

The USD Vista's guide to local prop measures in the 2020 election

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Body

The USD Vista's guide to local prop measures in the 2020 election: CA Voting and Props

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When voting, it's not just the future president on the ballot; there are also state and local representatives. These are the people who will determine redistricting, determine how tax dollars are used, and what policies will be enacted locally. Although profiles about these people will not be covered in this article, it's important to do research before deciding who to vote for. Two unbiased resources that you can use are Vote411 and Ballotpedia.

In addition to voting people into power, propositions (props) are also on the table and they are directly approved or declined by voters. These props are important to consider because they determine how state money is used and can change or modify state laws. For CA, there are a total of 12 propositions on the ballot: Prop 14 to Prop 25. Here are all the propositions simplified along with the pros and cons of each proposition. The props in their entirety, can be found in the official voter information guide.

Prop 14: Authorizes Bonds Continuing Stem Cell Research

- **Details:** In 2004, Proposition 71 was enacted which allowed researchers in CA to conduct stem cell research. The money needed to fund this proposition was from CA selling \$3 billion in bonds to investors. This money was used for four main purposes: research the stem cell's ability to regenerate to create a new form of "regenerative medicine" to treat various diseases ranging from Alzheimer's disease to possibly COVID-19, conduct clinical trials, construct new research facilities, and create research internships for college students. However, most of the funds from Prop 71 have been spent. Prop 14 would allow CA to sell an additional \$5.5 billion over the course of at least 11 years to continue this research and clinical testing.
- **Fiscal:** It would cost CA \$7.8 billion to repay the bonds (the original \$5.5 billion plus \$2.3 billion in interest). In addition, CA's subsidized health care program (such as Medi-Cal) could be affected.
- **Argument For:** Those in favor of Prop 14 argue that this research has been highly effective for curing numerous diseases and could possibly even help in curing COVID-19. They also argue that it increases both jobs and more accessible treatment for everyone.
- **Argument Against:** Those who oppose Prop 14 state that there is a question about the integrity of the state agency overseeing these funds. They argue that the state's flaws in the original stem cell research have increased and that this research should be done by private investors and companies without the use of tax dollars.

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Prop 15: Increases funding sources for public schools, community colleges, and local government services by changing tax assessment of commercial and industrial property

- Details: Currently, all CA property owners are taxed based on how much they originally bought their property for. Prop 15 would require commercial land and buildings to be taxed based on how much they could be sold for starting in 2022.
- Fiscal: Only property owners that have more than \$3 million worth in commercial land and buildings will have increased taxes; homeowners and agricultural land owners are not affected. With the increased amount of tax dollars to local governments, 60% of the funds would go to cities, counties, and special districts while the other 40% would increase funding for schools and community colleges.
- Argument For: Those in favor of Prop 15 argue that this proposition would eliminate property tax breaks to wealthy corporations while cutting taxes for small businesses. They believe that more resources should be put into the community to help solve inequality, poverty, unemployment, homelessness, and underfunded schools.
- Argument Against: Those against it state that Prop 15 will actually result in higher property taxes for all Californians. In addition, they argue that Prop 15 will increase the cost of living and lacks accountability and will result in more job losses.

Prop 16: Allows diversity as a factor in public employment, education, and contracting decisions

- Details: In 1996, CA voters voted in favor of Prop 209 which banned the consideration of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in public employment, education, and contracting in CA. Prop 209 became Section 31 of Article 1 in CA's state constitution and it established Federal equal protection rights with an exception for affirmative action in colleges and universities. Prop 16 calls to repeal Prop 209 to provide a wider range of policies and programs to consider the factors stated above as long as they are in line with federal law related to equal protection.
- Fiscal: It depends on what policies and programs CA and local entities decide to implement.
- Argument For: Those in favor of Prop 16 argue that it will help remove discrimination in business and schools. They believe that white men are overrepresented in positions of power and wealth in CA and that Prop 16 will open up more opportunities for those who have traditionally been discriminated against (women and racial minorities).
- Argument Against: Those against Prop 16 state that the proposition itself is a form of discrimination and perpetuates a stereotype that all minorities and women can only succeed if they receive preference. In addition, they argue that this prop can be manipulated to give preference to those who don't need it and ultimately cost billions of taxpayer dollars.

Prop 17: Restores right to vote after completion of prison term

- Details: Currently, people with felonies on parole are unable to vote. Prop 17 would result in a new amendment to the Constitution of CA that would restore the right to vote for individuals currently on state parole. This could also result in some people on state parole being eligible to run for elective offices.
- Fiscal: It would increase annual county costs for updating voter registration cards and systems by hundreds of thousands of dollars statewide.
- Argument For: Those in favor of Prop 17 argue that it will allow prisoners to integrate with their community more easily and thus result in less crime. In addition, they state that 19 other states already allow people to vote once they complete their prison sentence.
- Argument Against: Those against Prop 17 state that CA voters already approved to let those who finished their prison term and parole to vote in 1974. Since parole in CA is for serious and violent crimes, their ability to vote should only be granted after they prove themselves to be able to fit in with society.

