| Incumbent | Elected by a vote of the people  
Fulfilled a 4-year term  
May use “Incumbent” as Ballot Designation | Creates a full-term seat |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Appointed In-Lieu | Qualified during nomination period with no challenger  
(or for Vote for N contest with N or fewer candidates), contest comes off-ballot and candidate gets appointed by Board of Supervisors to fill the seat prior to date of election  
Fulfilled a 4-year term in-lieu of an election  
May use “Incumbent” as Ballot Designation | Creates a full-term seat |
| Appointed Incumbent | Not elected  
Appointed by either District Board, City Council or Board of Supervisors to fill a vacancy just until next general election  
May use “Appointed Incumbent” as Ballot Designation | Creates a short-term seat if the appointed incumbent is filling a vacancy in the first half of a regular term  
Otherwise, creates a full-term seat |
| Vacancy | An “incumbent,” “appointed in-lieu,” or “appointed incumbent” vacates seat (and the vacancy remains unfilled) | Scenario:  
Vacancy of a four-year term (2018-2022)  
In first two years of term if vacancy occurs, this creates a short-term seat  
Example:  
Created vacancy in 2018 or 2019  
Short-term seat at the next general election in 2020 for last two years of term from 2020-2022  
Allows the rotation of officeholders to be staggered for election purposes  
NOTE: Vacancy in second half of term would not create a short-term election unless a special election is called pursuant to Government Code Section 1780 |