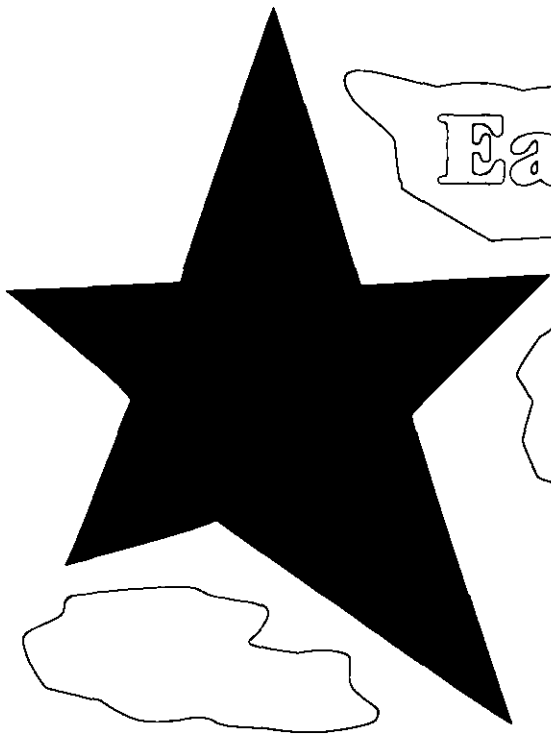


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Easy Reader

Voter Guide

November 5, 1996 Election

Make Your Vote Count!

What's Inside

Political parties in California3-4

Who is running for President5-8

California ballot measures9-15

Easy voting tips16

Vote in the November 5th Election!

Have you signed up to vote?

- Get a voter registration form at your library, post office, DMV, or call 1-800-345-8683.
- There is no cost to register. You can get help filling out the form if you want. Then just sign it and mail it in.

THE LAST DAY TO REGISTER FOR THIS ELECTION IS OCTOBER 7TH.



Voter Involvement Project

This non-partisan Easy Reader Voter Guide was prepared by the Key to the Community Voter Involvement Project, led by adult reading students around California. Development has been funded by a California State Library grant to the Santa Clara County Library Reading Program, in partnership with the Center for Civic Literacy.

Information about elections can be confusing and hard to understand. This election guide is easier to read and explains things clearly. The statements from the political parties and candidates are their answers to our questionnaires. We wrote the rest. We hope this guide helps you make informed voting choices.

Words to Know

- Ballot**the form you mark when you vote
- Bonds**a way to raise money for public projects; a government sells bonds and then has to repay the bonds plus interest
- Congress**the part of our national government that makes laws; it has two parts: the House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate
- Constitution**the document that lays out the basic framework for a government; we have a U.S. constitution and a state constitution
- Contribution**a gift of money, which may be for a political campaign
- Discrimination**unfair or unequal treatment based on race, color, sex or other factors
- Facilities**different types of buildings
- Federal**describes national government (compared to state or local government)
- Fraud**to lie or cheat someone out of something
- Frivolous**of little importance; unnecessary
- Gender**whether you are male or female
- Initiative**a proposed law that is put on the ballot by the people, not the legislature
- Legislature**the part of our state government that makes laws; it has two parts: the State Assembly and the State Senate
- Lobbyist**someone who is paid to persuade lawmakers
- Loophole**a way around a rule or law
- Non-partisan**not tied to any political party or point of view
- Political Party**a group that shares the same views about government and works together to win elections
- Priorities**choices about what is most important
- Propositions**laws that are presented to the public to vote on; they can be state or local
- Qualifications**skills and abilities to do a job or hold a position
- Representative**someone you elect to look out for your interests

Credits

Many people helped put this guide together. A committee of the **Bay Area New Readers Council** shaped overall content: Gloria Ashford, Claude Jones, Sherries Oakmon and Jean Shields. Other Council members and library-based literacy staff contributed to this guide: Bonnie Bjerre, Carey Call, Darlene Garcia, Walter Miles, Enrique Ramirez, John Sbarbarro, Bertha Van Dusen and John Zickefoose.

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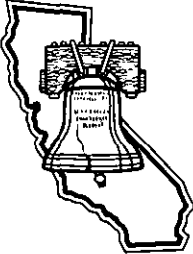

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The Political Parties

When you sign up to vote, you choose whether you want to join a political party. A political party is a group of people who share the same views about how the government should be run and what it should do. There are 8 political parties in California. We asked each party what they stand for and what their priorities are.

