

The CA State Propositions and our position

The following are Los Angeles Greens' recommendations for the November 7, 2006 Ballot Propositions. Please note that we generally do not support bonds because they pass on tremendous debt to future generations (and benefit the wealthy while bankrupting the government) however, we make certain exceptions for bonds that we think will pay for projects that will outlast the debt, such as infrastructure. Here are our recommendations for Tuesday, November 7, 2006:

1A

Transportation Funding Protection, Legislative Constitutional - would prohibit the state sales tax on gas from being used for anything other than transportation improvements. It further strengthens Prop. 42 by limiting the conditions under which this prohibition can be suspended (which has happened twice since the passage of 42 in 2002). The Legislature and governor may borrow from the gasoline tax funds in cases of severe fiscal hardship, but must repay in full within 3 years and may also only borrow twice in ten consecutive fiscal years – it therefore closes a loophole in Prop. 42 to make raiding of the gasoline sales tax more difficult, and reflects earlier voter will; however, it reduces the state's authority to use these funds for other, non-transportation priorities. The big sponsors of this bill are engineering and transportation companies. We did not have consensus on this.

Neutral

1B

Highway Safety, Traffic Reduction, Air Quality, Port Security:

Bond measure of \$19.925 Billion for "highway safety, traffic reduction, air quality, and port security." These funds include \$4b for public transportation, \$3.2b for goods movement and air quality (including new school buses), and \$1.4b for port security, disaster response, and seismic retrofits of overpasses. However, the majority (over \$11b) of the funds are for capital improvements to roads and highways, the wrong priority if California wants to reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles. Furthermore, this bond requires massive borrowing; repayment with interest will cost over \$35b. There are better ways to reduce traffic and promote public transportation and safety.

1C

Housing and Emergency Shelter Trust Fund: Authorizes the state to sell \$2.85 billion of general obligation bonds to fund new and existing programs. The major allocations: 1) Three new programs aimed at development, such as parks, water, sewage, transportation, and housing, 2) Assistance to homebuyers to make down payment for home ownership, and 3) Construction or renovation of rental housing projects, such as apartment buildings near public transportation. The state Green Party voted NO because of the bond issue and because it didn't like the potential profit that might be reaped some day if the housing was sold to for-profit entities. We felt this issue is too important not to vote yes. The vote was divided but we had a super-majority that recommended YES.

No

1D

Kindergarten – University Public Education Facilities Bond:

Public education retrofitting – again a bond issue but we felt this was money well spent. \$10.4 billion. Our vote was split but we had a supermajority that voted YES.

Yes

Yes

1E

Disaster Preparedness and Flood Prevention Bond: This would help prevent Katrina type disasters and California is in need of this bond. \$4 billion. Our vote was split but a supermajority recommended YES.

Yes

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83

Sex Offenders, Sexually Violent Predators: While we do not minimize the very real danger of sex offenders, we believe this is too broad. By prohibiting them from residing within 2000 feet of any school or park, it prevents them from living in smaller towns and places a burden and increases the hazard to larger more urban communities. We already have authority to monitor offenders with GPS devices while on parole, this bill would extend monitoring to their lifetime, even for first-time offenders convicted of non-violent offenses. It would cost \$500 million but makes no meaningful distinction between misdemeanors and hard-core offenders. Almost invariably, offenders were at one time victims themselves. This proposition exhibits the hallmarks of all great Republican pieces of legislation: it demonizes a section of the society in need of serious help; it accomplishes almost nothing; and it costs a great deal of money. It needs to be pointed out that maybe 90% or more of all molestation is intrafamilial: fathers molesting their sons and daughters, just as they themselves were molested. Of the remainder, a significant chunk is committed by mothers, brother, uncles, etc. This leaves a tiny subsection of "predators", individuals stalking children to whom they are in no way related. Real solutions include individual, family, and community-based therapy. Our membership had a nearly unanimous vote of NO.

No

84

Water Quality, Safety and Supply, Flood Control Bond: Echoing the sentiment underlying Proposition 1E, this funds flood control projects, water quality efforts and conservation programs. This \$5.388 billion bond measure would lead to benefits for both urban and rural populations through restoration and protection of streams and rivers, as well as our potable water supply particularly safeguarding the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta, a source of clean drinking water for more than half of all Californians. Provides for flood control measures, including inspections and mapping that will help prevent future disasters. It also sets aside needed funds for wildlife and forest protection, state and local parks, and beach preservation.

Yes

85

Waiting Period and Parental Notification Before

Termination of Minors Pregnancy. This is a carbon copy of Prop 73, which many Greens worked so hard to defeat during Arnie's special election. It is yet another transparent attempt by right to life groups to impose whatever restrictions they can on a woman's right to make her own decisions regarding reproductive choice, starting with minors. They are trying to say that this initiative is a way to force minor women to report sexual abuse and exploitation by sexual predators. All it really does is put restrictions on minors who are currently able to receive an abortion without parental notification or consent. It would inevitably send some young women to illegal abortionists, and unsafe unsanitary, conditions. Another problem children have speaking to their parents is sometimes the child's father is the father of the unborn.

