

## Uncertain future for initiatives that would favor Latinos in California

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### Body

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Los Angeles, 28 Oct (EFE News).- Some proposals that will be voted on November 3 in California and that could favor Latinos face an uncertain future, starting with Proposition 16, which would restore ethnic quotas for entry to state universities and public employment.

Proposition 21, which would establish control over the increase in housing leases, and 22, which would maintain the independence of some work as a contractor by adding basic benefits, also sail in turbulent waters.

For Michele Siqueiros, president of the Campaign for University Opportunity and promoter of Proposition 16, this measure that seeks to revoke Proposition 209 that canceled ethnic quotas in 1996 offers an important opportunity for Latinos.

"54% of public school seniors are Latino, but Latinos account for only 25% of undergraduate students at the University of California. We need to eliminate the affirmative action ban to ensure that every student has a fair chance for success," he said to Efe Siqueiros.

Opponents of Proposition 16, such as David Lehrer, President of Community Defenders, a Californian organization that promotes rapprochement among people of different races, argue that without the benefit of quotas minorities have made significant progress in representation.

"Contrary to what those who support Proposition 16 claim, the university of California's nine campuses are no less diverse now than when Proposition 209 was adopted," he argued in statements to Efe.

In confronting the figures for Latino students, Lehrer noted that in 1994 the proportion of Latino students in the University of California system was 14.7%, compared to 36% in 2020.

As reported this week by a survey by the University of California, Berkeley's Institute of Government Studies (IGS), only 38% of California voters support Proposition 16 while 49% oppose this measure. Even among the same Latino voters, support for this initiative that seeks to restore so-called Affirmative Action is 40%, while 42% are against it.

CONSENSUS ON HOUSING COST

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What Californians do agree on is that the very high cost of housing - both for purchase and lease - is a serious problem for middle- and low-income people.

Proposition 21 seeks to establish greater local control over leases by cities by reducing the current state limit of 5% more inflation for multifamily housing (apartments) built more than 15 years ago. Current regulations exempt most family home homes and so-called "condominiums" or closed residential assemblies from that limit.

"Half of tenants across the state, more than three million households, spend more than 30% of their rent income," claims the "Yes to 21" campaign, which promotes the initiative.

According to the proponents of the proposal, high leases not only disproportionately affect "low-income households, people of color, the elderly and families with children", but also have a domino effect that also harms the middle class.

Opponents of the measure ensure that a greater restriction on increased leases would reduce investment in housing properties, especially those offered to lease to middle- and low-income people. The proposal "is bad for homeowners and renters: it would reduce our housing availability and make the housing crisis in California even worse," says the "No to 21" Coalition.

Two years ago, state voters rejected a similar proposal with 41% votes for and 59% against. In what appears to be a similar path this year, only 37% of voters surveyed by IGS support the measure while 48% are against it. Among Latinos, 46% support the initiative and 36% are against it.

Another hot topic in the state measures the pulse between those looking for all drivers of phone-based transportation services like Uber, Lyft and DoorDash to be employed with all the benefits of law, and those who want to maintain the independence of these drivers as contractors.

Proposition 22 authorizes drivers to serve as independent contractors - with some benefits as subsidies for health services - and directly rejects AB5, passed in 2019 by the state legislature, which obliges companies to hire them as employees.

The initiative pits companies that offer this modern transportation service with California's leading service unions and important political and legislative figures, such as prosecutor Xavier Becerra and assemblyman Lorena González.

46% of Californian voters support Proposition 22 while 42% reject it. Latinos are equally divided with 43% for and 44% against.

Thus, for the estimated 21.2 million voters registered in September by the California Secretariat, 21% of them Latino according to the Public Policy Institute, the November 3 vote can have a significant impact on their opportunities and quality of life.

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