

CA voters see increase of \$150M in spending for 2020 ballot measures

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Byline: Mela Seyoum

Body

According to data gathered by California Target Book, which gives nonpartisan information on the state's politics, voters have seen an increase of more than \$150 million in spending on advertisements for ballot measures this year compared to 2016.

The total amount raised for all propositions currently stands at \$627.6 million, according to a press release from California Target Book. The propositions that have received the most funding include Proposition **22**, with more than \$200 million raised, and Propositions 23 and 15, which have each raised more than \$100 million.

Marva Diaz, editor of California Target Book, said the 2016 election cycle previously held the record for the most amount of money spent on ballot measures.

"This is really just an astronomical year in that we see that a few of the ballot measures have had the most amount of money raised," Diaz said. "We're really seeing the last record be blown away."

According to Diaz, restrictions regarding social distancing, which has forced campaigns to adjust how they reach voters, might alter spending in these campaigns. This has led to more money being put toward communication such as text messages, robocalls and mail.

Diaz noted that she will be watching on election night to see if disproportionate funding affects results. For example, Diaz said, there is significantly more funding in support of **Prop. 22** than in opposition. This is also true of **Prop. 24**, which has a sole funder in support of it and virtually no financiers on the other side, according to Diaz.

Andy Kelley, vice chair of the Alameda County Democratic Party, noted that the campaign in support of **Prop. 22** is mainly funded by Uber and Lyft. It makes sense financially, Kelley added, for those companies to put a lot of funding into their campaign because they stand to make millions per year if the proposition passes.

"The reason we're seeing the cost escalate is that so many of the ballot measures are about money for corporations," Kelley said.

Kelley said he does not think voters are significantly affected by this increase in spending. He added that voters become suspicious and frustrated when it seems that those with the most money have such a large influence in the electoral process.

One concern about increased spending on ads for certain propositions is that voters may not be as knowledgeable about other ballot measures that may affect communities specifically, according to Kelley.

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"That's the big concern; the things that you need to educate voters about that aren't the big, flashy, well-funded campaigns fall by the wayside," Kelley said. "They have to compete for the same airtime, the same media coverage, the same ad space that the corporate-funded campaigns do. That's where we'll probably see a greater impact."

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