



California Council of Churches **IMPACT**

Ballot Proposition Recommendations for the November 5, 2024 General Election

Summary

Proposition 2: YES
Proposition 3: YES
Proposition 4: YES
Proposition 5: YES
Proposition 6: YES

Proposition 32: YES
Proposition 33: YES
Proposition 34: NO
Proposition 35: YES
Proposition 36: NO

There is no Proposition 1. It has been removed.

Proposition 2

Recommendation: SUPPORT

AB 247 (Chapter 81, Statutes of 2024) Muratsuchi. Education finance: school facilities: Kindergarten Through Grade 12 Schools and Local Community College Public Education Facilities Modernization, Repair, and Safety Bond Act of 2024.

This is a \$10 billion bond act to finance repairs and upgrades to California schools. K-12 schools would receive \$8.5 billion while community colleges would receive \$1.5 billion. Public universities were excluded since they have their own access to such funding. The money replaces parts of the General Fund that will not have to be spent in this lean budget year. The last voter approved financing was 2020,

and that fund is nearly depleted. We know educational success has much to do with safe, quality facilities, and while funds have been spent, lower income areas still have too many substandard structures. There is a sliding distribution scale that is a good start to prioritizing highest need schools in poor areas.

Proposition 3

Recommendation: SUPPORT

ACA 5 (Low) Marriage equality. (Res. Ch. 125, 2023)

This is an Assembly Constitutional Amendment. It will repeal the California Constitutional Amendment passed by Proposition 8 in 2008 that declared marriage to be between only one man and one woman. Since then, the Supreme Court (SCOTUS) ruled in *Obergefell v. Hodges* (2015) ruled that same sex marriage between consenting adults is fully legal. It makes sense to remove a Constitutional Amendment that is in contradiction to federal law today and replace it with one that is consistent with federal law.

create, *Faith for Equality*. The Council and IMPACT stand united in their witness and advocacy for marriage equality today.

California Council of Churches became a party to this 2015 outcome in a supportive *amicus* filed by a group CCC helped

It is clear that a revision in that status of *Obergefell* by today's US Supreme Court could, under Article 6, Sec. 2 of the Constitution, invalidate the California Constitution, but in light of the threat, particularly if it is left to the states, it is important for California and for IMPACT to provide faithful and political state Constitutional support for the current law of the land and the equal justice it upholds.

Proposition 4

Recommendation: SUPPORT

SB 867 (Chapter 83, Statutes of 2024) Allen. Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, Drought Preparedness, and Clean Air Bond Act of 2024.

This would authorize the state to incur a general obligation debt of \$10 billion to deal with the impacts of climate change. It would fund programs that are long neglected including drinking and ground water resilience; wildfire and forest resilience; coastal and other flooding, drought assistance, heat mitigation, etc.

We passed some of this in 2018 via Prop.68, but by 2020 funds were low. In 2019 the Legislature approved a \$21

Proposition 5

ACA 1 (Resolution Chapter 173, Statutes of 2023) Aguiar-Curry. Local government financing: affordable housing and public infrastructure: voter approval.

ACA 10 (Resolution Chapter 134, Statutes of 2024) Aguiar-Curry. Local government financing: affordable housing and public infrastructure: voter approval.

This Assembly resolution unites two separate Assembly Constitutional Amendments to improve access to voter approval for affordable housing. They seek an adjustment to the 1978 Proposition 13 tax structure confining tax increases to 1% of the property value as assessed in any given year. In 1996 voters passed Proposition 218 that required charter cities to submit new tax requirements to the voters that would pass if and only if two-thirds of the vote favored them. This Assembly resolution would lower the threshold for infrastructure and affordable housing financing to 55%. Thus, it becomes the fiscal cousin of the Senate Proposition eliminating the approval vote of local governmental officials.

Proposition 6

ACA 8 (Resolution Chapter 133, Statutes of 2024) Wilson. Slavery.

Slavery was abolished federally in the 13th Amendment and in the California Constitution with the same exception for those serving time in prison. This California Constitutional Amendment seeks a redress to the state standard. It prohibits slavery or involuntary servitude under all circumstances. This is important in light of events in other states using inmates for unpaid work in both state facilities and now in private businesses with the state taking their wages. This Constitutional Amendment states that no inmate can be penalized for refusing work, and that the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation may offer credits for work voluntarily accepted. The specific forms of “credits” is not

Proposition 32

RAISES MINIMUM WAGE. INITIATIVE STATUTE.

