



SUMMARY

Proposition 14: YES
 Proposition 15: YES
 Proposition 16: YES
 Proposition 17: YES
 Proposition 18: YES
 Proposition 19: YES

Proposition 20: NO
 Proposition 21: YES
 Proposition 22: YES
 Proposition 23: YES
 Proposition 24: NO
 Proposition 25: NO

BALLOT PROPOSITIONS NOVEMBER 3, 2020

PROPOSITION 14.....RECOMMENDATION: SUPPORT

Authorizes Bonds to Continue Funding Stem Cell and Other Medical Research. Initiative Statute.

This is a \$5.5 billion bond that will cost approximately \$7.8 billion when repaid over 25 years. The bonds will continue funding the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, which in turn funds research and development of stem cell medicine. CIRM began with Proposition 71 in 2004 and has ramped up both basic stem cell research and has produced 64 clinical trials covering 11 different medical specialties from cancer to macular degeneration. CIRM operating costs are confined to 7.5% of the funding with the rest to research. Work is overseen by a 35-person board.

PROPOSITION 15.....RECOMMENDATION: SUPPORT

Increases Funding for Public Schools, Community Colleges, and Local Government Services by Changing Tax Assessment of Commercial and Industrial Property. Initiative Constitutional Amendment.

This measure will rework the property tax rates set in 1978 for both residential and commercial property by Proposition 13. Commercial and industrial property would now be taxed based on fair market value. Rather than setting tax rates based on the age of the company, Proposition 15 will tax businesses based on size and income. Those with values of less than \$3 million plus all residential properties (apartments), and agricultural operations will retain Proposition 13 valuations and rates. In addition, small businesses at set income levels will be exempt from personal property tax. The new revenues, estimated to bring \$6.5-11.5 billion annually, will fund K-12, community colleges, and local governments with emphasis on improving older, more deteriorated school systems in low-income areas.

PROPOSITION 16.....RECOMMENDATION: SUPPORT

ACA 5 (Resolution, Chapter 23). Weber. Government Preferences.

This resolution, only nine words long, repeals Proposition 209 (1996) that prohibited the state from considering race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in public employment, education, or contracting. Rather than creating the “color blind” society promised, Proposition 209 prohibited all considerations of race and other attributes thus enabling discrimination to re-expand. Race, gender, etc., and the experiences produced in life because of them are part of the holistic experience of any person. Quotas and “point” systems remain unconstitutional. Affirmative action was meant to give equal consideration to people whose contributions to society are based in part on these ascriptive life experiences. If Prop. 15 passes, that can be restored.

PROPOSITION 17.....RECOMMENDATION: SUPPORT

ACA 6 (Resolution, Chapter 24). McCarty. Elections: Disqualification of Electors.

This measure restores the right to vote to people on parole. Those on probation, who avoided prison, keep their right while on probation. Those on parole, the status that comes after prison release, do not. Those opposing voting rights for former convicts say it gives voting rights to those who may reoffend, and to violent criminals. However, if the parole board sees fit to release someone to return to productive society, that restorative action must include the full rights and responsibilities of the society.

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Ballot Recommendations for the November 2020 Ballot Propositions

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PROPOSITION 18.....RECOMMENDATION: SUPPORT

ACA 4 (Resolution, Chapter 30). Mullin. Elections: Voting Age.

This measure would allow 17-year-olds who will be 18 at the time of the next general election to vote in primaries and special elections. The argument for this measure is that it would engage youth in greater likelihood of voting in general elections. Voting is essential, and we support the sentiments embodied in former President Barack Obama's eulogy for Rep. John Lewis, champion of the Voting Rights Act: "...we (must) remember what John [Lewis] said: 'If you don't do everything you can to change things, then they will remain the same. You only pass this way once. You have to give it all you have.' As long as young people are protesting in the streets, hoping real change takes hold, I'm hopeful; but we cannot casually abandon them at the ballot box...We cannot treat voting as an errand to run if we have some time. We have to treat it as the most important action we can take on behalf of democracy."

PROPOSITION 19.....RECOMMENDATION: SUPPORT

ACA 11 (Resolution, Chapter 31). Mullin. The Home Protection for Seniors, Severely Disabled, Families, and Victims of Wildfires or Natural Disasters Act.