Party	What They Stand For	Top Priorities
<p data-bbox="101 439 435 480">American Independent</p> 	<p data-bbox="482 439 932 582">The American Independent Party stands for traditional moral values and the God-given rights of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.</p> <p data-bbox="482 602 932 746">This party believes government should uphold the United States Constitution, including protection of life and property and strong national defense.</p>	<ul data-bbox="1011 439 1489 633" style="list-style-type: none"> • End Federal income tax • Do away with the Federal Reserve which increases the national debt • Bring back parent and local control of children's education <p data-bbox="1011 643 1458 746">This party has about 255,000 members in California. For information, call 909-345-4224.</p>
<p data-bbox="101 776 435 817">Democrat</p> 	<p data-bbox="482 786 972 1001">The Democratic Party believes in revitalizing the economy and supporting American families—by reducing crime, improving public education, protecting our nation's senior citizens, and protecting a woman's right to choose.</p> <p data-bbox="482 1022 972 1165">This party believes the role of government should be to provide order, safety, education, infrastructure, and an expanding economy for its citizens.</p>	<ul data-bbox="1011 786 1473 970" style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-elect President Bill Clinton and Vice President Al Gore • Become the majority in the State Assembly and Congress once again • Assist all our Democratic candidates <p data-bbox="1011 991 1489 1093">This party has about 6.8 million members in California. For information, call 213-848-3700.</p>
<p data-bbox="101 1185 435 1226">Green</p> 	<p data-bbox="482 1195 972 1410">The Green Party stands for ten key values: protecting the environment, democracy, fairness, non-violence, making government more local, equality, respect for diversity, responsibility, community-based economics and future focus.</p> <p data-bbox="482 1430 972 1492">This party believes the role of government is to support these values.</p>	<ul data-bbox="1011 1195 1497 1338" style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach people that all life on our planet is interconnected • Show that cooperation is more important to our well being than competition <p data-bbox="1011 1359 1442 1461">This party has about 84,000 members in California. For information, call 916-448-3437.</p>
<p data-bbox="101 1543 435 1584">Libertarian</p> 	<p data-bbox="482 1553 972 1686">The Libertarian Party stands for freedom. What is yours is yours, to spend, save or give away. Take care of yourself and hurt no one else. Live and let live.</p> <p data-bbox="482 1706 972 1849">This party believes government should only step in when someone tries to take something from you by force, even if that someone is the government itself.</p>	<ul data-bbox="1011 1553 1481 1737" style="list-style-type: none"> • End rules that stop business from growing • Let people come here to live and work • Drop or sell most government agencies and end income tax <p data-bbox="1011 1757 1442 1860">This party has about 70,000 members in California. For information, call 1-800-637-1776.</p>

The Political Parties

Party	What They Stand For	Top Priorities
<p data-bbox="112 285 445 333">Natural Law</p> 	<p data-bbox="489 277 920 426">The Natural Law Party stands for government that will solve today's problems and prevent future problems before they start.</p> <p data-bbox="489 441 962 627">This party believes government should be based in common sense and promote programs that will pay for themselves. It should promote a happier, healthier, more successful future for all Americans.</p>	<ul data-bbox="1007 277 1449 513" style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce crime with programs that really work • Cut health care costs by promoting good health • Improve education with methods that increase students' learning ability <p data-bbox="1007 526 1475 638">This party has about 100,000 members in California. For information, call 1-800-515-1008.</p>
<p data-bbox="112 654 445 702">Peace and Freedom</p> 	<p data-bbox="489 654 967 803">The Peace and Freedom Party stands for democracy, cooperation and sharing. They want to organize and educate the public to work together to meet human needs.</p> <p data-bbox="489 818 951 930">This party believes the role of government should be to make sure that everyone has jobs, housing, education and equal rights.</p>	<ul data-bbox="1007 654 1464 851" style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs for all: \$10 hourly minimum wage • Defend affirmative action • Cut military spending, tax the rich to provide health care; housing and education for all <p data-bbox="1007 864 1429 975">This party has about 71,000 members in California. For information, call 213-737-1998.</p>
<p data-bbox="112 1027 445 1075">Reform</p> 	<p data-bbox="489 1038 962 1187">The Reform Party stands for the economic growth and political reforms necessary to restore the American Dream for all Americans.</p> <p data-bbox="489 1201 956 1313">This party believes the role of government should be to respond to the will of the people and to protect their interests.</p>	<ul data-bbox="1007 1038 1475 1234" style="list-style-type: none"> • Pass laws to control campaign spending • Expand the California economy and create more jobs for Californians • Involve more Californians in the political process <p data-bbox="1007 1247 1444 1359">This party has about 118,000 members in California. For information, call 310-726-9422.</p>
<p data-bbox="112 1379 445 1427">Republican</p> 	<p data-bbox="489 1390 936 1576">We stand for smaller government, lower taxes, tougher penalties for career criminals, and an end to runaway illegal immigration. We fight to end quotas and preferences based on race.</p> <p data-bbox="489 1591 956 1736">We believe government should do only those things that the private sector cannot do better. Government should be the last resort, not the first.</p>	<ul data-bbox="1007 1390 1459 1545" style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut middle class taxes • End illegal immigration • Fight career criminals through "Three Strikes and You're Out" <p data-bbox="1007 1558 1459 1670">This party has about 5.4 million members in California. For information, call 818-841-5210.</p>

