

California Church **IMPACT**

BALLOT RECOMMENDATIONS

for the February 5, 2008 Primary Election

SUMMARY:

Proposition 91: NO

Proposition 92: YES

Proposition 93: YES

Propositions 94, 95, 96, 97: NO

PROPOSITION 91. Transportation Funding, Initiative Constitutional Amendment and Statute

Recommended Position: NO on Proposition 91

California Church IMPACT supported Proposition 42 that designated key funding for transportation measures. However, we have long maintained that “locking in” budget items, especially those that do not directly support those in need, does a great deal of harm to people whose essential programs have no fixed budget stream. In difficult budget years, human needs must take priority, and the more budget items are dedicated to certain programs, the more those abandoned by the economy and forces of life will suffer. We cannot, in good conscience, support this initiative since transportation received a huge infusion of bond money in the 2006 election and thus the original Proposition 42 funds must be available to divert to other needs when budget shortfalls occur. The state must live within its means, but human needs must be our first moral priority.

PROPOSITION 92. Community Colleges, Funding, Governance, Fees, Initiative Constitutional Amendment and Statute

Recommended Position: YES on Proposition 92

When Proposition 98 passed in 1988, it locked in 40-50% our annual state budget for education. It covered K-14, including a small percentage for community colleges. While we do not support such “budget by ballot” propositions, this funding stream has long existed to guarantee education financing with one exception: the community college portion, slightly over 10% of all the Proposition 98 revenues, has become the yearly “cash cow” that is drawn off to cover non-education costs. The result is that the California community colleges struggle to finance this critical part of the educational process. Tuition has risen to \$20 per credit, thereby prohibiting many students from being able to afford any hope of higher education. Proposition 92 this year seeks only to honor the community college allocation commitment that voters established almost 20 years ago. Proposition 92 will not raise taxes but will allow community colleges to reduce fees by 25% thus giving access to many more students seeking higher education.

PROPOSITION 93. Limits on Legislators’ Terms in Office, Initiative Constitutional Amendment

Recommended Position: YES on Proposition 93

California Church IMPACT believes that the power to elect government officials should rest completely upon the voting public, and has consistently opposed any term limits. We understand the power of incumbency and the force of money, but remedies to these problems, not term limits that remove voter choice, should be the means to change legislators. California voters put term limits into place in 1990, limiting incumbents to 6 years (three 2-year terms) in the Assembly and an additional 8 years (two 4-year terms) in the Senate for a total of 14 years in public office. Proposition 93 reduces the overall time to 12 years, but permits that to be spent entirely in one house of the state legislature. Though we are reluctant to support a measure that perpetuates any kind of term limits, we support this change because it will help keep strong, experienced, and informed legislators for 12-year tenures thus benefiting from their expertise. Getting rid of legislators, especially in the Assembly, after a scant 6 years is wasting knowledge and talent that should not be so easily dismissed. The demands of government are increasingly complex, and having knowledgeable legislators is a benefit to better government. Voters clearly retain the option of voting legislators out of office even if they are not termed out.

The following four referenda may or may not be on the February 2008 ballot. They are being challenged in court, and we do not currently know the disposition of that case. Please check for updates at our website: www.churchimpact.org. If they are present, California Church IMPACT takes the following positions:

PROPOSITIONS 94, 95, 96, AND 97. Referenda to Overturn Amendment to Indian Gaming Compacts

Recommended position: NO on all four referenda

California Church IMPACT has long supported the right of indigenous people to determine their own economic, social, and political organization. We support their sovereignty rights that have been hard-won after centuries of abuse by the dominant society. Among the paths toward economic independence bands of California native peoples have elected to develop casinos that have proven economically successful and that have returned money to both the bands who run them and to the state of California. However, in 2007 four California State Senate bills provided unprecedented authority to only four of the largest bands to vastly expand casino gambling facilities and to do so without regard to several existing protections for the state's environment and labor laws. IMPACT's opposition to these compacts – "No to unfair gambling deals" – rests on our belief that we are all God's children and that we have a collective responsibility to care for all people and for our precious earth and all of its resources. These are moral values that no one should be free to dismiss, no matter who that would be. We share with native people a time-honored reverence for our natural world, and we cannot uphold political-economic compacts that do violence to those age-old principles. We also cannot undermine the well-being of casino workers who labor to create the wealth that has helped so many bands of native people from poverty. Their work and conditions must be protected regardless of who they are, and they cannot be exempt from the labor laws that all other employers observe. Finally, our support for indigenous people's rights means we cannot pit one band or people against another giving unfair advantage to some that would not accrue to all. These four bands would be unfairly enriched with lax standards for casino development unavailable to other bands. We think these measures may be well-intentioned, but the outcomes have the potential to do great harm to our earth, our fellow humans, and to the solidarity of native peoples and we therefore recommend a NO vote to stop the implementation of these four compacts.

Spread the Word!


We encourage members and friends to distribute these ballot guides from now until the election through "IMPACT Sundays." Share them with members of your own congregation plus other churches, temples, synagogues, mosques, and temples and any other places of worship. Please ask for permission first if you are distributing inside any place of worship or feel free to stand outside to distribute them. We thank you for your interest in encouraging active deliberation on these and all issues that affect our democratic process and our moral perspectives as people of faith. If you find these recommendations helpful, please help defray the considerable cost with a contribution to California Church IMPACT.

For more information and the latest updates, please visit www.churchimpact.org

Rev. Dr. Rick Schlosser
Executive Director
Elizabeth Sholes
Director of Public Policy
www.churchimpact.org

Ballot Proposition Recommendations
February 2008

4044 Pasadena Avenue
Sacramento, CA 95821



Time Limited – Please Expedite

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Sacramento CA
Permit #1411