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League of Women Voters of California Education Fund

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Contra Costa County, CA

November 6, 2012 Election

Measure G

Parcel Tax

West Contra Costa Unified School District

2/3 Approval Required

Pass: 59149 / **75.61%** **Yes** votes ..... 19077 / **24.39%** **No** votes

See Also: Index of all Measures

Results as of Dec 3 1:05pm, 100.0% of Precincts Reporting (139/139)

Information shown below: Impartial Analysis | Arguments | Full Text

To maintain quality education with local funding the State cannot take away, including protecting core academics -- reading, writing, math, science, attracting and retaining quality teachers, providing lower class sizes for the youngest children, preparing students for college and the workforce, and improving safety on and around school campuses, shall West Contra Costa Unified School District renew its existing parcel tax for five years, keeping the current rate, with no funds for administrator salaries, exempting seniors and requiring citizen oversight?

Impartial Analysis from the County Counsel

The Board of Education of the West Contra Costa Unified School District has adopted a resolution proposing to extend its current parcel tax (a qualified special tax). This ballot measure asks voters to decide whether the District's existing parcel tax should be extended for an additional five years, beginning July 1, 2014.

The District currently levies an annual parcel tax of 7.2 cents per square foot of total building area on each parcel of taxable real property, or $7.20 per unimproved parcel of taxable real property, within the District. The District's current parcel tax is set to expire on June 30, 2014. If this measure passes, the parcel tax would be extended for an additional five years, beginning July 1, 2014, and continuing through June 30, 2019.

A parcel of taxable real property is any unit of real property located in the District that receives a separate property tax bill from the Contra Costa County Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office. The total building area on each parcel would be obtained from the Contra Costa County Assessor's Office, or based on the records of the building department of the jurisdiction in which the property is located. Parcels that are contiguous, are used solely for owner-occupied residential purposes, and are held under identical ownership, could apply annually to be treated as a single parcel for the purposes of the parcel tax. The parcel tax would not be levied on parcels that are exempt from paying property taxes. The measure

News and Analysis

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- About Measure G - Note: This link to an external resource is offered strictly as a convenience for users interested in coverage by outside news organizations. The content is provided by organizations unaffiliated with Smart Voter and its partners, and no endorsement of any views expressed or guarantee of its accuracy is intended or implied.

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also provides that any person who is over the age of 65, or who, regardless of age, receives Supplemental Security Income for disability, may apply to the District for an exemption from the parcel tax.

The ballot measure states that proceeds from the parcel tax will be used to "improve the quality of education in the District by supporting" specified District programs. Proceeds from the parcel tax may be used only for the specific purposes set forth in the ballot measure and according to constitutional and statutory provisions.

State law requires the District's chief fiscal officer to file an annual report with the District's Board of Education that states the amount of funds received and expended in each year and the status of any projects required or authorized to be funded from the parcel tax proceeds. State law also requires the proceeds from the parcel tax to be deposited into a designated account. Parcel tax funds also will be the subject of an annual independent financial audit, and the District's Community Budget Advisory Committee will oversee the use of parcel tax proceeds.

Two-thirds of those voting on the ballot measure must approve the measure for it to pass.

A "yes" vote is a vote in favor of authorizing the parcel tax.

A "no" vote is a vote against authorizing the parcel tax.

Arguments For Measure G

Maintain quality local education and give students the tools they need to succeed by voting YES on Measure G. This measure renews our local educational funding measure which provides a basic level of funding for our schools that the state can't take away.

Measure G enables the school district to continue giving students a quality education from kindergarten to high school graduation, providing them with the tools they need to succeed in today's workforce. We cannot rely on state government to fund local schools. Voting YES on Measure G will renew existing funding needed to maintain core academic programs that prepare our students for success.

Vote YES on Measure G to:

- Fund core academic programs of reading, writing, math and science;
- Maintain manageable class sizes to provide students with the individual attention they need;
- Support after-school programs that keep kids away from gangs and drugs;

Arguments Against Measure G

Less than 6 months ago, voters rejected WCCUSD parcel tax Measure K. And now the school district presents another parcel tax measure. We believe WCCUSD spends too much on consultants and surveys - money that should be going into the classroom. We owe over a BILLION dollars in debt that has us paying every year until 2027 and beyond.