The number of members in each party was provided by the California Secretary of State's Office (as of 3/26/96), rounded to the nearest thousand.

Candidates for President

November 5, 1996 Election

The candidates for President and Vice-President run as a team. You vote for them together. They are elected for a four-year term.

The President:

- oversees most federal departments and agencies
- approves or rejects new laws
- presents an annual budget to Congress
- is in charge of foreign policy and the armed forces

The Vice-President:

- takes over if something happens to the President
- runs meetings of the U.S. Senate
- attends important events for the President
- has other duties chosen by the President

We asked the candidates for President to tell us why they are running, their qualifications, and their priorities.

Democrat



Candidate:
Bill Clinton

Age: 50

Occupation: U. S. President

Lives in: Little Rock, AK

Running Mate:

Al Gore

Age: 48

Occupation: U. S. Vice President

Lives in: Carthage, TN



I want to build a bridge to the next century that protects the American values of opportunity, responsibility, and community. I am working to help all Americans meet their challenges and build better lives.

My economic policies have cut the deficit by 60 percent and created over 10.2 million new jobs. I am committed to balancing the federal budget while protecting Medicare, Medicaid, education, and the environment.

Priorities

- Continue responsible economic policies that expand the economy and create new jobs
- Expand affordable educational opportunity for all Americans
- Strengthen families by giving parents the tools they need to care for their children

Republican



Candidate:
Bob Dole

Age: 73

Occupation: Former U.S. Senator

Lives in: Russell, KS

Running Mate:

Jack Kemp

Age: 61

Occupation: Co-Founder, *Empower America*

Lives in: Bethesda, MD



I am running for President because I believe America can do better. I want to help the American people realize their hopes and dreams in a new century of limitless possibility.

I have served America as an Army lieutenant, Representative in Congress, Senator and Senate Majority Leader. I believe I have the leadership, vision and integrity to help our nation meet the challenges of the next American Century.

Priorities

- More opportunities: provide lower taxes, better jobs, higher wages
- Smaller government: balance the budget, end wasteful spending and replace welfare with work
- Stronger, safer families: provide tax relief, choice in education; reduce drug use and violent crime

Note: The order of the candidates is based on the size of their party in California.

Candidates for President

November 5, 1996 Election

American Independent



Candidate:
Howard Phillips

Age: 55
Occupation: Chairman, Conservative Caucus
Lives in: Vienna, VA

Running Mate:
Herbert Titus

Age: 59
Occupation: Law Professor
Lives in: Chesapeake, VA



I want to limit the federal government to its delegated, enumerated Constitutional boundaries and to restore the American legal system to its Biblical presuppositions.

As head of the U. S. Office of Economic Opportunity, I gained battle-front experience concerning the ways and means to eliminate wasteful, unconstitutional federal spending.

Priorities

- End legal abortion
- Restore political accountability
- Eliminate direct taxes on the American people, including taxes on income, social security, capital gains, inheritance and business activity

Reform



Candidate:
Ross Perot

Age: 66
Occupation: Businessman
Lives in: Dallas, TX

Running Mate:
James Campbell
Stand-in Candidate

I want to leave a better nation for our children and grandchildren that is economically and morally strong. I want to make sure that our government is responsive to the people, not the special interests.

I have been preparing 40 years for this job. I grew up having to manage money carefully. I have been a success in industry where I made very complex systems work in a cost-effective manner.

Priorities

- Balance the budget and eliminate the national debt to put the country's financial house back in order
- Set better trade deals to bring jobs back home
- Educate our workforce for the 21st century; restore local control and parent involvement in schools

Natural Law



Candidate:
John Hagelin

Age: 49
Occupation: Research Scientist
Lives in: Fairfield, IA

Running Mate:
Mike Tompkins

Age: 47
Occupation: Scientist
Lives in: Boone, NC



I am deeply committed to solving America's problems. As a scientist, I know there are proven, cost-effective programs that can solve critical problems like rising crime, spiraling health costs, pollution, declining education and a sluggish economy.

