Board Room, members of the current Hillsborough County Charter Review Board will be on hand to listen and discuss public opinions about the future of this county's charter.

What with recent issues involving the former County Administrator, current County Attorney, former Internal Auditor and even members of the commission themselves, the two public hearings promise to be lively if not informative.

We sincerely suggest residents who have anything to say about the future of their political and economic system in Hillsborough County should mark their calendars for two days that will no doubt, make history.

*Submitted into the  
Record by: Gerald White, Sr.  
6/29/10*

# OUR OPINION

## A Lesson In Rational Redistricting

**D**on't expect fireworks tonight when Tampa City Council districts are redrawn by the City-County Planning Commission.

The process is so transparent and fair that very few people are left dissatisfied.

Under a special state law, the appointed planning commissioners, not the elected city council members, readjust the boundaries of the four districts to compensate for population changes.

Technically, the job isn't that difficult. Jim Hosler of the planning staff explains the goal is to draw compact districts of nearly the same population and to make sure one district is mostly black, the only minority here that has established past discrimination.

Making a perfect map is impossible. After meeting with affected neighborhoods, the staff came up with three alternatives, all of which are well balanced and preserve one district with a black majority.

The planning commission is almost certain to choose one of these reasonable maps.

When the Hillsborough County Commission redrew its own districts last year, the process was charged with partisan politics and resulted in ill will. It included one elongated, gerrymandered and manifestly preposterous district.

City council's process is better. The job is by nature political and controversial, but it need not be partisan. Certainly it need not be bizarre.

*Submitted into the Record by: Gerald White, Sr.  
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