



The California Primary

MARCH 2, 2004

The League of Women Voters of Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville

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Nonpartisan Information on Ballot Measures

Regional Measure 2 - Regional Traffic Relief Plan

Counties of Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, San Francisco, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Solano

A Majority Vote Needed to Pass this Measure

Regional Traffic Relief Plan

The Question:

Shall bridge tolls on seven state-owned bridges be raised by \$1 to pay for transportation improvements and transit operations?

The Way It Is Now:

Traffic congestion at bridges has been increasing. This increases

air pollution and travel times and costs of doing business in the Bay Area. The land connection of the BART tube under the bay would be vulnerable in a major earthquake. To get cost-effective transit alternatives to congested bridges both additional funds and transit coordination are needed.

What Measure 2 Would Do:

Regional Measure 2 is a transportation financing proposal placed on the ballot by the California Legislature (Perata, SB916). If a majority of voters in the seven Bay Area counties with state-owned bridges pass this measure, bridge tolls would be increased by \$1. The toll for the Antioch, Benicia, Carquinez, San Rafael, Bay, San Mateo and Dumbarton bridges would then be \$3; the Golden Gate Bridge is not state-owned and currently has a toll of \$5.

The increased toll would relieve the growing traffic congestion on the bridges by funding transportation improvements around the Bay and would benefit those using the bridges and paying the fee. The measure would raise \$125 million a year for 35 years. Of this total, \$41 million per year would fund transit operations. In addition, the measure would fund the following projects:

- BART extension to Warm Springs & Oakland Airport, connection to East Contra Costa County (on conventional rail) and turnback track at Pleasant Hill (\$246M);
- expanded regional express bus network with park and ride (\$171M);
- new Transbay Terminal linking regional buses, Muni, BART, Caltrain and future high speed California rail (\$150M);

- strengthening the transbay BART tube to withstand earthquakes (\$143M);
- new rail service over the Dumbarton bridge (\$135M);
- improvements to the I-80/I-680 interchange at Cordelia (\$100M);
- expanded ferry connections (\$84M);
- improvements to the US 101 interchange at Greenbrae (\$65M);
- a fourth bore for the Caldecott Tunnel (\$51M);
- carpool lane completion eastbound at the Carquinez Bridge (\$50M);
- completion of new Benicia-Martinez Bridge (\$50M);
- common regional transit ticket system (Translink) (\$42M);
- rail connection between ferry and Sonoma-Marin rail (\$35M);
- Muni 3rd Street light rail (\$30M);
- intermodal terminal at Vallejo linking express bus and ferry (\$28M);
- access improvements for pedestrians and cyclists to transit (\$23M);
- Capital Corridor track and station improvement (\$25M);
- real-time transit information at stops or via communication devices (\$20M);

The measure requires that transit operators receiving operating funds meet performance standards for cost-effectiveness and number of riders. If not, funds can be reassigned by the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (composed of locally elected officials from the nine counties of the Bay Area) after a public hearing process. Once the projects are in the State Transportation Improvement Plan, the project sponsors must agree to any amendments.

The measure requires the Metropolitan Transportation Commission to develop a Regional Transit Connectivity Plan identifying hubs for timed transfers between systems by Dec. 1, 2005; a Regional Rail Master Plan integrating passenger rail services by July 1, 2006; and an integrated fare program by July 1, 2007.

A YES VOTE means you do want the bridge tolls increased by \$1 to fund a package of regional transportation improvements.

A NO VOTE means you do not want the bridge tolls increased by \$1 to fund a package of regional transportation improvements.

Proponents Say:

- Funds will be raised for transportation improvements to accommodate an estimated 50% increase in trips in the bridge corridors (1998-2025)
- Raising transportation money through bridge tolls, improving transit connections and connecting HOV lanes will encourage use of transit and carpools, reducing congestion and air pollution at the bridges.
- The measure will improve connections between transit systems for maximum cost-effectiveness. It will require a regional rail master plan to integrate passenger rail services.
- The measure will strengthen the essential BART transbay tube to withstand earthquakes. It will provide additional ferry capacity for flexible emergency service.
- Funds for operating transit as well as for building transit are included so we avoid building transit we can't afford to operate.
- Raising transportation money within the region will assist long-term regional transportation planning.