Are the students getting a better education for this? Without good management, and a good plan, instead of improving education, the school district has run wild with spending. Oversight doesn't seem to help, as debt continues to mount and accountability is sparse. Throwing money at problems is not a solution.

Want to know how much the WCCUSD costs you? The County Treasure/Tax Collectors Office can help you, or you can look online at http://www.westcountyforum.com/. Remember to look at bonds from 1998, 2000, 2002, 2005, 2010 and MRAD ("WCCUSD Assessment") and 2008 parcel tax.

- Keep programs that prepare students for college and train them for the workforce;
- Provide classroom computers, technology, and science lab materials; and
- Attract and retain quality teachers.

Measure G provides local funding for our schools and students by renewing local educational funding for the next five years. All funding will stay here in our community and can't be taken by the state for any reason. An independent citizen oversight committee will review all expenditures to ensure they are spent correctly. No funds raised from Measure G will be used for administrator salaries. Seniors are exempt from paying this tax.

Measure G does not increase your taxes + it continues the current local educational funding to maintain programs in your local schools. Without Measure G, the district will be forced to make significant cuts to critical programs that our students can't afford.

Vote YES on Measure G to protect our schools and help local students.

http://www.protectwestcountyschools.com/

McKinley Williams, Retired President, Contra Costa College

Maria Saxton, Teacher, Washington Elementary School, WCCUSD Teacher of the Year

John Gioia, Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors, District 1

Ben Steinberg, Parent, Mira Vista K-8 School

Charles E. Toombs, President, Kensington Police Protection and Community Services District

Rebuttal to Arguments For

It seems the School Board is spending more time and money on ballots and surveys than it is on budgeting. California's residents are struggling financially and the District's enrollment is declining. Isn't it logical that our school district should need less money, not more?

WCCUSD has 7 items on your property bill for taxes, assessments and bonds. Now having not one, but TWO measures on the same ballot, WCCUSD wants to expand the smorgasbord for more financial obligations on already overburdened taxpayers. Parcel taxes disproportionately single out property Taxpayers have been generous to WCCUSD, but as communities strain to maintain streets, lighting, utilities, safety and more, the District needs to reexamine their resourcefulness, and question their methods and priorities. You are the source of their funds. Is your financial support unending? We say no.

Many other school districts perform better at less cost. WCCUSD doesn't seem to know how that happens. It's no wonder that parents seek alternatives to education with home-schooling, charter and private schools while still paying their taxpayer obligations. In this period of declining enrollment and financial crisis for so many, demand quality education, demand accountability, demand better. Say NO to Measure G.

Susan L. Pricco, Homeowner

Margie Liberty, Property Owner

Thomas Lynden, Business Owner CPA

Rebuttal to Arguments Against

Measure G is not a new tax. It is simply a renewal to continue the local education funding our schools need. You will not pay more with Measure G, and our schools will not receive any new funding. They will just continue to receive the local funding they are currently using to support core academic programs, after school programs, manageable class sizes, and school safety.

This district has shown time and again that it is now responsible and transparent with all its funding. In early May, the School District made the final payment on the state loan from the early 1990s. Earlier in this school year, they made the final payments on both the IBM loan and the Voluntary Integration Program (VIP), both debts coming from the same period in the District more than 20 years ago. There has been a state audit that has determined the District is fiscally responsible.

Measure G will renew our local education funding to support programs that prepare our children for success. It supports after school programs that keep kids away from gangs and drugs, and it funds college and workforce preparation to give students the tools they need to succeed in today's economy. Measure G funding provides classroom computers as well as materials for technology and science labs.

Don't let our local education funding expire. Vote YES on Measure G to renew this critical funding source without paying any new taxes.

owners, including retirees and those on fixed or low income, to pay for services and programs.

Remember the "senior exemption" only applies to seniors who are homeowners and only if they apply for the exemption.

Promises of an "oversight" committee give voters a false sense of security. WCCUSD's CBOC has no authority to impose changes or make decisions. That power lies solely with the School Board. There's nothing to ensure your dollars will be applied with any equity or used in your neighborhood.

Most parcel taxes are supposed to be fixed term measures but most, like the MRAD Assessment, show up again as "extensions". Sound familiar?

Don't be fooled by fancy flyers, costly campaigns or intimidating scare tactics. WCCUSD already garners a disproportionate amount of your wallet, and will for many years to come. Look at State and local measures, the needs of other public agencies who serve you and say NO to Measure G.