I am a physicist, educator and businessman who has worked with government for 12 years to introduce cost-effective programs that can solve problems and prevent new ones from starting.

Priorities

- Cut taxes deeply and responsibly while also balancing the budget with cost-effective solutions
- Use natural health programs to prevent disease, promote health and cut health care costs by 50%
- Provide education programs that develop the inner genius of students

Candidates for President

November 5, 1996 Election

Green



Candidate:
Ralph Nader

Age: 62
Occupation: Citizens' Rights Advocate
Lives in: Winsted, CT

Running Mate:
Winona LaDuke

Age: 37
Occupation: Organizer
Lives in: White Earth, MN



The Green Party USA answered for Ralph Nader: We have to break up the two party monopoly in this country. People are alienated from it. We need to broaden the agenda and rebuild our democracy free from corporate control.

Ralph Nader has integrity. He knows how the government works. As a consumer and citizens' rights advocate, he is one of this century's most respected and influential people.

- Build political and economic democracy: campaign finance reform, ballot access in all states, free equal media time to all qualified candidates
- Stop corporate welfare and make military budget cuts
- Promote healthy people and environment: universal health care and renewable energy sources

Peace & Freedom



Candidate:
Marsha Feinland

Age: 47
Occupation: Teacher
Lives in: Berkeley, CA

Running Mate:
Kate McClatchy

Age: 35
Occupation: Teacher/Homemaker
Lives in: Shelburne, MA

It is time to stop blaming immigrants and people on welfare for our problems. Ordinary people need to join together. We can use the country's wealth to meet human needs and make life better for everyone.

As a teacher, I help all children learn. As an elected member of a rent board, I help tenants keep rents low and housing in good repair. I do not help the rich get richer.

Priorities

- Provide good food, housing, health care, and schools; make sure everyone has a job, or income if they cannot work
- Stop giving tax money to big companies, banks and the military
- Protect nature; keep air and water clean in everybody's neighborhood

Libertarian



Candidate:
Harry Browne

Age: 63
Occupation: Writer/Investment Advisor
Lives in: Nashville, TN

Running Mate:
Jo Jorgensen

Age: 39
Occupation: Software Company Owner
Lives in: Greenville, SC



Government doesn't work. In my first year, I will cut government by 50%, end the income tax and the IRS. I will get social security out of government hands and end the insane war on drugs.

I'm the only national candidate committed to huge tax cuts, huge spending cuts, and a balanced budget. I'm the only candidate who will shrink the federal government to only those things allowed by the Constitution.

Priorities

- End the income tax and cut government by 50% my first year
- Get Social Security out of government hands; use the sales from assets to buy private retirement investments instead
- End the insane war on drugs immediately

Other Elected Offices

There are many other candidates you will be asked to vote on in this election. Some will represent you in Congress, the state legislature and your local government. The candidates for your area will be listed on the Sample Ballot that is sent to all registered voters by your County Elections Office.

U.S. Representative California has 52 U.S. Representatives in Congress—each one elected from a local district. They work on new laws, the national budget and represent the interests of their district in Washington, D.C. They may also be called Congressman or Congresswoman. They serve a two year term.

California Senate There are 40 state senators in California, each elected from a local district. They are one part of the state Legislature in Sacramento (the Assembly is the other part). State Senators represent about 800,000 people in their district. They work on state laws and the state budget. They serve a four year term.

California Assembly There are 80 Assembly districts in California. Assembly members represent about 400,000 people in their district. They also work on state laws and the state budget. They serve a two year term.

In this election, you will be voting on the national and state offices which are shown in red on this chart:

Federal government	President and Vice President	U.S. Senators (will be voted on in 1998)	U.S. Representatives in Congress
State government	Governor (will be voted on in 1998)	State Senators (half this election and half in 1998)	State Assembly members

There will also be local offices on your ballot. Who you vote for depends on where you live. If you want to find out who your elected representatives are, check with your library, call your local County Elections Office or League of Women Voters. All they need to know is your address to tell you which districts you are in. They can also give you a local number to call. When someone is elected to represent you, it is your right to let them know how you feel!

Ballot Measures

Ballot measures are new laws that the public votes on. They are also called propositions. This guide covers measures that change state laws. There may also be ballot measures for your local area.

- Propositions 204 through 206 are bond measures put on the ballot by the State Legislature. Selling bonds is a way that the state raises money for new projects but the state has to pay interest on the bonds. Money from our income tax and sales taxes helps repay the bonds and interest.
- Propositions 207 through 218 are initiatives. This means they were put on the ballot by a “petition” where people collected signatures.