Current law, passed by voters, raised the minimum wage for all businesses. It currently is \$15 an hour for businesses with 26 or more employees, \$14 for those with fewer employees. It was then mandated to rise \$1.00 per year to \$18 per hour. This proposition would continue to raise the wage by \$1.00 increments for both sets of employees but now could be delayed in times of economic downturn at the Governor’s direction. There could be two delays thus increasing the time it would take to reach \$18 level. From that point on, the wage would increase relative to the Consumer Price Index, a more reliable calculator than the federal poverty level.

billion comprehensive bill, but it never got to the ballot. Governor Newsom signed a \$536 million urgency bill that year, but it, too, is expended. The impacts from uncertain weather conditions prompted by climate change are never ending. This revenue is not money operating in a vacuum since these funds are combined after disasters with federal funds as well as for ongoing measures to prevent disasters.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

There are provisions in ACA 1 to audit the use of any money raised by the lowered threshold and prevent its use for governmental salaries or expenses so that it will be directed entirely to the stated projects. Money raised by the lower vote requirement cannot be directed to those seeking to purchase a home.

The companion measure added recently is a “clean up” bill to provide details on what the Legislature can and cannot itself permit to be revised in terms of tax voting requirements. It simply affirms through our approval standard practices already in law.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

specified — be they time removed from the sentence or cash. CA does pay inmates for what work they do, including firefighting, all of it voluntary, but it’s less than \$1 per hour. Cash received by inmates via family, etc. goes to their fines and obligations. That would likely be true of cash income, where credits toward reduced time would not. This appears to give both prisons and inmates some choice of remuneration. If any prison facility rejects the plan, no inmate can be penalized for refusing work. This is far from an adequate revision of all prison practices, but it appears to be a very good start.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

This is a realistic alteration of the minimum wage statute that takes into account the vagaries of our state and national economies. While both California and the nation are strongly robust for now, that may not always be true. Giving the Governor the authority to ask for a delay is fair to business and consumers as well as to employees. The delays are limited, the promise still in effect all based on the realities of our times.

Proposition 33

EXPANDS LOCAL GOVERNMENTS' AUTHORITY TO ENACT RENT CONTROL ON RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY. INITIATIVE STATUTE.

This initiative would repeal the 1995 law known for its authors as the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act. The law forbids local governments from creating rent control laws for any form of housing. With the increase of rents that respond to market forces such as movement into areas by high wage workers and displacement of lower-income tenants by new unaffordable rent increases, the move to end Costa-Hawkins and allow local government to find their own versions of rent control has gained new energies.

A Berkeley 2018 study found rent control does not stop the construction of new housing or affordable housing. Alternatively, a Brookings Institute study (2018) found that rent control substantially reduces the market price of regulated property and also neighboring housing even if not rent controlled. In both studies, they found there was enormous benefit to the renters if less benefit to owners. Long-term communities tended to form and be stable with vibrant retail and community services. On the other hand, rent controlled properties often were neglected by landlords.

Proposition 34

RESTRICTS SPENDING BY HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS MEETING SPECIFIED CRITERIA. INITIATIVE STATUTE.

While this proposition speaks in the plural of "health care providers", it targets one nonprofit: AIDS Healthcare Foundation. One of the proposition's supporters, Protect Patients Now, specifically says this. One of the current issues in healthcare is whether housing is a health issue. A number of health advocacy organization believe that it is, but only AIDS Healthcare Foundation has the money and resources needed to buy housing as part of a subsidiary mission. AHF also has supported a number of ballot measures over the past few years such as this year's Proposition 33, to force government to create affordable housing for ultra-low-income groups who are homeless. Proposition 34 is backed by pro real estate groups that fought those ballot measures, and it has become clear that the target of this proposition is only AHF because no other organization has their money or mission. Is it true that AHF has legal problems concerning their use of

Proposition 35

PROVIDES PERMANENT FUNDING FOR MEDI-CAL HEALTH CARE SERVICES. INITIATIVE STATUTE.

