

A closer look at controversial propositions

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Body

Oct 19, 2020(CalMatters: <https://calmatters.org> Delivered by Newstex) ;; Good morning, California. It's Monday, October 19. Beyond the top lineA voter drops off her ballot at Emeryville City Hall on Oct. 15, 2020. Photo by Anne Wernikoff for CalMatters Today is the last day to register online to vote[1] — and if you aren't one of the more than 3.5 million Californians[2] who have already returned their ballots, it's time for a closer look at some of the 12 statewide propositions[3]. You've probably heard that Prop. 15[4], one of the most controversial and high-profile measures on the November ballot, would heft taxes on some commercial properties to raise up to \$11.5 billion annually for local governments and schools.

But a less-considered aspect is how the measure would affect California's housing crisis, CalMatters' Matt Levin reports[5]. Some say Prop. 15 would incentivize local governments to favor commercial projects, which would contribute both sales taxes and higher property taxes to city coffers. Others say Prop. 15 would actually increase housing supply by propelling tax-averse developers to redevelop aging commercial or industrial properties into homes. For more on the ins and outs of these arguments, check out Matt's report[6]. Meanwhile, Prop. 20[7]'s main tagline is that it would roll back certain criminal justice reforms. But one little-noticed provision would expand the state's DNA database by collecting samples from people convicted of certain misdemeanors, including child and elder abuse, domestic abuse, prostitution with a minor, shoplifting, forgery and drug possession, CalMatters' Byrhonda Lyons reports[8]. Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert: 'Oftentimes, folks that have been convicted of those (misdemeanor) crimes lead law enforcement to identify or solve cases that are violent crimes, rape, murders.' Contra Costa District Attorney Diana Becton: 'I just don't think that we have the data to prove that including those cases in the DNA data bank is going to help us solve violent crimes in California.' And though much of the attention on Prop. 16[9] has focused on how reinstating affirmative action would affect university admissions, the Los Angeles Times takes a look at how it would impact the multibillion-dollar business of public contracting[10]. For more, check out CalMatters' election guide[11]. And if you miss today's online registration deadline, you can still register to vote[12] at your local county elections office, polling place or vote center.

_____The coronavirus bottom line:As of 9 p.m. Sunday night, California had867,317 confirmed coronavirus casesand16,943 deathsfrom the virus, according toaCalMatters tracker[13].Also:CalMatters regularly updates this pandemic timeline tracking thestate's daily actions[14]. And we'retracking the state's coronavirus hospitalizations by county[15].After a week of legal threats and dueling allegations of fraud and voter suppression, the brouhaha over the GOP's ballot boxes went out with a whimper on Friday: No charges were announced and both sides declared victory, Ben Christopher writes[16]. Advertisement<https://mattressrecyclingcouncil.org/programs/california/> Other stories you should know 1. Exide can abandon LA plant, judge rules The closed Exide factory on April 5, 2017. Photo by Danny Moloshok, REUTERS via Alamy A federal judge approved Exide's bankruptcy plan Friday[17], allowing the company to walk away from its

A closer look at controversial propositions

shuttered battery-recycling plant in Los Angeles[18] and leave California taxpayers to shoulder millions of dollars in cleanup costs and health risks from lead and other toxic pollutants. But part of the blame also rests at the feet of California regulators, who allowed the company to operate for more than 30 years despite its repeated environmental violations, the Los Angeles Times reports[19]. Advocates also fault the state Department of Toxic Substances Control for its lackluster oversight. Last month, Gov. Gavin Newsom vetoed a bill[20] that would have increased transparency and accountability within the department. He said Friday[21] the state plans to appeal the federal judge's decision. Newsom[22]: 'I am outraged that the federal bankruptcy court let Exide and its creditors off the hook today and decided that lead exposure does not pose an imminent or immediate harm to the public.' Federal Judge Christopher Sontchi[23]: 'How much can the (California) government sit back and not take action to remediate and then say abandonment is not appropriate because it's an immediate, imminent, threat?' Idalmis Vaquero of Boyle Heights, who lives within the residential cleanup zone[24]: 'I'm frustrated and enraged that Exide is getting away with this, but also by how our system is failing us again and again.'