You do not have to vote on every ballot measure. You can vote on just the ones that are important to you.

Ballot Measures

Prop 204

Water Supply Bonds

Title: Safe, Clean, Reliable Water Supply Act.

The way it is now: In the past, the state has provided funds for projects that improve water quality and supply. Most of the money from earlier bonds for water has been spent.

What Prop 204 would do: Allow the state to sell \$995 million in bonds for several different water improvement projects. Most are in the San Francisco Bay and Delta area. This water is used for most of the state's crops plus drinking water for 22 million Californians. These bonds are part of a longer term plan that also uses federal money.

What it will cost: \$1.8 billion to pay off the bonds and interest over 25 years.

Pro:

- The state's water supply has not kept up with population growth. We need a long term plan for water.
- This is a good investment. Cleaner water and a better water supply will help keep our economy growing.

Con:

- Those who pollute our water should be responsible for cleaning it up — not the general public.
- 85% of water is used by farmers and business. Residential customers should not have to pay these costs.

Prop 205

County Jail Bonds

Title: Youthful and Adult Offender Local Facilities Bond Act of 1996.

The way it is now: The county jail system holds offenders who are waiting for their trial or serving a sentence. In 1995, over 1.1 million adults and 50,000 juveniles (youths) were booked into county facilities. Almost all of the county jails and juvenile halls report that they are overcrowded. Last year, 21,000 inmates were let go early due to lack of space.

What Prop 205 will do: Allow the state to sell \$700 million in bonds to repair, build or buy new county jails for adults. To get some of these funds, a county has to have a plan and pay 25% of the project cost.

What it will cost: \$1.25 billion to pay off the bonds and interest over 25 years.

Pro:

- Rising juvenile violence and the "3 Strikes" law are filling jails faster. Half of California's counties are under court order to release inmates because of overcrowding.
- Thousands of inmates are only serving a small part of their sentence before being released back onto the streets.

Con:

- Building more jails does not help reduce the causes of crime. We need to put more money into prevention rather than punishment.
- Many inmates have committed non-violent crimes and could be handled with house arrest instead.

Prop 206

Veteran Home Loan Bonds

Title: Veterans' Bond Act of 1996.

The way it is now: The Cal-Vet program buys homes and farms that are resold to California veterans. Monthly payments from veterans cover all real estate plus costs to run the program.

What Prop 206 will do: Allow the state to sell \$400 million in bonds for the Cal-Vet program so an additional 2,000 veterans could get home loans.

What it will cost: \$700 million to pay off the bonds and interest over 25 years. This cost will be covered by payments from veterans in the Cal-Vet program.

Pro:

- The Cal-Vet program is 75 years old and has always been self-supporting.
- This is a way to help veterans at no cost to California taxpayers.

Con:

- Cal-Vet is the same as the federal VA loan program. We do not need two programs doing the same thing.
- The real estate market is slower now. If some veterans cannot make their payments, there will be costs to taxpayers.

Ballot Measures

Prop 207

Lawyer Fees

Title: Attorneys. Fees. Right to Negotiate. Frivolous Lawsuits.

The way it is now: Lawyers set their fees with their clients. They may get paid hourly or on a “contingent” basis, which means they only get paid if they win the lawsuit.

What Prop 207 will do: Any major changes to current state laws about lawyers’ fees would have to be voted on by the public. It also puts into law current State Bar rules about charging too much and court penalties for “frivolous” lawsuits. A lawsuit is frivolous if it is not based on solid reasons or is filed just to harass someone. If a Court decides that a lawsuit is frivolous, the lawyer who brought the case could not collect any fees.

What it will cost: Some small cost to the state, depending on how many new lawsuits end up getting added or dropped.

Pro:

- This only lets the public, not lobbyists and elected officials, make changes to lawyer’s fees.
- There will be tougher rules to stop frivolous lawsuits, like taking fees away.

Con:

- This locks in current laws on fees and makes it too hard to put limits on lawyers.
- The state should be able to protect consumers from lawyers who charge too much.

Prop 208

Limits on Campaign Funds

Title: Campaign Contributions and Spending Limits. Restricts Lobbyists.

The way it is now: When candidates run for elected office, they usually ask people for “contributions” (gifts of money) to help pay for their campaigns. If they run for national office, federal law has limits on how much people can give. There are no contribution limits for campaigns for state and local offices.