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Prop 18: Amend California Constitution to permit 17 year olds to vote in primary and special elections if they will turn 18 by the next general election and be otherwise eligible to vote

- Details: Primary elections nominate or elect candidates to state and federal offices while special elections fill in vacancies in state elective offices or US House of Representatives. Currently, most 16 and 17 year olds can pre-register to vote and be automatically registered to vote when they turn 18 years old. Prop 18 would result in a new legislative constitutional amendment that would allow 17 year olds who would be 18 years old by the next general election to vote in any primary and special elections that happen before the next general election.
- Fiscal: There would be minor costs for county election officials and a minor one-time state cost; both to send, process, and update voter materials.
- Argument For: Those in favor of Prop 18 argue that if 17 year olds can pay taxes from their jobs and enlist in the military, they should be given the right to vote. In addition, they believe that this will result in higher youth voter turnout.
- Argument Against: Those against Prop 18 argue that 17 year olds simply aren't mature enough to vote because they're still being heavily influenced by teachers and counselors. In addition, many legal responsibilities and restrictions such as having a driver's license or entering a legal contract apply only once students turn 18 and the right to vote should also be treated in the same way.

Prop 19: Changes certain property tax rules

- Details: Currently, all CA property owners are taxed based on how much they originally bought their property for. When the ownership of the property changes, it results in a higher property bill and thus higher taxes. With that said, there are two parts to Prop 19. Voting yes for Prop 19 would mean approving all parts of the proposition and vice versa. Eligible homeowners are homeowners over 55, severely disabled, or those whose property has been impacted by a natural disaster. If an eligible homeowner were to move, they have special rights that they can only use once that allow them to pay the same amount of taxes they did for their previous property but only if 1) it's in the same county and 2) the new house isn't more expensive than the previous house. Prop 19 would increase an eligible homeowner to move anywhere in the state, purchase a more expensive home, and use the special rule three times in their lifetime while still maintaining the amount of taxes they paid previously. Inherited properties refer to property that is passed from parent/grandparent (if the parents have deceased) to child. Prop 19 would limit inherited properties to be only primary homes and farms. In addition, if the cost of the inherited property exceeds the amount of taxes one would pay for it by more than \$1 million, taxes would increase for that property.
- Fiscal: Increased taxes from inherited properties would go towards fire protection and certain local governments. In addition, it would reduce property taxes for Eligible Homeowners. There would be overall increases in property taxes for local governments and schools.
- Argument For: Those in favor of Prop 19 argue that Prop 19 would massively help those who have been displaced due to the wildfires and seniors who are isolated from the rest of their families due to COVID-19. In addition, it would force wealthy heirs to pay taxes on their vacation homes and rentals in which the money could be used to increase fire protection, emergency response, and school funding.
- Argument Against: Those against Prop 19 argue that it would actually hurt the transfer of homes and small businesses between parent and child. In addition, they mention how a change to the special rules have been brought up via Prop 5 in 2018 but was rejected by voters.

Prop 20: Restricts Parole for certain offenses currently considered to be non-violent. Authorizes felony sentences for certain offenses currently treated only as misdemeanors

- Details: There are four parts to Prop 20 and each section has its own background and proposal. Voting yes for Prop 20 would mean approving all parts of the proposition and vice versa. CA splits its crime into two categories: felony (crime that's considered to be violent or serious) and misdemeanor (crime that's determined to be less severe). Some crimes are categorized as wobblers: crimes that can be categorized

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either as a felony or misdemeanor depending on the circumstances. Prop 20 would create two new types of theft-related crimes that would be considered wobblers. In addition, Prop 20 would change some existing theft-related crimes to be considered as felonies. People released from prison are supervised by either state parole agents or probation officers (referred as PRCS) depending on the crime they committed. Prop 20 would require state parole and PRCS to request a change to the terms of their supervision if former inmates violated the rules they had to follow for a third time. This would result in harsher terms or possibly placement in county jail for the former inmates. People in prison are primarily convicted for a primary crime (the most severe crime that requires the most jail time) but can also face additional jail time due to lesser crimes that were convicted at the same time. Prop 57, established in 2016, to allow prison inmates convicted of nonviolent felonies to be considered for release after only serving the term for their primary crimes. With this came the establishment of the Board of Parole Hearings . Prop 20 would add more requirements that the BPH must consider and exclude certain inmates to be unable to partake in this process, thus making it harder for inmates to be released earlier. In CA, three groups of people must provide DNA samples: adults arrested/charged/convicted of a felony, youth who committed a felony, and people registered as either sex offenders or arsonists. Prop 20 would mandate adults who are convicted of certain misdemeanors to provide a DNA sample.

