



**PROS**  
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**ALBANY**

Nonpartisan Information on  
Ballot Measures

*League of Women Voters of Berkeley, Albany and Emeryville  
1414 University Ave., Suite D., Berkeley, CA 94702*

**GENERAL ELECTION,  
TUES. NOV. 4, 2008**

**MEASURE  
AA**

**CITY COUNCIL TO ADOPT ORDINANCE SETTING  
THRESHOLD LIMITS OR THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
FORMAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING AND ESTABLISHING  
SUCH OTHER PROCEDURES AS ARE NECESSARY FOR  
UNDERTAKING THE COMPLETION OF ANY PUBLIC  
PROJECTS.**

CHARTER AMENDMENT (requires majority vote)

**The Way It Is Now**

The City Charter currently provides that when “the expenditure required for a public project exceeds the applicable limit under the general laws of the State of California, or such lower limit as established by ordinance of the City Council, it shall be contracted for and let to the lowest responsible bidder after notice.” (Section 4.03) Thus, the Charter enables the City Council to adopt an ordinance setting lower limits for formal bidding on contract work than the threshold set in State law.

**What This Measure Does**

This Charter amendment would enable the City Council to set either higher or lower limits for requiring a formal bidding process on contract work for public projects. The City would no longer be constrained by the State law.


**Supporters Say**

- This measure is unanimously supported by the City Council and many other cities have adopted similar measures.

- It would give City Council the flexibility to set limits it deems appropriate for triggering the need for formal bidding on City contracts.
- The State threshold has not been updated for many years and is out of line with current construction costs. The formal bidding process for minor repair projects extends project start dates.
- Informal bidding processes for contracts below the threshold would still provide for competitive bids from multiple contractors or vendors, but could be done far more rapidly with potential cost savings to both the City and the bidders.

**Opponents Say**

No arguments have been filed in opposition to measure AA.



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

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

# MEASURE BB

## **\$300 PER MONTH SALARY FOR COUNCIL MEMBERS. CHARTER AMENDMENT (requires majority vote)**

### The Way It Is Now

The Albany City Charter provides that each member of the City Council receive a compensation of \$5 for each meeting attended, up to a limit of \$25 in any one month. In addition, in direct contradiction to provisions of the City Charter, each member of the City Council is entitled to receive health and life insurance benefits equal to those paid to full-time management employees. These benefits currently cost the City about \$55,000 annually and could be as high as \$82,000 if all Council members claimed the maximum allowed. The authority for this benefit is contained in a 1972 Council resolution, whose title addressed only payments to public employees, not to Council members. At that time, the City's contribution amounted to \$34 per Council member.

### What This Measure Will Do

Beginning on December 15, 2010, this measure would provide to each member of the City Council a monthly salary of \$300, for an annual total of \$3,600, instead of the \$5 per meeting attended, and in addition to the health and life insurance benefits received.

### Supporters Say

- Current compensation does not cover the cost of childcare and biases council membership toward those who are wealthy or retired, which does not represent the diversity of our community.
- State law currently provides for General Law cities to compensate city council members up to \$300 per month. Albany, as a Charter city, would be in line with council pay in El Cerrito and Emeryville.
- Council members are required to make extraordinary time commitments and personal sacrifice; we can show we value them by passing this minimal raise.
- We have lost existing and potential council members for economic reasons.

### Opponents Say

No arguments have been filed in opposition to Measure BB.

# MEASURE CC

## **CITY COUNCIL TO SET TIMES FOR COUNCIL MEETINGS BY RESOLUTION OR ORDINANCE. CHARTER AMENDMENT (requires majority vote)**

### The Way It Is Now

The City Charter presently provides that "The regular meetings of the Council shall be held on the first and third Mondays of each month, at eight o'clock pm., ..."

### What This Measure Does

It would enable the Council to set the time for start of Council meetings by a resolution or ordinance, rather than seek approval of a charter amendment each time they wish to make a change.

### Supporters Say

The Council could set earlier meeting times, giving individuals and families opportunities for increased participation in local government.

### Opponents Say

No arguments have been filed in opposition to Measure CC.



### **Who May Vote?**

A person entitled to vote must be:

- A U.S. 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

**Last day to register to vote in the November 2008 election is Monday, October 20th.**

# MEASURE DD

## REAL PROPERTY TRANSFER TAX INCREASE. CITY ORDINANCE (requires 2/3 majority vote)

### The Way It Is Now

The City currently collects a tax when real estate ownership changes hands. The current rate

is \$11.50 per \$1,000 of the value of the property.

### What This Measure Will Do

It would raise the real property transfer tax rate to \$14.50 per \$1,000, beginning in 2009, for an addition of \$300 for each \$100,000 of the value of the property transferred. Thus, the tax on a home purchased for \$600,000 would increase from \$6,900 to \$8,700.

### Supporters Say

- The real property transfer tax is an important source of

unrestricted funds to support general municipal services. As one of the few revenue sources the City can influence, this tax increase will help avoid possible reductions in essential services.

