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November 2018 CA Ballot Propositions

Voter Guide

Do you remember being overwhelmed by the six-page ballot with 17 statewide ballot propositions in 2016? We do! As fellow Californians, we know how difficult it can be to find the time to become a well-informed voter, especially when there are multiple different policies on the table to vote on. Researching the policies, considering both sides of the argument, and discussing with friends and family takes time!

At Indivisible CA: StateStrong, we did the research and asked our members to weigh in to help you get informed about the 11 propositions on the November statewide ballot. A survey was sent to all our members, asking them to vote on each ballot measure: "Yes," "No," or "No Position." Each ballot measure had to get a simple majority to receive any of those three recommendations. If a proposition received only a plurality of votes, we gave the proposition a "No Consensus." The overall response rate to the survey was 17% and included respondents from over 50 Indivisible groups across the state.

YES on Proposition 1: Veteran and affordable housing bonds

This proposition authorizes the issuance of \$4B new General Obligation bonds to be used for housing for low income families, veterans, and farm-workers. It will also provide loans for first-time low- or moderate-income home buyers and infrastructure to support in-fill development of affordable housing.

California has the highest poverty rate in the nation: over one in five Californians live in poverty. Lack of affordable housing is a major contributor to poverty. Meanwhile, federal support for low-income and homeless housing has plummeted since the late 1970s and disproportionately impacts communities of color.

Including available federal matching grants the LAO estimates that the proceeds from these bonds would provide subsidies for 30,000 multifamily and 7,500 farm worker households, down payment assistance for 15,000 home buyers and home loans to about 3,000 veterans.

This proposition provides much-needed funds to tackle the housing affordability and homelessness crisis in California, especially in light of the past and current cuts to federal housing programs.

96% of respondents voted Yes on Prop 1.

YES on Proposition 2: Use previously-collected taxes to house the mentally ill

Proposition 2 permits up to \$140M a year from the Mental Health Services Fund to be transferred to the No Place Like Home Fund to finance permanent supportive housing for individuals living with a severe mental illness who are homeless or at risk of chronic homelessness. These funds would repay up to \$2B in bonds.

The cost-effectiveness of providing supportive housing to homeless people who suffer from chronic mental illness is well documented, and generally reduces the cost of providing other mental health treatment services for those who receive housing.

This proposition allows state and local governments flexibility to use existing bond funds to provide housing for homeless people with mental illness.

97% of respondents voted Yes on Prop 2.

NO on Proposition 3: Water infrastructure bonds

Authorizes the state to issue \$8.877B of new bonds for a wide array of water supply projects.

The Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) estimates that there is a funding gap for critical water projects of \$2-3B a year. In June 2018, California voters passed Proposition 68 that provided for \$4B in bonds for water projects. However, that money, along with \$6B from previous bond issues, remains unspent.

We agree with PPIC that the California legislature should provide stable funding from California's general fund for ensuring a robust water supply, without the need for expensive bond issues. The Sierra Club's arguments that regional special interests will benefit most from these funds *without legislative oversight* are also compelling.

79% of respondents voted No on Prop 3.

YES on Proposition 4: Children's hospitals bonds

This proposition authorizes \$1.5B in General Obligation bonds for capital improvements in children's hospitals. Funds from two previously voter-approved bond measures (2004 Prop 61, \$750M and 2008 Prop 3, \$980M) have been fully allocated to projects to build, expand and improve hospital facilities. Funds from this proposition will contribute toward the expansion or improvement of health care access by children eligible for governmental health insurance programs and indigent, underserved, and uninsured children.

82% of respondents voted Yes on Prop 4.

NO on Proposition 5: Transfer of assessed value of current homes

This proposition expands the ability of homeowners over 55 years of age or disabled to transfer the assessed value of their current home to a newly acquired home for the purposes of calculating property tax liability. This proposition permits transfer of assessed value to any new home in California and allows transfer of the base value any number of times.

In general, families who own their own home have higher incomes and greater wealth than families who live in rented homes. Homeowners also get substantial government subsidies not available to renters. This proposition essentially permits homeowners to avoid paying market-rate property taxes on new homes, and is therefore an additional subsidy for the wealthy. When the wealthy get more tax breaks and subsidies, the proportional tax burden on lower income families increases. Expanding the ability of homeowners to maintain the cost basis of original homes will cost local governments substantial tax revenue, eventually reaching a loss of revenue of up to \$1B a year, further hampering their ability to provide quality services and schools to their residents.

