

Ms. Holliday,

Thank you for the follow-up questions from the charter commission. I hope this response will address the questions properly.

I do not know if cities that use at-large elections for their council elections have rules that a certain amount of at-large officials must live in certain parts of the city. My guess is that they do not have those types of rules. For the cities in St. Louis County that have at-large systems (Webster Groves, Kirkwood, Olivette), I do not believe they have any such requirements.

The idea of what constitutes "too much spending" is admittedly theoretical. The economists who put together these studies construct models of expected spending and taxation levels and then analyze data to see if that fits that model.

While what constitutes "too much" or "pork-barrel" spending may be part theory, the data behind it is definitely not a theory. Southwick analyzed the spending totals from more than 1,800 cities (above 10,000 in population) across the country with at-large or ward systems to test this idea. He found that at-large cities spend between 6 and 25 percent less, taxes about 15 percent less, and had 60 percent less debt than ward cities.

Dalenberg and Duffy-Deno focused more on large cities over a wide period of time. Their data, which concluded that larger councils spend more on capital improvements, included capital improvement spending and stock for 30 cities across the country over a 20-year period. In this study, the authors generally avoided whether it was "too much" or "pork" and just focused on the data, though they clearly stated that ward systems resulted in that higher spending. They state, "Ward councilors are biased toward large capital improvement projects, which are visible and have concentrated neighborhood benefits."

My own research has found that the small number of Missouri cities in our larger metro areas that use at-large systems do spend slightly less than comparable suburbs. While one cannot draw any firm conclusions from such a tiny sample size, and individual anecdotes can go in either direction, this result for Missouri that is consistent with the nationwide studies is interesting.

It is reasonable to ignore ideas such as whether or not the higher spending levels constitute "too much" or "pork." It is enough, if you choose, just to focus on the consistent analysis that spending in ward systems correlates with higher total spending than in at-large systems.

Removing the district designation from the at-large officials will allow Kansas City to benefit from the focused work of six ward representatives and the citywide concerns of six at-large officials (seven, counting the mayor). The evidence is strong that moving to an entirely ward-based council system will involve strong incentives for increased spending across the board.

Furthermore, the testimony presented by Freedom, Inc. gave the example of Cincinnati, which has an entirely at-large system and has greater minority membership on its city council than would be predicted by the baseline population totals. At-large election systems, even in part, like the Kansas City

Council (half at-large, half wards), can benefit an entire community through fiscal discipline and full inclusion.

The testimony is now available online at www.showmeinstitute.org, along with citations for all of the studies discussed both in the original testimony and in this additional response.