

Here's how you should vote on CA's 12 propositions

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Body

Unsure of how to vote on California's 12 important propositions? The Daily Californian has gladly done the work for you.

Several crucial propositions related to civil rights are on the ballot, including Proposition 16's reinstatement of affirmative action and Prop. 17's restoration of the right to vote for parolees. Prop. 22, which would grant ride-hailing companies an exemption from AB 5, is another hot-button issue for voters and industry, as it has become the most expensive proposition in California's history.

Here are The Daily Californian's endorsements for California's pressing propositions for how residents should vote this November.

Prop. 14 - YES

Now more than ever, it's critical to believe in and fund science. Authorizing \$5.5 billion in general obligation bonds for the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine would be an important step forward. A part of the money would go specifically toward research and therapy for common afflictions such as Alzheimer's disease and strokes. The institute has already saved lives through its work and would be able to continue doing so thanks to Prop. 14.

It's a lot of money - but the funds would lead to more accessible cures and create more jobs. Just because the federal government no longer blocks funding for stem cell research does not mean the state should halt its progress. While the Daily Cal's editorial board recognizes that the institute has run into oversight issues, a majority of the money would go toward research, and the oversight committee would be slightly expanded.

Let's fund critical research.

Vote "yes" on Prop. 14.

Prop. 15 - YES

Back in the 1970s, California voters approved legislation that significantly limits property taxes, essentially granting landowners tax cuts that siphoned money away from government and public education. Today, California schools are in desperate need of funds: Per capita education spending in California is among the lowest in the United States.

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The name of Prop. 15 - Schools and Communities First - effectively summarizes the merits of this new legislation. California must close tax loopholes that, for more than 40 years, have allowed large businesses and corporations to avoid contributing their share of taxes to surrounding communities.

While opponents argue against increasing taxes during a recession, Prop. 15 would only apply to commercial properties worth more than \$3 million. Thus, the tax increase would fall mostly on businesses that can afford it.

This is fair and reasonable legislation that would flood schools and governments with billions of dollars of much-needed funding.

Vote "yes" on Prop. 15.

Prop. 16 - YES

The Daily Cal's editorial board once endorsed Prop. 209 to ban affirmative action. In 2020, we seek to rectify that harm.

Heightened calls for racial justice have echoed across the state for months, and many employers and educational institutions have made statements of support. But simply talking about diversity isn't enough - Californians must right a long-standing wrong by opening employment and state educational opportunities to women and BIPOC.

The legacy of the ban on affirmative action has not furthered progress toward fairer decisions - instead, rates of admissions for Black students at UC Berkeley alone have plummeted. Prop. 16 would reinstate affirmative action, which would help remedy the current wage and educational gaps by recognizing the value of diversity.

Some may say Prop. 16 is regressive because it would reinstate racial quotas, but it simply allows race, ethnicity, color, national origin and sex to be considered in admissions and hiring processes (and racial quotas are legislatively banned).

Candidates who are claimed to be more qualified tend to have greater access to opportunities, and affirmative action will recognize the opportunity gap faced by marginalized communities. Let's work toward a more equitable society through race- and sex-conscious legislation.

Vote "yes" on Prop. 16.

Prop. 17 - YES

Prop. 17 would finally restore the right to vote to former prisoners who have completed their prison terms and are now on parole.

Under the current system, people on parole can remain disenfranchised after they've reentered society and begun to pay taxes, hold jobs and contribute positively to their communities. This systemic disenfranchisement also continues a legacy of voter suppression that disproportionately silences the voices of people of color in the United States.

While opponents claim that Prop. 17 would grant voting rights to dangerous criminals, studies have shown that civic engagement can correlate with reduced recidivism among former prisoners.

Granting people on parole the right to vote is crucial to welcoming them back into political processes that impact their lives and the lives of their families, friends and neighbors.

Altogether, Prop. 17 is an opportunity to recognize and restore the humanity of people in our communities.

Vote "yes" on Prop. 17.

Prop. 18 - YES

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Currently, those ages 18 to 24 represent the largest segment of California's eligible voters. With the passage of Prop. 18, the state could double down on the participation of young voters, as 17-year-old Californians would be able to cast votes in special elections and primary elections preceding the next election they would be eligible to vote in.

Opponents argue that teens are too easily impacted by the views of adults around them and that this could be a slippery slope to relaxing other age-bounded liberties, such as the legal drinking age.

However, allowing 17-year-olds to vote in primaries isn't any sort of regression, but instead represents the logical, supplementary link to adequately participate in a full election cycle. Our state should fuel youth civic engagement, as younger populations would invest themselves in issues that impact them now and in the future.

Vote "yes" on Prop. 18.

Prop. 19 - NO

Prop. 19 is a verifiably unnecessary property tax break for those 55 or older, allowing them to carry their old homes' tax assessment to a new home of the same or lesser value.

Parts of the proposition - particularly the eradication of inheritance loopholes on nonprincipal homes and allocation of generated tax revenue toward wildfire prevention - look promising. But in its entirety, Prop. 19 utilizes such tidbits as shallow disguises of what the legislation really is - a padding of wallets for California's real estate agents.

This explains the extensive bankrolling of real estate associations for this proposition - adding up to more than \$42 million encouraging Californians to vote "yes," compared to the \$20,000 fundraised for the vote "no" campaign - as it would greatly stimulate the housing market, increasing their revenues.

Nearly 40% of Californians ages 18 to 24 live with their parents. A "yes" on Prop. 19 does nothing for the demographic of young home buyers, who'd simply see more homes just become vacant and still unaffordably out of reach.

See it for the real estate ploy it is. Vote "no" on Prop. 19.