What Prop 208 will do: It sets up campaign limits for state and local office. Prop 208 will:

- limit the size of contributions to \$500 or less and limits how much a candidate can give to his or her own campaign
- set voluntary limits on how much a campaign can spend; if a candidate agrees to this lid on total spending, then contributions can be double the allowed level (for example, \$1,000 instead of \$500)
- stop lobbyists from making contributions
- make ballot measure campaigns show their biggest supporters in their advertising

What it will cost: About \$4 million per year to set up the program to keep track of these limits.

Pro:

- The rising spending on campaigns is giving the special interests more control over politicians. Prop 208 will bring politics closer to the people.
- The public needs to pass these campaign limits because the elected officials have not.
- Prop 208 is more likely to go into effect than Prop 212 because it does not contradict the Constitution on total spending limits (which 212 does).

Con:

- It is our right to be able to support any candidate we want, at any amount we want.
- There should not be limits for the public because special interest groups will always find a loophole.
- Prop 208 is not tough enough on contributions and has limits that are still too high compared to Prop 212.

Note: Also look at Prop 212, which is also about campaign limits. If both measures pass, Prop 212 would overrule all of Prop 208.

Ballot Measures

Prop 209

Affirmative Action

Title: Prohibition Against Discrimination or Preferential Treatment by State and Other Public Entities.

The way it is now: Federal, state and local governments run programs to help increase opportunities for women and racial and ethnic minorities. Some of these "affirmative action" programs set goals for participation of women and minorities in state employment, state contracts and in public universities and colleges. Other programs recruit, tutor and train women and minorities to help increase employment and education opportunities.

What Prop 209 will do: Get rid of affirmative action programs, or any special treatment based on race or gender, in state and local government and public education. Affirmative action programs could only be kept if they were needed to get federal funds or to obey existing court orders.

What it will cost: Up to \$125 million could be saved by ending state affirmative action programs. Not all of this would be direct savings to state and local governments because funds from some programs would be applied to other types of spending. There would be savings in the area of public contracting because more awards would be based just on lowest cost.

Pro:

- There are too many programs that use race and gender as part of the selection process. The fairest way to reach equal opportunity is to have no special treatment.
- Affirmative action programs create reverse discrimination. Any kind of discrimination should be against the law.
- These programs give the impression that women and minorities cannot compete without special help. They end up doing more harm than good.

Con:

- We do not have a level playing field yet, which means we do not all begin with the same opportunities. Affirmative action programs have made progress, but there is still a long way to go.
- Affirmative action programs help women and minorities participate in employment and education opportunities they would not have without it.
- Prop 209 has a loophole that allows discrimination based on gender in some hiring decisions.

Prop 210

Minimum Wage

Title: Minimum Wage Increase.

The way it is now: Both federal and state laws can set a minimum wage for workers in most types of jobs. California's minimum wage has been \$4.25 since 1988. Congress recently raised the national minimum wage to \$4.75 this year, with another raise to \$5.15 next year.

What Prop 210 will do: Raise the minimum wage in California to \$5.00 in March 1997 and then to \$5.75 by March 1998.

What it will cost: This would have mixed impact on California's economy and income to the state. The higher wage might lead to more spending and income from sales taxes. On the other hand, it could also reduce the number of jobs. The state would have about an extra \$120 million in salary costs, offset by some savings in assistance programs.

Pro:

- The buying power of the old minimum wage was at a 40 year low. In many cases, welfare pays better than working.
- Business profits and salaries for people at the top have gone up a lot. Working people deserve a good increase too.
- The cost of living in California is higher so we need a higher minimum wage than the rest of the country.

Con:

- The new federal wage of \$5.15 will already be a 21% increase. We should not go any higher right now.
- With a higher minimum wage, there will be job layoffs. Either employers can't cover the cost, or they will pass it onto us with higher prices.
- There will be less jobs for unskilled workers. Many employers will only be able to hire trained workers at the higher rate.

Ballot Measures

Prop 211

Lawyer Fees/Securities Fraud

Title: Attorney-Client Fee Arrangements. Securities Fraud. Lawsuits.

The way it is now: Securities are investments like stocks and bonds. "Securities fraud" is when someone gives an investor false or misleading information. Many people have securities as part of their retirement plans.

What Prop 211 will do: Make it easier for a person in a retirement plan to sue for securities fraud instead of needing the whole retirement plan or group to sue. Prop 211 also locks in all laws about lawyers' fees for any type of case. Any changes in laws about lawyers' fees would have to be voted on by the people.

What it will cost: Some small increase in state court costs based on more lawsuits about securities fraud.

Pro:

- This gives stronger legal rights to individuals in retirement plans.
- There will be stronger penalties for people who cheat others out of their pension or retirement.