No

86

Tax on Cigarettes. As the voter guide indicates, this proposition "imposes additional 13 cent tax on each cigarette distributed (\$2.60 per pack), and indirectly increases tax on other tobacco products." The revenue generated from this increased excise tax, estimated to be about \$2.1 billion annually, will be spent on emergency health care, enforcement of tobacco related laws, anti-smoking education, cancer prevention and cancer treatment. There was some debate in the committee about supporting this proposition. While many agreed that increasing the tax on tobacco would be a good example of "true cost pricing," i.e. it would put the cost of the product more in line with the overall price paid by society for it, others contended that this was a "sin tax" that sought naively to cure social ills and that it would punish the poor disproportionately. Ultimately the committee recommends a "yes" vote on this proposition, as it will certainly discourage smoking and generate new revenue for treating the health problems tobacco products create.

Yes

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87

Alternative Energy, Research, Production, Incentives, Tax on California Oil Producers. This would impose a \$.062 per barrel tax on all crude oil pulled out of the ground in California. The estimated \$4 Billion generated over a 10 year period would fund, university grants, incentives and subsidies, start up funds for new businesses, and classes in vocational schools and community colleges, pertaining to alternative fuels and renewable energy. Oil companies would NOT be able to pass this extra cost on to the consumer. This is a good first step. Chevron funds the "no on 87."

Yes

88

Education Funding. Real Property Parcel Tax. This provides public school funding (K-12) through a \$50 tax on each real property parcel. As the voter guide states, the revenue must specifically be used for "class size reduction, textbooks, school safety, Academic Success facility grants, and data system to evaluate educational program effectiveness." There was unanimous support in the committee for giving more money to education in California, however, as a tool for generating that money this proposition did not have unanimous support. In fact our membership took a majority NO position so that's what we recommend. It is a regressive/flat tax where the wealthy and the poor homeowners pay the same.

No

89

Political Campaigns. Public Financing. Corporate Tax Increase. Expenditure Limits. This would impose a .2% tax on large corporations, which would go into a pool to fund the political campaigns of candidates who voluntarily agree to limit expenditures and not take money from corporate, and special interest groups. It would also limit the amount of money a corporation or interest group could spend on ballot initiatives. This same system is working well in Arizona and Maine. It has increased participation in the political process for minorities, women, and third party candidates. It has also increased voter turnout, as well as voter trust in candidates who participate. This legislation would be good for the electoral process as a whole, and good for the Green Party in particular.

Yes

90

Government Acquisition, Regulation of Private Property. While touted as the answer to the recent Supreme Court sanctioned problem of the government's use of eminent domain to seize private property to build shopping malls – it is extremely deceptive. This is anti-environment and will have the most severe impact on California. It will destroy many environmental, land use, zoning and planning laws that currently protect us. It would destroy Coastal Commission protections and property owners could sue for compensation for anything - even zoning regulations that prevent garbage dumps from being built in residential neighborhoods. They could sue over coastal permits that prohibit development of beaches, or even sue because of offshore oil and gas drilling. This will bankrupt the government and cause inordinate pain to our current environmental protections. This prop is opposed by environmentalists, labor, consumer groups, scientists, public health agencies and many others.

No

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H

Affordable Housing General Obligation Bonds

This bond provides \$750 million in grants and loans for developers to build affordable rental units and an additional \$250 million for a loan program to help first time homebuyers. Property owners in LA would see their annual real estate taxes increase approx. \$14.66 for every \$100,000 of assessed value for 20 years. It would expand the city's affordable housing trust fund, and mostly targets families that earn less than \$69,300. The City Council voted unanimously to put this on the ballot and it is supported by the Mayor as well. It is also supported by Habitat for Humanity and other housing advocates. We had nearly unanimous consensus for a YES.

Yes

J

Technical Changes for Prop F Regional Fire Stations. Prop F provided funds for new standard and regional fire stations. This measure would allow the Fire Department the flexibility to build regional fire stations on more than one site of less than two acres. There is no change to the City's debt obligations and no impact on the General Fund. It's supported by Eric Garcetti and the Fire Chief.

Yes

R

Councilmember Term Limits of Three Terms; City Lobbying, Campaign Finance and Ethics Laws. This gives LA City Councilmembers three terms instead of two (12 years total). While some of us prefer shorter term limits, the benefits from this bill were too great to pass up. This prohibits city officials from accepting free gifts from lobbyists; prevents lobbyists from making campaign contributions to City Councilmembers; bars lobbyists from being appointed to a City Board or Commission and imposes tough reforms on contract bidders. It also toughens disclosure rules, prohibits former elected City officials from lobbying any city agency or department for two years after leaving City service and requires city councilmembers their staff and city commissions to attend mandatory ethics training. The League of Women Voters supports this. We did not have consensus because some of us are opposed to increasing term limits from 2 to 3.

Yes with Reservations

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