Paul Freese, Homeowner, Retired Systems Analyst

Joy J. Jennings, Homeowner, Caregiver

Georgette Bynum, Homeowner, Registered Nurse

John Hardester, Chief of Police, City of Pinole (title for identification purpose only)

Angela Chavez, Vice-President, Hanna Ranch Elementary School PTA

John E. Marquez, Board Member, Contra Costa Community College District Ward I

Jacqueline Rushing, CEO/Founder of Young Scholars

Elizabeth Underwood, Retired Teacher of WCCUSD

Full Text of Measure G

The following is the full ballot text of the proposition to be presented to the voters by the West Contra Costa Unified School District in the ballot pamphlet:

To maintain quality education with local funding the State cannot take away, including:

- protecting core academics - reading, writing, math, science,

attracting and retaining quality teachers,

providing smaller class sizes for the youngest children,

preparing students for college and the workforce,

improving safety on and around school campuses,

shall West Contra Costa Unified School District renew its existing parcel tax for five years, with no funds for administrator salaries, exempting seniors and requiring citizen oversight?

The purpose of the special tax is to improve the quality of education in the District by supporting the following programs:

- protecting core academics -- reading, writing, math and science,

- attracting and retaining qualified teachers,
- preparing students for college and the workforce,
- providing smaller class sizes for the youngest children,
- providing classroom computers and technology,
- improving safety on and around our campuses,
- supporting after-school programs to keep kids away from gangs and drugs,
- supporting science laboratories, materials and activities,
- supporting libraries.

An exemption shall be granted annually on any single family residential parcel or multi-family dwelling unit owned by one or more persons 65 years of age or older or persons who receive Supplemental Security Income (SSI) for a disability, regardless of age, who occupies said parcel or unit as a principal residence, upon annual application to the District for exemption.

Pursuant to California Constitution Article XIIIB and applicable laws, the appropriations limit for the District will be adjusted periodically by the aggregate sum collected by levy of this special tax.

Accountability

The proceeds of the special tax shall be applied only for the specific purposes identified above. The proceeds of the special tax shall be deposited into an account, which shall be kept separate and apart from other accounts of the District. No later than January 1 of each year while the tax is in effect, commencing January 1, 2014, the chief fiscal officer of the District shall prepare and file with the Board of Education a report detailing the amount of funds collected and expended during the prior fiscal year, and the status of any project or description of any programs authorized to be funded by this measure. Parcel Tax funds shall also be subject to an annual independent financial audit which shall be made public, including oversight by the Community Budget Advisory Committee and posting on the District's website.

Basis of Tax

The current parcel tax shall be maintained at an annual tax of 7.2 cents per square foot of total building area on each parcel of taxable real property within the District or a tax of $7.20 per unimproved parcel of taxable real property. The District shall provide the Contra Costa County Treasurer-Tax Collector a report indicating the parcel number and amount of tax for each parcel of taxable real property. The number of square feet of total building area on improved real property shall be obtained from the Contra Costa County Tax Assessor. If that information is missing from the tax assessor's records, the number of square feet of total building area shall be based upon the records of the building department for the applicable jurisdiction.

Definition of Parcel of Taxable Real Property

"Parcel of taxable real property" shall be defined as any unit of real property in the District that receives a separate tax bill for ad valorem property taxes from the Contra Costa County Treasurer-Tax Collector's Office. All property that is otherwise exempt from or on which are levied no ad valorem property taxes in any year shall also be exempt from the parcel tax in such year. Parcels owned and occupied by persons 65 years of age or older or persons receiving Supplemental Security Income for a disability regardless of age, may be exempt from the parcel tax, subject to annual application, as described above.

For purposes of this special tax, any such "Parcels" which are (i) contiguous, (ii) used solely for owner-occupied, single-family residential purposes, and (iii) held under identical ownership may, by annually

submitting an application of the owners thereof by July 1 of any year to the Board of Education be treated as a single "parcel" for purposes of the levy of this education parcel tax.

Severability

The Board of Education hereby declares, and the voters by approving this measure concur, that every section and part of this measure has independent value, and the Board of Education and the voters would have adopted each provision hereof regardless of every other provision hereof. Upon approval of this measure by the voters, should any part be found by a court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid for any reason, all remaining parts hereof shall remain in full force and effect to the fullest extent allowed by law.

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