A similar measure was defeated in 2018 but has been rewritten. The measure helps qualified homeowners who are "house rich, income poor," while it prevents use of low-tax-rate property for income generation. By terms of Proposition 58 (1986), property with low tax rates due to age of purchase could be transferred to children and grandchildren with the same rates and valuations. In many instances wealthy individuals use that property as rental income far exceeding the tax rates paid. Proposition 19 does expand the use of existing low rates for seniors, those with disabilities, victims of wildfire or natural disaster, allowing transfer or senior rates to any county and allowing the transfer three times v. once. However, it bars inherited property from being used for income generation and requires it must be used as the primary residence by those who inherited it. All such rental properties will be reassessed upward to full market status thus generating new tax revenue. This impacts 40-60,000 taxpayers. 75% of new revenues will be assigned to the Fire Protection Fund, 25% to County Revenue Protection Fund for any possible loss of tax revenue. Every older property released for actual sale will also generate higher tax rates and more revenue for the county.

PROPOSITION 20.....RECOMMENDATION: OPPOSE

Restricts Parole for Non-Violent Offenders, Authorizes Felony Sentences for Certain Offenses Currently Treated Only as Misdemeanors.

This proposition makes changes to policies related to criminal sentencing charges, prison release, and DNA collection. It would reclassify many misdemeanors as "wobblers," permitting crimes to be either misdemeanors or felonies. These would include firearm and vehicle theft, and unlawful use of a credit card as well as serial crime, regardless of content, and organized retail crime. The proposition would prohibit early release by reclassifying crimes as "violent." Other crimes, committed prior to 2014 reforms, would require the perpetrator to have his or her DNA on file. Furthermore, rather than having the parole board consider applicants on the basis of fulfilling their sentences and in-prison behavior, this proposition directs the parole boards to consider the person's age, employment prospects, etc. In sum, a person could remain in prison, regardless of compliance, if he or she were poorly educated and less employable; often racially biased. This proposition will undermine past sentencing reform measures passed by voters in recent elections. Crime is significantly lower in the past few years per the Public Policy Institute of California. These new standards would not stop crime but will swell our prison population through reclassification of offenses, to no discernable public benefit.

PROPOSITION 21.....RECOMMENDATION: SUPPORT

Expands Local Governments' Authority to Enact Rent Control on Residential Property. Initiative Statute.

Expands local governments' ability to implement rent control on some housing now covered by the 1995 Costa-Hawkins Act. Under the CHA, rent control cannot be implemented for housing built or occupied after 1995. Rent control cannot be used on dwellings with distinct titles such as single-family homes, condos, townhouses, etc. In light of the soaring rents in every part of California, this year's Proposition 21 would allow local governments to abolish some CHA provisions. It upholds the bar on property first occupied in the past 16 years owned by natural persons (not those owned by corporations) with no more than two separate units, e.g., single family, condos, duplexes, subdivided units such as a cooperative and community apartments. In all other eligible properties, local governments can limit rent increases to 15% during the first three years after a vacancy. While it does nothing to reduce current rental rates, it would slow the further rate increases for new tenants. Because the decision will remain in local control, it gives voice to local citizens based on perceived differences in their own communities, housing stock, and rental demand.

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PROPOSITION 22.....RECOMMENDATION: SUPPORT

Changes Employment Classification Rules for App-based Transportation and Delivery Drivers. Initiative Statute.

This proposition reworks a part of AB 5 (2019) that ended “independent contractor” status for many jobs. The proposition addresses only “app-based drivers” — those who offer ride sharing or delivery services such as Uber, Lyft, DoorDash, Instacart, etc. While AB 5 sought greater economic equity for such “gig” or casual engagement work, it has created real problems for those driving. Most drivers work erratically to fit family and other considerations into their schedules and work for several different companies at the same time. Defined shifts would cause them to quit or create real hardships. Labor groups are correct to demand assured income, benefits, protections for these novel workers, new to the labor economy. This proposition shows they have largely succeeded. The companies have created this measure that puts into law the demands put forth by unions and advocates. It will provide minimum wage plus 20%, covering drive time to pick up and from delivery; mileage; insurance for both drivers’ vehicles and workplace injury; guaranteed retention of tips; and payments for workers’ health insurance. Unions still oppose this measure, but it’s better wages than what the legislature could create for a unique group of workers, does not prohibit unionization, and offers the kinds of security as well as flexibility desired by drivers. The companies were forced to do well by their drivers. In sum, unions and advocates already won this argument for drivers that is better for these workers than most part time employees will get under AB 5 or current labor laws. It would be immoral to deny drivers this benefit simply because it came from the employers and not from unions and others. The proposition in no way impacts temporary workers who are hired for 9 to 5 positions. Those are very different working conditions and not addressed in this measure. They remain covered by the terms and standards set by AB 5. While this proposition does not go as far as we wish, it is a step in the right direction for many workers. There is nothing in this initiative to prevent the legislature from further strengthening it. We understand this is controversial, but for these reasons, we join our friends at the California NAACP in supporting this measure.