For additional information, review the Official California Legislative Digest www.leginfo.ca.gov on Senate Bill 916, Perata

Opponents Say:

- The measure distributes funds by ballot measure rather than selecting projects through the regional transportation planning process. Priorities may be determined by political pressure rather than by transportation and land use planning criteria.
- Some projects may encourage more people to drive by removing bottlenecks and increase congestion at the bridges. No data is provided on how effectively the proposed investments will alleviate traffic congestion at Bay Area bridges.
- Some of the BART extensions may not have enough riders to justify the investment, according to current land use plans.
- Revenues from increased bridge tolls will not completely fund most projects. This will create pressure to use other transportation funds for these uses.
- There is no automatic sunset provision for this measure.
- The Metropolitan Transportation Commission - as the Bay Area Toll Authority - could have set a \$3 bridge toll without a ballot measure and taken responsibility for regional rail and transit connectivity plans, which would provide direct accountability.

Alameda County Measure A - Essential Health Care Services Tax

A Two-thirds Vote is Needed to Pass this Measure

Essential Health Care Services Tax

The Question:

Should Alameda County implement a half-cent sales and use tax, with annual citizen fiscal oversight and review, to relieve the shortfall in funding for County health services?

The Way It Is Now:

Alameda County provides health care services through two systems: the Health Care Services Agency, and the Alameda County Medical Center. The Medical Center and its associated clinics provide care at Highland and Fairmont Hospitals and the John George Psychiatric Pavilion on the Fairmont Hospital Campus. Both systems receive funding through a combination of Federal, State and local monies. Both systems have experienced an increase in demand for services from uninsured persons due to the poor economy, increase in unemployment, and erosion of employee health benefits.

At the same time, the fiscal crisis experienced by the State has resulted in reduction of funding. The Medical Center, which is governed by a separate Board of Trustees but which retains close ties to County governance, has been particularly hard-hit by the increased demands for primary health care by the uninsured. The Medical Center has already closed some services and is currently operating at a large deficit. The County has been both contributing and

lending funds to help to relieve these deficits, but the County is experiencing its own fiscal problems. The State is reducing funding to the Counties and to its medical care system.

What Measure A Would Do:

The County is proposing to raise money to relieve the fiscal crisis in its health care systems by placing on the ballot this measure for a one-half cent increase in the tax rate for retail transactions and use. Currently, the county tax rate is 8.25%; this measure would increase the rate to 8.75%. The tax is scheduled to begin July 1 of 2004, after adoption by the required two-thirds of the voters in the March 2004 election. If approved, the tax increase would end on June 30, 2019.

Proceeds from the the tax money would be used to:

- provide and maintain trauma and medical services throughout Alameda County;
- provide primary, preventative and mental health services to indigent, low income and uninsured children, families and seniors;
- retain qualified nurses and health care professionals;
- prevent closure of County clinics and the Alameda County Medical Center.

The County has created a proposed ordinance that will implement the measure if the voters adopt it. The ordinance

specifies how the tax increase will be administered and spent and specifically designates 75% of the proceeds to the Alameda County Medical Center and 25% to other medical services, such as community based health care providers, uncompensated care costs for emergency care and other related hospital admissions, and essential public health, mental health and substance abuse services.

The proposed ordinance also provides for the establishment of a Citizen Oversight Committee to review the expenditure of the money gained from the passage of this measure and evaluate how the money was spent for the purposes it spells out. This committee would report its findings annually to the County Board of Supervisors.

Financial Impact:

The increase of a half cent in sales and use tax is estimated to bring in approximately \$90 million per year for 15 years. This estimate is subject to fluctuation, based on the general economy of Alameda County over the 15-year specified collection period. Whatever the actual proceeds, 75% is designated by the proposed implementing ordinance to go to the Medical Center and 25% to other health care needs for the county.