Con:

- There are good laws already in place to protect people from securities fraud.
- Prop 211 protects high lawyers' fees and encourages more petty lawsuits.

Prop 212

Limits on Campaign Funds

Title: Campaign Contributions and Spending Limits. Repeals Gift and Honoraria Limits. Restricts Lobbyists.

The way it is now: When candidates run for elected office, they usually ask people for "contributions" (gifts of money) to help pay for their campaigns. There are no contribution limits for state and local campaigns. For national campaigns, federal law has limits on the size of contributions. However, federal law does not set limits on total spending for a campaign or for how much money can come from outside the district. These types of limits have been ruled unconstitutional.

What Prop 212 will do: It sets up campaign limits for state and local office. Prop 212 will:

- limit the size of contributions to \$200 or less and limit how much a candidate can give to his or her own campaign
- set mandatory limits that candidates must follow on how much a campaign can spend
- limit contributions from outside the candidate's district to 25% of the total
- end limits on gifts (called "honoraria") and speaker's fees for elected officials
- stop lobbyists from making contributions and stop companies from deducting lobbying expenses on their taxes

What it will cost: About \$4 million per year to set up the program to keep track of these limits. The state would also get about \$6 million per year by ending the tax deduction for lobbying expenses.

Pro:

- The rising spending on campaigns is giving the special interests more control over politicians. Prop 212 will bring politics closer to the people.
- The public needs to pass these campaign limits because the elected officials have not.
- Prop 212 reduces the impact of outside special interests and has tougher dollar limits than Prop 208.

Con

- It is our right to be able to support any candidate we want, at any amount we want.
- There should not be limits for the public because special interest groups will always find a loophole.
- Prop 212 will be challenged as unconstitutional. It will also undo earlier reforms by stopping limits on gifts for elected officials.

Note: Also look at Prop 208, which is also about campaign limits. If both measures pass, Prop 212 would overrule all of Prop 208.

Ballot Measures

Prop 213

Criminal and Car Accidents

Title: Limitation on Recovery to Felons, Uninsured Motorists, Drunk Drivers.

The way it is now:

- If a felon is injured while breaking the law, they can sue if it was because someone was careless.
- If someone gets injured in a car accident, they have the right to sue for related losses. There are two types of losses: economic (wage losses, medical costs, etc.) and non-economic (such as pain and suffering).

What Prop 213 will do:

- Stop someone convicted of a felony from being able to sue for any losses while committing a crime if these losses were related to someone being careless. They could still sue for some types of injuries, such as “excessive force” during an arrest.
- If someone has no car insurance or was convicted of drunk driving at the time of an accident, they would not be able to sue for non-economic losses. They would still be able to sue for economic losses.

What it will cost: Nothing. There could be a small amount of savings from fewer injury lawsuits.

Pro:

- Drunk drivers who cause accidents should not have the same rights as safe drivers .
- People with insurance pay very high rates to cover the costs of uninsured drivers. Drivers who play by the rules should not have to cover costs for those who don't.
- Some convicted felons make money off of accidents. They should not be allowed to profit from their crimes.

Con:

- Prop 213 would let a reckless driver with insurance who hit someone without insurance get away without paying for all of the damage they caused.
- This measure lets insurance companies get out of paying for injuries their customers cause to others.
- Insurance costs are too high for many Californians. Prop 213 does nothing to make insurance more affordable.

Prop 214

Health Care

Title: Health Care. Consumer Protection.

The way it is now: About 80% of Californians have some type of health insurance. Annual spending on health care in the state is about \$100 billion. Health care costs have gone up a lot, but they are growing more slowly since health care businesses (like HMO's) have worked to reduce costs and become more efficient.

There are two health care measures on the ballot, Prop 214 and Prop 216. They are alike in many ways but different in others.

What Prop 214 will do:

- Make sure health care businesses cannot push doctors or other health care workers to hold back needed care or information in order to save money; it would also require a second opinion in order to deny any patient recommended care
- Set up standards to require more health care staff for more types of facilities
- Make health care businesses provide financial information to the public
- Create tougher rules to stop the firing of health care workers without just cause

What it will cost: Up to hundreds of millions of dollars in extra costs for state and local governments for buying and providing health care services based on additional services, added staffing and the cost of new regulations.

Pro:

- This will stop health care businesses from using their focus on profits to deny proper medical care.
- This health care reform will stop unsafe staffing and “gag rules” (that stop workers from saying what they really think).
- Making financial information public will let people see how much of their health insurance is paying for medical care versus big executive pay and overhead.