This proposition proposes a permanent fee on all Managed Care Organizations such as Kaiser, Blue Cross, Blue Shield, etc. that already have a levy per patient fee due to expire in 2026. These funds go to specific health care coverage for those on Medi-Cal, the California version of Medicaid, that enrolls those earning 138% or less of the Federal Poverty Level annually. In California, thanks to expansion by the 2010 Affordable Care Act, it now includes all who are homeless with or without children as well as those with disabilities, elders, etc. Fees for

Recommendation: SUPPORT

In San Francisco the rent control did not prohibit creation of high-market value housing. In Cambridge MA the removal of rent control raised property values. There is no universal outcome.

The issue is also divided by our ideas about housing. Is it shelter for individuals and families or a commodity to create wealth for owners? That question is compounded by the large amount of rental property owned by real estate speculators who bought vigorously during the COVID pandemic. It is further impacted by low-mobility people and high-mobility people, those who move often vs. those who do not.

Because this proposition leaves the decision up to local governments that will determine how much and what kinds of properties can be controlled, there is room for the voices of the citizens most impacted by the choices. That gives more opportunity for all sides to be heard so wise policy is made.

Recommendation: OPPOSE

Medi-Cal funding and very poor track record of maintaining substandard "affordable" housing? Yes. The *Los Angeles Times* has several articles revealing the Foundation's legal woes.

The issue for voters, however, is that this is a dangerous use of a ballot measure to politically target ONE entity rather than tackle their possible errors in court. It comes perilously close to making voters complicit in supporting a "bill of attainder", a political weapon specifically rejected in the US Constitution. Bills of Attainder were ways to politically punish some adversary without using the courts and were rampant in England before the US was founded. This is a misuse of the election ballot process which cannot and must not be normalized.

Recommendation: SUPPORT

administration are capped and audits will assure that the funds are spent on targeted care such as primary and specialty care, emergency care, family planning, mental health, and prescription drugs. It will comprise the largest health care coverage expansion in the state's history. It will expand staffing and thus reduce wait times, lower overall costs to the program including pharmaceuticals. There will be no tax on the general public. This proposition has no opposition.

Proposition 36

Recommendation: OPPOSE

ALLOWS FELONY CHARGES AND INCREASES SENTENCES FOR CERTAIN DRUG AND THEFT CRIMES. INITIATIVE STATUTE.

This initiative statute addresses revisions to Proposition 47 that passed in 2014 and was implemented in 2015. Prop. 47 reduced many drug charges and sentences for property theft (\$950 or less) and changed simple drug possession to misdemeanors. Statistics from the Public Policy Institute of California note very little uptick in crime following that reduction in sentencing until immediately following the pandemic. Once America was “back in business” after shutdown, crimes rose though remaining substantially lower compared to the 1980s and 90s. The diversion and treatment aspects of Prop. 47 mean recidivism, repeat offending, was markedly reduced in all areas impacted by the Prop. 47 changes.

That said, retail theft after the pandemic, especially frightening ‘smash and grab’ invasions of retail outlets during business hours, have led the call for tougher penalties. These revisions would be to allow aggregation of the value of multiple property thefts possibly to exceed the \$950 cut off; recriminalizing the possession of fentanyl, and a

warning to those who commit such crimes twice that another is still a ‘third strike’ even if the first two did not reach the monetary limit. Revising these standards may divert money back to prison and away from community-based treatment programs as well as school funding, etc. However, those incarcerated on felonies who receive treatment may have their records expunged.

That said, upon review, it is clear that the standards here are too vague to prevent abuses of the ‘aggregation’ section. There are now, signed into law, ten bills tackling “smash and grab”, carjacking, and a few other high-visibility crimes that don’t do violence to Proposition 47. Affirming our support of Proposition 47 while knowing the real problems of these high-profile crimes are being addressed, allows us feel justice is being served by retaining our focus on the restorative aspects of Proposition 47 while respecting the legislative care for impacted retailers and citizens. We don’t need to make things worse.

Many thanks to the Task Force who helped us prepare these recommendations: Rev Sophia DeWitt (United Church of Christ), Rev Dr Alan Jones (United Methodist Church), Rev Dr LaTaunya Bynum (Christian Church/Disciples of Christ), Rev Ivan Herman (Presbyterian Church USA), Rev Jason Bense (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America), and Elizabeth Sholes and Rev Dr Rick Schlosser from IMPACT.

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 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!

Please visit www.churchimpact.org for more information and to support our work. Thank you!

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