2. School reopening battles heat up Dozens gathered in Brentwood City Park on Sept. 15 to demand that Brentwood reopen schools. Photo by Anne Wernikoff for CalMatters Tensions in the battle over school reopenings are reaching a fever pitch, with influential teachers unions digging in their heels[25] and demanding improved safety measures[26] as increasingly frustrated lawmakers[27] and parents push for a return to campus. The two groups' arguments evoke the chicken-or-the-egg paradox: Unions say reopening too quickly will harm disadvantaged communities — many of which are experiencing higher rates of COVID-19 infection — while lawmakers and parents say school closures are disproportionately affecting disadvantaged communities and widening the state's achievement gap. San Francisco Mayor London Breed, one of 13 mayors who recently urged[28] the state to safely reopen schools as soon as possible, issued a scathing statement[29] Friday in response to the San Francisco Unified School District ordering 44 schools linked to figures like Abraham Lincoln and Thomas Jefferson to change their names[30]. Breed[31]: 'In the midst of this once-in-a-century challenge, to hear that the district is focusing energy and resources on renaming schools — schools that they haven't even opened — is offensive. The fact that our kids aren't in school is what's driving inequity in our city. Not the name of a school.'

3. Pandemic drives first-time gun sales Photo via iStock About 110,000 Californians purchased guns during the first five months of the pandemic, 43% of whom did not previously own a firearm, according to a preprint of recent survey data from UC Davis researchers[32]. The news comes amid a concerning uptick in gun violence and homicide rates in California cities[33] that experts say is attributable in part to the pandemic, which has driven up anxiety and depression rates as the economy spirals downward. Other key findings[34]: 76% of those who bought guns in response to the pandemic said they worried about lawlessness. 56% were concerned about the state's release of inmates[35] to curb coronavirus outbreaks at state prisons. 49% were worried about 'the government going too far.' 38% feared a 'government collapse.' 31% were concerned about gun store closures. Californians' anxieties about unrest were echoed in another recent survey[36] in which 82% said they feared many Americans won't respect the outcome of the November election. The Los Angeles Police Department recently told officers[37] they may need to reschedule vacations during the week of the election. LAPD Assistant Chief Horace Frank[38]: 'Our hope is that there isn't any unrest or unlawful exhibition of behavior, but hope is not a strategy so we have to do the responsible thing and properly prepare for any such unlawful activities.'

4. Unemployment department update Image via iStock Something that likely wasn't on your 2020 bingo card: Los Angeles Rapper Nuke Bizzle Releases Song Called 'EDD[39],' in which he brags about defrauding California's unemployment department while waving a stack of debit cards[40]. On Friday, federal authorities arrested Bizzle[41] on charges that he fraudulently obtained more than \$1.2 million in federal benefits distributed by the Employment Development Department. If convicted, he could face 22 years in federal prison. 'I just got rich off of EDD,' Bizzle raps in the eponymous song, which was released in September. 'Get on that laptop, I'm working out, 25 claims in four hours.' EDD, which has doled out \$101 billion in benefits[42] since the onset of the pandemic, recently reopened after a two-week reset period[43] during which it implemented a new ID-verification tool to mitigate fraud and speed up processing times. Though concerns about the tool's efficacy remain[44], EDD's claim backlog has fallen from about 1.6 million[45] to just over 1.2 million, according to data released Thursday[46]. Overall unemployment also dropped from 11.4% in August[47] to 11% in September[48], with the hard-hit leisure and hospitality sector notching more than 48,000 new jobs. Advertisement <https://www.chcf.org/collection/modernizing-payment-californias-community-health-centers/> Upcoming events Oct. 21, 5-6:30pm: Rebuilding and Resiliency: How We Need to Handle Wildfires From Now On[49]. In this two-part virtual event, CalMatters examines California wildfires through the lens of Rebuilding Paradise, a new documentary from Academy Award-winning director Ron Howard. Register[50] Submit Your Questions[51] CalMatters columnist