Prop. 20 - NO

Prop. 20 presents an unappealing rollback on previous legislation that downgraded many felonies to misdemeanors and enabled more opportunities for parole, such as Prop. 47 and Prop. 57.

Supported by police departments and prosecutors, Prop. 20 reads like a conservative "law and order" maneuver that institutes unnecessarily harsh penalties for low-level crimes. A vote "yes" would only exacerbate the injustice embedded in California's criminal justice system.

Prop. 20 outlines more ways to criminalize marginalized communities that are already overpoliced and racially targeted by the system. The San Francisco-based Center on Juvenile and Criminal Justice said an estimated 66% of people sent to jail or prison under Prop. 20 would be Black, Latinx, Asian or other Californians of color.

Prop. 20's cutback and increased stipulations on parole programs only make this unfair criminalization permanent.

There are more effective, efficient avenues to keeping communities safe and crime rates low - especially for a state with an ongoing prison crisis. Vote "no" on Prop. 20.

Prop. 21 - YES

For renters in a densely populated, widely low-income city such as Berkeley, the passage of Prop. 21 and elimination of the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act is a long-awaited protective measure.

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Prop. 21 would grant municipalities the agency to enact rent control on properties at least 15 years old, with a clause exempting landlords who own no more than two homes. Under Costa-Hawkins, Berkeley landlords can increase the rent to market rates when a tenant moves out - Prop. 21 could grant cities the proper authority to limit such gouging.

Notable opposition, such as Gov. Gavin Newsom, view Prop. 21 as another hurdle to creating accessible housing, as private sector builders would lose incentive to build new housing.

But investment in private sector building perpetuates high rents and shies away from overdue solutions to California's housing crisis such as public housing. Instead, Prop. 21 is a tangible solution to the high housing costs that universally plague Californians.

Vote "yes" on Prop. 21.

Prop. 22 - NO

Uber, DoorDash and other ride-hailing and food delivery companies seek a legislative exception to classify their workers as independent contractors through Prop. 22.

The classification would allow companies to deny drivers a minimum wage, sick leave and any meaningful employment benefits. They would also skirt millions in taxes supporting welfare programs such as Social Security and Medicare.

This is why Prop. 22 has become the most expensive proposition in California's history. Gig companies committed \$184.3 million, filling air space with seemingly distorted information to support their money-saving stance.

These companies argue that most drivers prefer to be contractors, as the majority work part time and desire greater flexibility. However, the cited study was self-funded, indicating that the results are biased. In reality, a study by the city of San Francisco uncovered that 71% of its gig drivers work more than 30 hours a week, making driving their primary income source.

While the proposition does contain paltry benefits for drivers, workers deserve better. Moreover, Prop. 22 would require a seven-eighths majority to overturn, altogether allowing ride-hailing companies to purchase and frame their ideal legislative package.

Do not be duped by these companies' outrageous spending.

Vote "no" on Prop. 22.

Prop. 23 - YES

One in 7 adults has chronic kidney disease. And Prop. 23 would protect them.

Prop. 23 would create new state requirements for dialysis clinics. In addition to requiring a constant on-site medical professional, clinics would report infection data to the state and would need to receive the state's OK before closing.

The state's requirements look good. Although clinics are already required to report infection statistics to the federal government, proper reporting and increased transparency of statewide infection rates would improve service quality by allowing California to better recognize areas for improvement. Additionally, asking the state before closing a clinic ensures access to dialysis for all, regardless of geography or socioeconomic status.

Opponents claim that requiring an on-site medical professional would gratuitously exacerbate operating costs, increasing the price of an already expensive service. However, more than 90% of patients on dialysis are on Medicare, which pays for all, if not the bulk of, the treatment.

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Big dialysis and its bottom line are threatened by Prop. 23 - about 600 clinics operate in California, most of them owned by two private, for-profit companies. We must ensure the health of and the quality of care for the millions of patients on dialysis.

Vote "yes" on Prop. 23.

Prop. 24 - NO

Prop. 24's fine print hands Big Tech all of the power it needs.

Prop. 24 outlines greater online protection and privacy for consumers, purportedly handing the power to users, limiting companies' sharing and selling of sensitive information. A new agency would enforce these measures, and the definition of "sensitive information" would be expanded to include swaths of personal data.

But underneath the flashy protections lies a buried tech-centric agenda. Prop. 24 was written in conjunction with Google and Facebook. The team rejected almost every suggestion made by the 11 privacy and consumer rights groups - essentially, Prop. 24 was written by Big Tech.

And it shows in the proposition's text. "Pay for privacy" clauses, automatic opt-outs and lines allowing for refusals of consumer-requested deletions litter Prop. 24. This is a textbook example of digital redlining, with a carefully created loophole weakening the privacy of small businesses, disproportionately hurting those owned by Black, Latinx and Asian individuals.

Tech companies have not come out with endorsements for Prop. 24 because they don't have to - they wrote it. Protect your information. Vote "no" on Prop. 24.

Prop. 25 - YES

Prop. 25 receives a tepid "yes" in the context of the United States' inequitable justice system. In fabricating a county-by-county, algorithm-based system performing risk assessments on defendants, Prop. 25 would end money bail in California. This system would not replace judges but aid them, as the algorithm would designate defendants as low, medium or high risk in terms of public safety and flight risk.

Concerns have risen - notably from many civil rights groups - about the factors involved in determining risk. If the factors and the data they are based on are racist, then is an algorithm a better alternative?

Although the technology and its implications surrounding the risk assessment are new and intimidating, the effects of cash bail are even worse. Whether you have enough cash on hand determines whether you await trial at home or in a jail cell. The amount is decided by a single judge, which keeps so many Americans unnecessarily locked up that 75% of the jailed population is not convicted of a crime.

The arbiter of justice should not be cash. Vote "yes" on Prop. 25.

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