



# Ballot Initiative STRATEGY CENTER

## Ballot Initiative Overview

2008 Election

### California

California is one of the most active ballot initiative states, having voted on over 250 ballot initiatives since the process was created in the state. Given the state's size and diversity of interests, as well as its activist nature, it's surprising California's ballots don't carry even more measures. What qualifies is a small percentage of measures attempted each year. According to political scientist Dave McCuan, only 26% of all initiatives filed have made it to the ballot and only 8% of those filed were adopted by the voters.

I&R historians agree that the modern initiative movement was spurred by Proposition 13, California's measure to limit property taxes in the state. Within two years of Prop 13's passage, 43 states had implemented some form of property tax limitation and 15 states lowered their income tax rates.

California leads the nation with the highest number of reform efforts, including those to end bilingual education and affirmative action, adopt one of the most comprehensive drug reform measures in the country, attempt broad reaching election reform as well as prescription drug control pricing and other consumer-related measures. Analysts believe that Pete Wilson's Proposition 187, one of the most well-known anti-immigrant ballot measures ever considered, drove Hispanic voters away from the Republican Party and had far-reaching effects on Latino politics in the state.

The 2008 ballot includes 12 measures, covering vastly diverse topics such as gay marriage, parental notification of abortion, animal rights, criminal justice and renewable energy. California will be the first state to vote on taking away marriage equality from LGBT couples if they pass Proposition 8.

It is difficult to characterize the nature of ballot measures in California over time, other than to point to the eclectic mix of measures that qualify and the sponsors behind them, who are often operating in a world of their own. Ballot measure campaigns in California are rarely successful without sophisticated means in which to talk to voters across a vast geographic area. In recent

years, prescription drug reform was defeated with a \$120 million opposition campaign and a renewable energy initiative faced opposition from big oil companies with a daunting amount of money. This year isn't remarkably different than previous years, with measures on the ballot concerning criminal justice, drug reform, energy, gay rights, reproductive freedom and much more.

**Twelve measures were on the statewide ballot (seven passed).**

**Ten were citizen-petitioned initiatives.**

**Two are legislative referenda.**

### **3 Constitutional Amendments Qualified**

#### **Proposition 4: Reproductive Freedom**

Waiting period and parental notification before termination of minor's pregnancy: Changes California Constitution, prohibiting abortion for unemancipated minor until 48 hours after physician notifies minor's parent, legal guardian, or, in limited cases, substitute adult relative. Provides an exception for medical emergency or parental waiver.

Proponents: Friends of Sarah, <http://www.yeson4.net/>

Opponents: The Campaign for Teen Safety, <http://www.noonprop4.org/>

FAILED 48% - 52%

#### **Proposition 8: LGBT Equality**

Eliminates right of same-sex couples to marry: Changes California Constitution to eliminate the right of same-sex couples to marry. Provides that only marriage between a man and woman is valid or recognized in California.

Proponents: Protect Marriage, <http://www.protectmarriage.com/>

Opponents: Equality for California Families, <http://noonprop8.com>

PASSED 52.5% - 47.5%

#### **Proposition 9: Criminal Justice**

Criminal justice system. Victims' rights. Parole: Requires notification to victim and opportunity for input during phases of criminal justice process, including bail, pleas, sentencing and parole. Establishes victim safety as consideration in determining bail or release on parole.

Proponents: Marsy's Law: Justice for Crime Victims, <http://www.marsyslaw.org/>

Opponents: No on Props 6 & 9: Communities for Safe Neighborhoods & Fiscal Responsibility, <http://www.votenoprop9.com/>

PASSED 53.5% - 46.5%

### **7 Statutory Initiatives Qualified**

#### **Proposition 2: Animal Rights**

Standards for Confining Farm Animals: Requires that certain farm animals be allowed, for the majority of every day, to fully extend their limbs or wings, lie down, stand up and turn around.

Limited exceptions apply.