- Fiscal: State and local correctional costs along with state and local court-related costs would cost more than several million dollars annually. State and local law enforcement costs would also increase annually but not to the extent of the previous two parts.
- Argument For: Those in favor of Prop 20 state that it would make those who commit crimes that should be considered violent but are currently considered to be "nonviolent" (domestic violence, hate crimes, sex trafficking, etc.) serve their full sentence. They emphasize that Prop 20 is for violent inmates who pose a risk to society regardless of their race or ethnicity.
- Argument Against: Those against Prop 20 state that it would result in reduction in mental health services and rehabilitation programs which would ultimately result in more crime. The money used to enforce stronger sentences should instead be used to solve problems in the community such as schools, homelessness, mental health treatment, and affordable housing.

Prop 21: Expands local governments' authority to enact rent control on residential property

- Details: Renting housing is infamously expensive in CA. As a result, some CA cities enact rent control: laws that limit how much landlords can increase rent for housing from one year to the next. However, there is a CA state law called the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act (Costa-Hawkins) that puts limitations on local rent control laws. Courts have also deemed that rent control laws must allow landlords to receive a "fair rate of return:" landlords can increase rent enough to receive some sort of profit each year. Prop 21 would add limitations on Costa-Hawkins that would allow more cities and counties in CA to enact some form of rent control. However, Prop 21 would still allow landlords a fair rate of return.
- Fiscal: Prop 21 would have an impact on the rental housing industry: the value of rental housing would likely decline. Overall, Prop 21 is estimated to likely reduce state and local revenue overtime.
- Argument For: Those for Prop 21 argue that it will help reduce the homelessness problem by keeping families, seniors, and veterans stable in terms of housing while still guaranteeing landlords a profit. In addition, they argue that Prop 21 will save taxpayers money and keep housing costs down.
- Argument Against: Those against Prop 21 argue that it will actually worsen the housing crisis because it reduces home values and eliminates homeowner's protections. In addition, they mention that voters have voted against rent control expansion measures in 2018.

Prop 22: Exempts app-based transportation and delivery companies from providing employee benefits to certain drivers

- Details: Currently, drivers who work for app-based transportation and delivery companies (Uber, Doordash, etc.) are considered to be employees. Employees have standard job benefits and protections such as a minimum wage and extra pay for overtime that independent contractors don't have. Independent

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contractors generally have more options about when, where, and how much to work compared to employees. Prop 21 would make all drivers to be considered as independent contractors instead of employees. However, drivers would still get benefits that include a 120% minimum wage, health insurance for those who work more than 15 hours, rest policy, workplace discrimination, sexual harassment policies, criminal background checks, and safety training.

- Fiscal: Companies would charge lower fares and delivery fees to customers due to the elimination of providing standard employee benefits and protections. In addition, state income taxes paid by drivers would increase.
- Argument For: Those in favor of Prop 22 state that drivers need the flexibility to continue to be able to fulfill their other obligations and needs. In addition, they emphasize that voting yes for Prop 22 would save CA jobs.
- Argument Against: Those against Prop 22 state that this is a proposition that Uber, Lyft, and Doordash are pushing because it would profit themselves rather than actually help their drivers. They say that those companies already provide all the services that Prop 22 would supposedly give because it's a requirement for every CA business to do so.

Prop 23: Establishes state requirements for kidney dialysis clinics. Requires on-site medical professional

- Details: When someone develops kidney failure, they need to either receive a kidney transplant or go through dialysis (a type of treatment that mimics the functions of a healthy kidney). Currently, most people receive dialysis at chronic dialysis clinics (CDCs) and pay for it using insurance. The California Department of Public Health (CDPH: the department that regulates the chronic dialysis clinics) doesn't require the specific amount of time that a medical director should spend at the CDCs. Prop 23 would require each CDC to have a doctor on site during all treatment hours and requires CDCs to report accurate infection data to the state. CDCs must also gain consent before closing/reducing its services and must accept all forms of payment regardless of who pays for the treatments.
- Fiscal: Overall, it would increase costs for CDCs annually. This would result in increased costs for state and local governments.
- Argument For: Those who support Prop 23 argue that dialysis is a dangerous procedure that requires a doctor nearby at all times. They also argue that Prop 23 would protect all vulnerable patients (especially rural, poorer communities and POC communities).
- Argument Against: Those who oppose Prop 23 argue that it would actually put more lives at risk because more doctors are needed in hospitals and emergency rooms rather than at CDCs. In addition, they argue that Prop 23 would actually result in higher health care costs by hundreds of millions of dollars.

