

The initiative petition raises several issues, but two major concerns stand out: voter confusion and the inclusion of the removal of the earnings tax and any tax on payroll expenses.

Because of the complexity of this merger and the lack of detail provided, voter confusion is very likely. First, while there are references to the municipalities being responsible for their obligations, the petition does not provide appropriate funding mechanisms or new sources of revenue. The petition inconsistently describes whether and to what extent existing obligations will be funded in lieu of or in addition to funding for services. The petition sets out that the municipal districts will be a taxing sub-district of the metropolitan city and its own separate taxing authority. Citizens have no idea who will tax them, on what and how much.

Second, inclusion of the removal of the earnings tax and taxes on payroll is not appropriate in this petition and not consistent with the message surrounding current taxes and fees in place at the time of the merger. Elimination of these taxes should be a separate issue.