82% of respondents voted No on Prop 5.

NO on Proposition 6: Repeal gas tax

This proposition amends the California Constitution to require direct voter approval for increases in gasoline and diesel fuel taxes and vehicle registration fees. It applies retroactively to January 1, 2017, thus effectively repeals SB 1 that was passed by the legislature in April 2017.

California transportation infrastructure has suffered from years of neglect and is in dire need of repair and maintenance. The new taxes included in SB 1 will raise \$5B a year for the benefit of all Californians. Furthermore, an increase in the gas tax was probably the most political expedient way to raise much-needed funds. In one sense, we have already approved the gas tax by approving Proposition 69 in June, which requires all the new transportation taxes to be used for transportation.

94% of respondents voted No on Prop 6.

NO CONSENSUS on Proposition 7: Extend daylight savings time

This proposition allows the legislature to change the dates of daylight savings time (DST) and to adopt DST year-round.

NO on Proposition 8: Regulate dialysis center prices

This proposition limits revenue of chronic dialysis clinics (CDCs) by requiring clinics to refund excess revenue to payers (mainly insurance companies, but specifically excluding Medicare, Medi-Cal and other government payers) over direct patient costs (healthcare personnel salaries, pharmaceuticals, facility costs, etc) and healthcare improvement costs (training and education). Clinics that are required to refund excess revenue would also have to pay a penalty to the CA Department of Health.

While containment of healthcare costs will eventually benefit patients in the form of lower costs, we are not convinced that the piecemeal approach of this proposition is the answer. A more reasonable approach would be for the California legislature to develop industry-wide regulations across the healthcare sector.

64% of respondents voted No on Prop 8.

Proposition 9 was removed from the ballot

YES on Proposition 10: Affordable Housing Act

This proposition repeals the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act and allows local jurisdictions to govern landlord's rights to establish and increase housing rents, as long as any local ordinance or charter provision does not curtail landlord's right to earn a fair rate of return. Local ordinances would also be allowed to limit rent increases when a new tenant moves into a unit.

California home values and rents are the highest in the country and they continue to climb, while poverty levels reach an all-time high. An overwhelming majority of newly homeless people lost their homes due to rising rents. Increasing the available stock of rent controlled housing will help prevent very low income renters falling into homelessness. Truly affordable housing would help mitigate the homelessness crisis.

This proposition permits communities, through their locally elected representatives, to modify local rent control ordinances. Yep, we used local three times in that sentence. The housing crisis—stratospherically high rents and low availability—is a state-wide phenomenon, but the best solutions will almost certainly be tailored to local conditions. What works in Oakland probably won't work in Beverly Hills.

Returning control to communities instead of a statewide blanket policy allows those communities to have another option for addressing the massive crisis of lack of affordable rental housing.

93% of respondents voted Yes on Prop 10.

NO on Proposition 11: Restrictions on rest periods for ambulance workers

This proposition allows private ambulance services to require ambulance staff (EMTs, paramedics, dispatchers, etc) to remain on duty and available during meal and rest breaks. It also absolves private ambulance companies from paying penalties for previous infractions of the law.

California state law specifies the frequency and length of meal and rest breaks. Current practice is that ambulance employees are required to remain on duty during breaks, but the California State Supreme Court has decided that this practice is illegal. Although that decision involved a lawsuit by private security guards, there are similar lawsuits by EMTs and paramedics and the courts will likely apply the same ruling to those lawsuits. This proposition is an attempt by the ambulance companies to ignore state law and pre-empt the Supreme Court decision. We believe that labor laws exist for the protection of all workers and that no industry should be exempt.

91% of respondents voted No on Prop 11.

YES on Proposition 12: Farm animal housing standards

This proposition specifies the amount of space given to veal calves, breeding pigs and egg-laying hens. Current law requires these animals to be kept in facilities that allow animals to lie down, stand up, turn around freely and fully extend their limbs. The new law will specify how much space each animal must be given. Beginning in 2022, laying hens must be kept in cage-free housing.

91% of respondents voted Yes on Prop 12.

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