Prop 24: Amends consumer privacy laws

- Details: Many businesses collect data from their consumers to improve their sales and customer service and provide services to other businesses. Currently, specific businesses must meet certain consumer data privacy requirements and data breach requirements. As of now, the CA Department of Justice is in charge of the state's consumer privacy and data breach laws. Prop 24 would generally reduce the number of businesses required to meet consumer and data privacy requirements and provide consumers with new data privacy rights that could limit sharing and use of personal data. Prop 21 would also create the California Privacy Protection Agency, a new state agency that would oversee and enforce the state's consumer privacy laws.
- Fiscal: State costs and tax revenues would likely change but it's unclear how. There will be increased state costs for the CPPA, DOJ, and courts.
- Argument For: Those in favor of Prop 24 argue that consumers need stronger protections for privacy. They state that we should be in control of our own information and have the right to stop companies from using sensitive, personal information.

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- **Argument Against:** Those against Prop 24 state that this only benefits big companies and corporations because Prop 24 would grant companies more freedom to actually invade more of your privacy. In addition, small businesses would struggle to find the money to enact these privacy laws.

Prop 25: Referendum on law that replaced money bail with a system based on public safety and flight risk

- **Details:** When someone is arrested, there are several trial court proceedings before their case is officially brought to court. This first trial is referred to as an arraignment which when the court specifies what charges are brought up against them and appoints an attorney if needed. Currently under state law, people can be released on bail before or after arraignment instead of serving their sentence in jail, assuming they are arrested and placed into a county jail (with some exceptions). Prop 25 would completely eliminate the bail system and replace it with a pretrial assessment that assesses the risk of the person committing either a new crime or not showing up in court when released. This would only apply for felonies as people who commit misdemeanors would be automatically released within 12 hours of being placed in county jail.
- **Fiscal:** It would increase state and pretrial costs but decrease county jail costs. State and local tax revenue would be affected but it's unclear how.
- **Argument Pro:** Those for Prop 25 argue that the cash bail system is one that only benefits the rich because they can pay their way out of misdemeanors. In addition, they argue that getting rid of the cash bail system would actually save taxpayers tens of millions of dollars a year.
- **Argument Against:** Those against Prop 25 argue that it would actually hurt African Americans, Latinos, and other minorities because Prop 25 would implement a computer-based system of algorithms to make important criminal justice decisions. In addition, they argue that "zero bail" isn't effective and it's only going to endanger public safety.

Now that you know what's on your ballot and what propositions you are voting for, it's time to vote. Here are the steps you need to take to vote.

There are two ways to vote: in person or by mail. Registered voters in CA, should have already received a ballot via mail. Unregistered eligible voters in CA can still vote if they show up to their assigned polling place on the day of the election and vote in person, since CA offers same day voter registration.

Receiving a mail ballot does not mandate a voter to vote by mail, there is always the option of voting in person. The closest polling place to USD is the Bay Park Elementary School auditorium (2433 Denver St, San Diego, CA 92110), with early voting starting on Oct. 31. Their hours are from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day except for Election Day; Election Day hours are from 7 a.m. till 8 p.m. Voting early is especially advised for people who choose to vote in person as lines can be extremely long on Election Day.

Because of the pandemic, there are special CDC guidelines that all in-person voters must follow. Everyone must be wearing a mask and keeping two arm's length apart from each other. In addition, washing hands and use of hand sanitizer is highly recommended before and after entering the voting location and after touching high contact items such as doors and voting equipment. Voters are also advised to bring their own dark-colored (black or blue) ballpoint pen for voting.

To vote by mail, it is important to follow all the written instructions carefully. If a voter makes a mistake on their ballot, they should discard that ballot and request a new one, otherwise that vote may be disqualified. In CA, and most states, voters must sign the ballot envelope. This signature will be verified against a signature on file, often the signature from a voter's driver's license.

Once a ballot is filled out, voters can do one of two things. One option is to mail the ballot using your post office. Most states, including CA do not require a postage stamp. It is recommended voters mail their ballots as early as possible. Another option is to drop off the ballot in person at a secure dropbox, polling place, voting center, or county elections office by 8 p.m. on Election Day. The closest drop box to USD is at the Mission Valley YMCA (5505 Friars Rd San Diego, CA 92110). Their hours of operation are 6 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. on the weekdays and from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the weekends.

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For thorough information regarding voting methods, USD Votes has compiled information for all 50 states on their website.

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