Proponents: Californians for Humane Farms, <http://www.yesonprop2.com/>

Opponents: Californians for Safe Food, <http://www.safecaliforniafood.org/>

PASSED 63% - 37%

### **Proposition 3: Bond**

Children's Hospital Bond Act: Authorizes \$980,000,000 in general obligation bonds for construction, expansion, remodeling, renovation, furnishing and equipping of eligible children's hospitals.

Proponents: Yes on Children's Hospitals, Yes on Prop 3, <http://www.imaginewithus.org/>

Opponents: No Committee Identified

PASSED 55% - 45%

### **Proposition 5: Criminal Justice**

Nonviolent drug offenses. Sentencing, parole and rehabilitation: Allocates \$460,000,000 annually to improve and expand treatment programs. Limits court authority to incarcerate offenders who commit certain drug crimes, break drug treatment rules or violate parole.

Proponents: NORA Campaign - Yes On 5, <http://www.prop5yes.com/>

Opposition: No on Proposition 5, <http://www.noonproposition5.com>

FAILED 40% - 60%

### **Proposition 6: Criminal Justice**

Police and law enforcement funding. Criminal penalties and laws: Requires minimum of \$695,000,000 of state funding each year for police and local law enforcement. Makes approximately 30 revisions to California criminal law.

Proponents: Committee to Take Back our Neighborhoods,

<http://www.safeneighborhoodsact.com/>

Opponents: No on Props 6 & 9: Communities for Safe Neighborhoods & Fiscal Responsibility,

<http://www.votenoprop6.com>

FAILED 31% - 69%

### **Proposition 7: Energy**

Renewable energy generation: Requires government-owned utilities to generate 20% of their electricity from renewable energy by 2010, a standard currently applicable only to private electrical corporations. Raises requirement for all utilities to 40% by 2020 and 50% by 2025.

Proponents: Californians for Solar and Clean Energy, <http://www.solarandcleanenergy.org/>

Opponents: Californians Against Another Costly Energy Scheme, <http://www.noprop7.com/>

FAILED 35% - 65%

### **Proposition 10: Energy**

Alternative fuel vehicles and renewable energy. Bonds: Authorizes \$5 billion in bonds paid from state's General Fund, to help consumers and others purchase certain vehicles, and to fund research in renewable energy and alternative fuel vehicles.

Proponents: Coalition for Energy Independence: Yes on Prop 10, <http://www.prop10yes.com/>

Opponents: Consumer Federation of California, <http://www.noonproposition10.org/>  
FAILED 40% - 60%

### **Proposition 11: Election Reform**

Redistricting: Changes authority for establishing state office boundaries from elected representatives to commission. Establishes multilevel process to select commissioners from registered voter pool. Commission comprised of Democrats, Republicans, and representatives of neither party.

Proponents: Yes on Prop 11, <http://yesprop11.org/>

Opponents: Citizens for Accountability, <http://www.noonprop11.org/>

PASSED 51% - 49%

## **2 Statutory Initiatives Were Referred**

### **Proposition 1A: Bond**

Safe, Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act for the 21st Century: This act provides for the Safe, Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act for the 21st Century. For the purpose of reducing traffic on the state's highways and roadways, upgrading commuter transportation, improving people's ability to get safely from city to city, alleviating congestion at airports, reducing air pollution, and providing for California's growing population, shall the state build a high-speed train system and improve existing passenger rail lines serving the state's major population centers by creating a rail trust fund that will issue bonds totaling \$9.95 billion, paid from existing state funds at an average cost of six hundred and forty-seven million dollars (\$647 million) per year over the 30-year life of the bonds, with all expenditures subject to an independent audit?

Proponents: Californians for High Speed Trains, <http://www.californiahighspeedtrains.com/>

Opponents: No Committee Identified

PASSED 52% - 48%

### **Proposition 12: Bond**

Veterans' Bond Act of 2008: This act provides for a bond issue of nine hundred million dollars (\$900,000,000) to provide farm and home aid for California veterans.

PASSED 63.5% - 36.5%

*For additional information please check with the California Secretary of State:*

*<http://www.sos.ca.gov/>*