PROPOSITION 23.....RECOMMENDATION: SUPPORT

Authorizes State Regulation of Kidney Dialysis Clinics. Establishes Minimum Staffing and Other Requirements. Initiative Statute.

Revisiting Prop. 8 (2018), this measure regulated private, for-profit dialysis clinics. It requires a physician on-site at dialysis clinics and monitoring blood pathogens regularly. This was defeated last time due largely to fears that for-profit dialysis centers would use the increased regulations to raise fees and to turn down poor or underinsured patients. All patients are guaranteed equal treatment in this measure. These provisions, coupled with state regulation of clinics trying to close entirely, provide safeguards for access to service along with safeguards for patient well-being. Dialysis often transmits blood-borne infections; with too little monitoring, such infections can be fatal. SEIU health care workers’ union sponsors this ballot measure. It has no impact on their unionization efforts. This version of the ballot measure provides patient-centered regulation and will improve an essential service many people need but are not now obtaining either in fact or in quality.

PROPOSITION 24.....RECOMMENDATION: OPPOSE

Amends Consumer Privacy Laws. Initiative Statute. Expands Provisions of the CA Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) and Creates California Privacy Protection Agency to Implement and Enforce the CCPA.

The California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) was written by the Legislature, is enforced by the Attorney General, and went into full effect July 1, 2020. Proposition 24 purports to strengthen that law, but it has many unintended consequences that appear to weaken it. For those not well versed in technology, it is confusing. Many of the provisions about data collection that seem excellent, e.g., prohibitions on racial profiling, legal status as former convict, undocumented immigrant, can slip through the cracks. You may have seen popups asking if some company you’re researching may use your data, but saying NO is no guarantee that your private information is not part of their baseline management information or that opting out won’t cost you more money. Since the CCPA has, at this writing, operated for less than a month, these changes, opposed by ACLU, Consumer Federation of California, and Media Alliance, among others, simply cannot tackle how the existing law will function. Ballot measure terms and conditions are very hard to overturn legislatively no matter how poorly they operate. We need to see how CCPA functions now before we radically and substantially amend it, especially with provisions that may make us more, not less, vulnerable to invasions of our privacy and personal data.

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PROPOSITION 25.....RECOMMENDATION: SUPPORT VIA A NO VOTE.

Referendum to Overturn a 2018 Law that Replaced Money Bail System with a System Based on Public Safety Risk.

This referendum challenges a state statute to replace cash bail with risk assessments for suspects awaiting trial. SB 10 gave the courts discretion to assess low, medium, and high-risk defendants who could be released or detained on those assessments rather than on a demand for cash bail. Most proffering bail had to come up with 10% for a bail bond from a private provider, and if that was impossible, the defendant languished in jail. Wealthy people got out. Poor people remained. However, SB 10 did not actually improve chances of greater justice. "Risk assessment" may be racially, culturally, and economically biased. There are no guidelines in SB 10 for what sets determinations. All three CA affiliates of American Civil Liberties Union opposed SB 10 with its unintended racial biases and potential for greater not lesser inequity. ACLU is not opposing this ballot measure since it is sponsored by the for-profit bail industry. IMPACT, however, believes the greater good requires revisiting the entire issue to assure real justice. Because it is a referendum, a YES vote is to UPHOLD SB 10. A NO vote is to return to cash bail while we revisit the issue on risk assessments and other criteria.

Spread the Word!

We encourage members and friends to distribute these ballot guides from now until the election through "IMPACT Sundays." More information on IMPACT Sundays is available on our website. 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 Council of Churches IMPACT. You can help us by making sure we have your email address! Because of the cost of postage, we must cut costs by sending our mailings electronically. Please sign up by clicking the "Join Our Mailing List" button on our website!



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