A YES VOTE means you want to increase the County sales and use tax by one half-cent to relieve the shortfall in funding for County health services.

A NO VOTE means you oppose increasing the County sales and use tax by one half-cent to relieve the shortfall in funding for County health services.

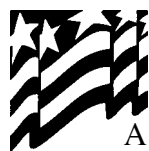
Supporters Say:

- Alameda County's health care system is in crisis. Just at a time when the number of uninsured patients is growing rapidly, significant reductions in state and federal funding are causing a reduction in the availability of quality health care throughout Alameda County;
- Without additional revenue, County clinics serving low-income children and families will close, trauma and emergency services will be reduced, and psychiatric and mental health services will be cut;
- Measure A is a temporary half-cent sales tax to avoid these cuts and ensure access to quality health care for all Alameda County residents. Specifically, it supports trauma and emergency services throughout the County, pediatric emergency services at Children's Hospital, essential primary care, preventive care and mental health services, basic primary care for underprivileged and uninsured children and families, retention of qualified and experienced nurses and other health care professionals, and prenatal and family planning services to low-income women;
- The primary and preventive services supported by Measure A are the most cost-effective approach to responsible health care. Providing these services helps to avert the higher cost of treating patients after they become critically ill;

- Measure A is a frugal and carefully crafted plan to address the most essential health care needs throughout Alameda County;
- Measure A is supported by doctors, nurses, the Alameda County Taxpayers Association, all five members of the Board of Supervisors, business leaders, seniors, and other residents.

Opponents Say:

- We display an insatiable appetite for government programs to meet our endless needs, are addicted to debt, yet balk at paying the bill – hence this laudable tax hike measure. But is this a bill worth paying?;
- This sales tax hike targets services to the poor and uninsured but it transfers wealth to them inefficiently. It sends more taxpayer income to the health care industry, but the purported low-income beneficiaries would probably rather eliminate the greedy middlemen and get direct financial benefits;
- Spending 15% of the Gross National Product on health care is far too much for a poor return;
- We should not underwrite expensive treatments for diseases stemming from lifestyle choices, like hypertension, diabetes, morbid obesity, cancer related to cigarettes, or diseases related to alcohol or drug abuse, not to mention AIDS. We should live healthier, lower our high tech health care expectations, and admit that this tax hike merely releases Alameda County funds for other uses;
- A sales tax hike just gives Internet shoppers and big-ticket item buyers another reason to purchase elsewhere;
- County debt tripled from \$355 million in 1992 to \$1 billion in 2002. The County Medical Center turned \$19 million in yearly profits into \$27 million in yearly losses.
- The economy is improving;
- Measure A will cost \$100 million annually. It is bad medicine – the wrong diagnosis, the wrong treatment, at the wrong time.



Who May Vote ?

A person entitled to vote must be:

- A United States Citizen,
- A resident of California
- Not in prison or on parole for the conviction of a felony,
- At least 18 years of age on the date of the election.

And you must be **registered** to vote.

The last day to register to vote in this election is **February 16, 2004.**

City of Berkeley Measures H, I and J

Measure H - Charter Amendment - Runoff Election

A Majority Vote is Needed to Pass this Measure

Runoff Elections

only required if the leading candidate for the office receives less than 40%? In addition, should the runoff be held early in February and the successful candidate assume office on March 1?

The Question:

Should the City of Berkeley Charter be amended so that a candidate for mayor, auditor, or council office can be elected with 40% or more of the votes and so that a runoff election is

Financial Impact:

The City will save between \$100,000 and \$300,000 if a runoff is avoided. Moving the runoff to February will save the City \$50,000 to \$150,000.

A YES VOTE means you want the candidate receiving 40% or more of the votes for mayor, auditor, or councilmember to be elected and that, if a runoff election is required, you want it to be held in February.

A NO VOTE means you want to keep the current rules which say that the winning candidate must receive at least 45% of total votes cast, and that a runoff election, if required, should be held in early December.