A closer look at controversial propositions

Dan Walters[52]: August's rolling blackouts indicated that California's transition to a carbon-free future will not be easy. Busting the Prop. 13 myth: Powerful special interests are pushing Prop. 13 to absurd ends to challenge taxes passed by a majority of local voters for homeless programs, child care and more, argues lawyer Jeffrey Sinsheimer[53]. Reforming Prop. 13: Prop. 15 will close a tax loophole and reclaim \$12 billion yearly for local communities and schools so we can reinvest in our future, writes Irwin Jacobs, founding chairman of Qualcomm[54]. Other things worth your time President Donald Trump reverses FEMA denial of emergency aid for California fires. // Politico[55]Inside Trump's Sunday fundraiser in Orange County. // Los Angeles Times[56]Former Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger: California Republicans 'off the rail' with 'fake' ballot boxes. // Politico[57]California students find new ways to get out the vote amid pandemic. // CalMatters[58]Spy plane sent to monitor protest in affluent Sacramento suburb, home to head of California National Guard. // Los Angeles Times[59]Statue of former Gov. Pete Wilson removed following activist calls. // NBC San Diego[60]San Francisco archbishop holds exorcism where Junipero Serra statue was vandalized. // San Francisco Chronicle[61]San Francisco mayor blasts 'lefty movement' for blocking housing. // The Real Deal[62]Many California wineries won't make wine this year because of wildfire smoke. // San Francisco Chronicle[63]There are 13.3 quadrillion plastic fibers in California's environment, study shows. // The Guardian[64]See you tomorrow.Tips, insight or feedback? Email emily@calmatters.org [65].;Follow me on Twitter: [@emily_hoeven](https://twitter.com/emily_hoeven)[66]Subscribe to CalMatters newslettershere[67].Follow CalMatters onFacebook[68]andTwitter[69].CalMatters is now available in Spanish onTwitter[70],Facebook[71]andRSS[72]. [1]: <https://registertovote.ca.gov/#mainCont> [2]: https://admin.cdn.sos.ca.gov/press-releases/2020/ballot-return-updates/10.14/VBMStatistics-November2020General_10-17-2020.pdf [3]: <https://calmatters.org/election-2020-guide/> [4]: <https://calmatters.org/election-2020-guide/proposition-15-property-tax-big-business/> [5]: <https://calmatters.org/housing/2020/10/prop-15-california-housing-crisis/> [6]: <https://calmatters.org/housing/2020/10/prop-15-california-housing-crisis/> [7]: <https://calmatters.org/election-2020-guide/proposition-20-crime/> [8]: <https://calmatters.org/?p=144875> [9]: <https://calmatters.org/election-2020-guide/proposition-16-affirmative-action/> [10]: <https://www.latimes.com/business/story/2020-10-17/prop-16-affirmative-action-diversity-contractors> [11]: <https://calmatters.org/election-2020-guide/> [12]: <https://calmatters.org/election-2020-guide/> [13]: <https://calmatters.org/health/coronavirus/2020/03/california-coronavirus-by-the-numbers-cases-testing-masks-hospital-beds/> [14]: <https://calmatters.org/health/coronavirus/2020/04/gavin-newsom-coronavirus-updates-timeline/> [15]: <https://calmatters.org/health/coronavirus/2020/04/california-coronavirus-covid-patient-hospitalization-data-icu/> [16]: <https://calmatters.org/politics/post-it/2020/10/gop-ballot-box-battle-california-fizzled/> [17]: <https://www.bloomberglaw.com/public/desktop/document/ExideHoldingsIncDocketNo120bk11157BankrDDElMay192020CourtDocket/18?1603066986> [18]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/10/california-federal-stimulus-census-exide/> [19]: https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-10-16/exide-bankruptcy-decision-vernon-cleanup?utm_source=sfmc_100035609&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=32970+Essential+California+Saturday+Edition&utm_term=https%3a%2f%2fwww.latimes.com%2fcalifornia%2fstory%2f2020-10-16%2fexide-bankruptcy-decision-vernon-cleanup&utm_id=16130&sfdc_id=1845983 [20]: <https://www.gov.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/AB-995.pdf> [21]: <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/10/16/governor-newsom-statement-on-exide-bankruptcy-ruling/> [22]: <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2020/10/16/governor-newsom-statement-on-exide-bankruptcy-ruling/> [23]: https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-10-16/exide-bankruptcy-decision-vernon-cleanup?utm_source=sfmc_100035609&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=32970+Essential+California+Saturday+Edition&utm_term=https%3a%2f%2fwww.latimes.com%2fcalifornia%2fstory%2f2020-10-16%2fexide-bankruptcy-decision-vernon-cleanup&utm_id=16130&sfdc_id=1845983 [24]: https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-10-16/exide-bankruptcy-decision-vernon-cleanup?utm_source=sfmc_100035609&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=32970+Essential+California+Saturday+Edition&utm_term=https%3a%2f%2fwww.latimes.com%2fcalifornia%2fstory%2f2020-10-16%2fexide-bankruptcy-decision-vernon-cleanup&utm_id=16130&sfdc_id=1845983 [25]: <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-10-16/state-teacher-unions-push-back-against-calls-to-reopen-k-12-campus-parents-divided> [26]: <https://www.sacbee.com/news/local/education/article246316155.html> [27]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/10/california-federal-stimulus-census-exide/> [28]: <https://calmatters.org/newsletters/whatmatters/2020/10/california-federal-stimulus-census-exide/> [29]: <https://twitter.com/LondonBreed/status/1317158288258027520> [30]:

A closer look at controversial propositions

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A closer look at controversial propositions

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