- The City is facing increased labor and energy cost increases, along with depressed economic activity, just as other governments are facing nationwide.
- It would raise this tax rate to a level on par with neighbor cities of Berkeley, Oakland and Piedmont.

### Opponents Say

No arguments have been filed in opposition to Measure DD.

# MEASURE EE

## TAX INCREASE FOR PARAMEDIC ADVANCED LIFE SUPPORT, FIRE ENGINES AND AMBULANCES. CITY ORDINANCE (requires 2/3 majority vote)

### The Way It Is Now

In 2000, Albany voters approved a new parcel tax

of \$18 per "Equivalent Residential Unit" (ERU) to fund a higher level of emergency medical service on fire engines and future purchase of ambulances. In 2004, the tax rate on business properties was adjusted according to the size of the building area, in order to better reflect the services provided in commercial, industrial and waterfront zoning districts.

### What This Measure Will Do

It would enable the City Council to increase this tax by up to 4%, beginning in fiscal year 2010-11 and on an annual basis thereafter. It would also enable the City Council to reduce or eliminate this increase for any year in which they find the City's budget would be balanced without this increase.

### Supporters Say

- This increase would amount to about \$0.87 per year for each residential unit and commercial equivalent.
- By 2020, the current \$18 could increase to \$26.70, allowing the City to accommodate increasing costs and providing funding for future replacement of paramedic fire engines.
- This measure has been unanimously approved by the City Council.
- Our paramedics currently respond to every emergency medical call in about 3 and a half minutes and save many lives. They seek community support to continue improving Albany's preeminent Advance Life Support response capabilities.

### Opponents Say

No arguments have been filed in opposition to Measure EE.

# MEASURE Y

## DIRECT ELECTION OF THE MAYOR. CHARTER AMENDMENT (requires majority vote)

### The Way It Is Now

Five members of the city council are elected at large in alternating even-numbered

years, each to serve for a four-year term. After each election, according to the City Charter (Section 2.01), the newly constituted Council elects "one of its members as its presiding officer, who shall have the title of Mayor ..." and then

"designates one of its members as Vice-Mayor." The current practice, instead, has been to elect a Mayor and Vice-Mayor each year at the Council's first meeting in January.

### What This Measure Will Do

This measure calls for the Mayor to be elected separately from those running for Council seats, beginning in the election of November 2012. It would define the Council as the mayor and

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*Measure Y, continued from previous page*

four council members, all of whom would serve for four year terms. The Vice-Mayor would be elected by other members of the Council and would serve at their pleasure. The measure provides for no changes in the functions or the role of the Mayor.

This measure provides that if no candidate for mayor receives a majority of votes, the Council shall then adopt an ordinance to provide for a run-off vote. The run-off system may include mailed ballots, “an instant run-off voting system when such technology is available to the City, or a special run-off election.”

**Supporters Say**

- It would give voters the choice about who leads Albany locally and represents them regionally.
- A 4-year mayor would give Albany residents a consistent voice in local decision-making and extend Albany’s leverage with regional, state and federal representatives, increasing our chance of receiving funds.
- It would increase our opportunity to influence policies of regional agencies, such as Bay Conservation and Development Commission, Metropolitan Transportation Commission and Bay Area Air Quality District.

**Opponents Say**

- This is a bad idea rushed by one individual. The Charter Review Committee voted against it three times.
- 84% of California cities with populations under 25,000 choose their mayors just as Albany has done since 1927.
- Rotating the position annually brings forth many points of view and leads to broad community consensus.
- In the case of a run-off, the City Council, which includes the Mayor, could choose the method most favorable to their preferred candidate.



**MEMBERS OF COMMISSIONS AND SIMILAR BODIES THAT ARE APPOINTED BY CITY COUNCIL WOULD SERVE FOR AN INTERIM TERM AFTER EACH ELECTION. CHARTER AMENDMENT (requires majority vote)**

**The Way It Is Now**

Members of commissions, boards, committees, task forces or similar City Council appointed bodies, generally serve only until the next general election, unless they are reappointed, “and unless otherwise established by ordinance or resolution.” (Section 3.23, City Charter)

**What This Measure Does**

This measure provides for all Council appointees to serve for a period of up to 45 days after certification of an election, or until they are either reappointed or replaced by a new appointee. It would enable commissions, etc., to continue to function for up to 45 days with a full set of members while members of the Council decide on new appointments or reappointments.

This measure would be an amendment to the City Charter,

although the Charter provides for the Council to adopt an ordinance or a resolution establishing such a procedure. It also provides for the Council to submit such an ordinance to the public at a general election, rather than creating an amendment to the Charter.

**Supporters Say**

- The City charter presently contains no provision for an orderly transition of membership in commissions, boards, etc., following an election.
- This measure allows for an ongoing process to continue the City’s business, giving Council members at least 45 days to choose their appointees.

**Opponents Say**

No arguments have been filed in opposition to Measure Z.