The Way It Is Now:

Berkeley municipal elections are held in November of even-numbered years. When more than two candidates run for the offices of mayor, auditor, or councilmember, the candidate receiving the highest number of votes sometimes does not receive the required 45% or more of the votes cast. In that event, a runoff election between the top two candidates must be held in early December, 28 days after the original election. Since the period between the regular election and a runoff election is short, the City Clerk must prepare for a runoff before it is known whether a runoff will be required.

This costs the City substantial staff time and money. The City Council unanimously proposed this charter change to save money in a time of serious budget shortfalls. In a previous election, voters elected to reduce the percentage required to win from 50% to 45%.

Supporters Say:

- Measure H will save the city money and staff time;
- The current 28-day period for preparing and election is too short. The City Clerk has to guess whether a runoff is needed and who the candidates will be before the November election results are in;
- H will enable the City to send out election information to voters early enough to comply with State election law.

Opponents Say:

- No opposing arguments were filed;
- Some critics point out that candidates should be elected by a majority of voters and not by a mere 40%;
- Three months is too long a gap between the election and the runoff. During this time the incumbent would serve instead of a candidate chosen by the current voters;
- Too few voters will determine the outcome, because turnout for runoffs is low.

What Measure H Would Do:

This measure would change the percent of the total vote required for election to 40%, thus making it more likely that a runoff would not be required. If a runoff election were required, it would be held in February, rather than in December. Candidates elected in February would take office on March 1. The previous incumbent would serve until the winner of the runoff took office.



Vote before March 2nd

An application for an absentee ballot is on the last page of your sample ballot. Fill it out, mail it in, and your ballot will be mailed to you. Follow the simple directions to return your ballot by mail, **or** you may drop it off at any polling place on election day. If you decide to return it by mail, be sure to allow enough time for it to be **received** (not just post-marked) by the County Registrar by election day.

The last day to apply for an absentee ballot by mail is February 24, 2004.

What if I miss the deadline to apply?

You can vote in person at the Alameda County Court House, 1225 Fallon Street, Oakland, during regular business hours from February 9 to March 1. Call your County Registrar's office for more information or options. Many cities offer special hours to vote at their City Halls the week before the election. Contact your local City Clerk for more information.

City of Berkeley Measure I

Charter Amendment Allowing City Council to Establish a System of Instant Runoff Voting Under Specific Conditions

A Majority Vote is Required to Pass this Measure

Instant Runoff Elections

The Question:

Should the Charter of the City of Berkeley be amended to allow the City Council to adopt an Instant Runoff Voting system provided three conditions are met so that it is legally and technically possible

and provided that it will not cost the City more money than the current system?

The Way It Is Now:

When elections are held for City offices, if no candidate receives 45% of the vote, a runoff election between the two candidates with the highest number of votes is conducted at a later date.

What Measure I Would Do:

The City Council would be authorized to establish a system of instant runoff voting (IRV) for the offices of mayor, auditor, and councilmember. With instant runoff voting, a single election determines the candidate favored by the voters, since voters can indicate their first, second and further choices on the ballot.

Before the Council may adopt an instant runoff voting system, it must make three findings: 1) voting equipment and procedures are technically capable of handling IRV; 2) IRV will not prevent consolidation of City elections with Alameda County elections; and 3) there will be no increase in City election costs as a result of IRV.

Financial Impact:

Estimated savings from avoiding a runoff election ranges between \$100,000 for a run-off election in a council district, to \$300,000 for a citywide runoff election for mayor or auditor. Establishing an instant runoff voting system might initially offset these savings in part.

A YES VOTE means you want to authorize the City Council to establish a system of instant runoff voting at a time in the future when specific conditions are met.

A NO VOTE means you do not want the City Council to adopt instant runoff voting.

Supporters Say:

Instant runoff voting saves money. Runoff elections are expensive. The City has spent more than \$1 million on

runoffs since 1986. IRV is more democratic. All voters can participate in selecting the winner, since if their first choice doesn't win, their second or third choice may win. The runoff election takes place instantly, without the need for a later special election. Under IRV you can vote for your favorite, without fearing you're helping elect your least favored candidate. IRV will be implemented only when it is technically and legally feasible and financially advantageous to Berkeley.

Opponents Say:

Voting systems should not be changed without very careful study. IRV is complicated and confusing. The County Registrar of Voters has said that he cannot at the present time allow Berkeley to consolidate its general municipal election with the statewide election, if it uses an IRV system. Voting machines in current use cannot handle both IRV and traditional elections on the same ballot. The specific form of IRV system is not mentioned in the ballot measure, and there are many forms of IRV. Let's wait until we know what works and what we are voting on.

Editor's Note: If both Measure H and Measure I pass:

- Beginning with the November 2004 election a runoff will be held only if the top candidate does not receive 40% of the vote;
- Whenever in the future it becomes technically feasible, the City Council will adopt a system of initial runoff voting that will eliminate altogether the need for a separate runoff election.

FYI . . .

The Regional Measure 2 (Traffic Relief Plan) and all the Berkeley Measures (H and I, Runoff Revisions; and Measure J, Filing Fees/Signatures-in-lieu) only need a majority vote to pass. Alameda County Measure A (Health Care Services Tax) requires a two-thirds vote to pass. For additional information, please visit our website at lwvbae.org, or call the League office at:

510/843-8824

For more information on statewide measures, please visit

www.smartvoter.org

City of Berkeley Measure J

Charter Amendment – Filing Fees/Signature-in-lieu

A Majority Vote Needed to Pass this Measure

Filing Fees/ Signature- in-lieu

The Question:

Should the City of Berkeley Charter be amended to require that candidates for council seats be nominated by registered voters in the districts they wish to represent? Should candidates for

the offices of mayor, councilmember, auditor, rent stabilization board commissioner and school board director pay a filing fee of \$150 which could be offset, in whole or in part, by submitting the signatures of city registered voters?

The Way It Is Now:

Under current law candidates for council office must present the names of no less than five or more than twenty registered voters in the city who nominate them for office, but the voters do not need to be residents of the council district where the candidate is running. Candidates currently pay a printing fee of \$35.00.

What Measure J Would Do:

This measure would require that the individuals who sign the nomination papers for a candidate for council office must be registered voters in the district where the candidate is running. It would also require that each candidate for city office pay a filing fee of \$150. However, the candidate could collect signatures of registered voters from anywhere in the City instead of paying part or all of the fee. Each additional signature would replace \$1 of the filing fee.

Financial Impact:

Candidates will pay increased fees or collect additional signatures. The City might save some money on ballot costs and monitoring campaign disclosure rules, if the new requirement eliminates candidates who would not actually participate in the campaign. Depending on the number of signatures needing verification and the number of candidates who just pay the fee, the City Clerk's costs for processing candidate applications may increase or decrease.

A YES VOTE means you want the persons who nominate a candidate to be registered voters in that candidate's district, and that you want candidates to pay a \$150 filing fee or submit additional signatures of registered voters in place of all or part of the filing fee.

A NO VOTE means you want to continue the current law, which requires only that the persons who nominate a candidate for council office be registered voters in the city, and which also only requires candidates for City office to pay a printing fee of \$35.

Supporters Say:

- The nomination of candidates for council office will be more representative, because each candidate will be nominated only by registered voters living in the council district;
- The modest filing fee will reduce the number of candidates who do not campaign actively. Candidates who are not serious about running cost the City money and clutter the ballot;
- No one will be prevented from running due to lack of funds, because signatures may be submitted instead of paying the filing fee;
- Measure J is a small reform of the process placing candidates for office on the ballot.

Opponents Say:

- Measure J will discourage potential candidates and make it more difficult to challenge incumbents;
- Democracy in Berkeley is diminished if people are deterred from using electoral campaigns to call attention to unresolved problems or promote solutions;
- Requiring people who may have valid ideas to collect 150 signatures or pay \$150 before they have access to forums where those ideas can have an impact would limit an important first amendment right. It is undemocratic.

★ ★ ★ **VOTE** ★ ★ ★

Tuesday, March 2nd

POLLS are OPEN 7:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M.

The address of your polling place is above the mailing label on your sample ballot.