Con:

- This measure just wants to keep staffing levels high, which will raise insurance rates.
- There is still a lot of waste in our system. For example, only half of the state's hospital beds were used in 1994.
- This measure does not help any people without insurance get health care. Instead, it will make costs go up further, which will force more people off coverage.

Ballot Measures

Prop 215

Medical Use of Marijuana

Title: Medical Use of Marijuana.

The way it is now: It is a crime to grow or use marijuana for any purpose. It is also a crime to sell or give it to people.

What Prop 215 will do: Allow people with certain illnesses to grow or use marijuana if it is recommended by their doctor. It also allows caregivers to grow and give the marijuana to the person with the illness. All laws and penalties about non-medical use of marijuana will stay the same.

What it will cost: No major impact to state and local governments.

Pro:

- Marijuana can relieve pain and suffering for people with cancer, AIDS and other serious illness.
- Only a licensed doctor will be able to prescribe marijuana.
- We will still have tough laws against non-medical use of marijuana.

Con:

- The types of illnesses are too broad. People will be allowed to grow and use marijuana for stress or "any other illness."
- No written records are required. This will make it hard to separate medical from non-medical use.
- Marijuana has not been approved by the FDA or any major medical group.

Prop 216

Health Care

Title : Health Care. Consumer Protection. Taxes on Corporate Restructuring.

The way it is now: About 80% of Californians have some type of health insurance. Annual spending on health care in the state is about \$100 billion. Health care costs have gone up a lot, but they are growing more slowly since health care businesses (like HMO's) have worked to reduce costs and become more efficient.

There are two health care measures on the ballot, Prop 214 and Prop 216. They are alike in many ways but different in others.

What Prop 216 will do:

- Make sure health care businesses cannot push doctors or other health care workers to hold back needed care or information in order to save money; it would also require a second opinion in order to deny any patient recommended care
- Create new taxes on different types of health care business activity, such as mergers, sale of stock and reducing the size of facilities; these taxes would pay for specific public health care services
- Set up a non-profit to represent the interests of health care consumers
- Set up standards to require more health care staff for more types of facilities
- Make health care businesses provide financial information to the public

What it will cost: Hundreds of millions of dollars in new taxes could be raised which would pay for specific health services. There would also be higher costs to state and local governments, up to hundreds of millions of dollars, for buying and providing health care services based on additional services and added staffing.

Pro:

- Prop 216 will raise money from new taxes to pay for more community health care services.
- This will stop health care businesses from using their focus on profits to deny proper medical care.
- Making financial information public will let people see how much of their health insurance is paying for medical care versus big salaries and overhead.

Con:

- This measure will keep staffing levels high, which will raise insurance rates.
- There is still a lot of waste in our system. For example, only half of the state's hospital beds were used in 1994.
- This measure does not help any people without insurance get health care. Instead, it will make costs go up further, which will force more people off coverage.

Ballot Measures

Prop 217

Income Tax

Title: Top Income Tax Brackets. Reinstatement. Revenues to Local Agencies.

The way it is now: In the early 1990's, California did not have enough money to run the state. To reduce expenses, the state shifted some property tax money from paying for local services (like parks, libraries, and social services) to pay for schools. To increase state income, a temporary higher tax rate was set up in 1991 for the richest 1% of people in the state (the top "bracket"). Depending on income, the tax rate is 10% or 11%. This higher rate ended with the 1995 tax year and 9.3% becomes the highest rate.

What Prop 217 will do: The higher tax rates will become permanent, starting with the 1996 tax year. A change in these rates would have to be voted on by the people. Half the funds from this top income tax bracket would be applied to local governments. The state would not be able to shift more property tax money away from local governments.

What it will cost: Nothing. There would be a gain of \$700 million per year, with half going to schools and the other half to local governments.

Pro:

- If we stop the higher tax rates, we are giving the richest Californians a tax break while local services and schools need these funds.
- This will help reduce crowded classrooms and gives money back to important local services which affect our safety.
- Prop 217 stops the state government from using local property tax money to balance its budget and lets local governments provide more services.

Con:

- Many small business owners report their business income on their personal taxes. This higher rate will hurt their ability to help keep the economy growing.
- We should ask our state government to be more efficient in spending our tax money instead of just giving them more to solve budget problems.
- Prop 217 has no guarantees about which services will get this money. It could just go to making government bigger.

Prop 218

Local Taxes

Title: Voter Approval for Local Government Taxes. Limitations on Fees, Assessments and Charges.

The way it is now: Local governments raise money for local services in many different ways. There are general taxes for services like police and fire. There are fees for services to specific locations, like water and garbage collection. Property owners can also be charged "assessments", which cover specific improvements like street lighting or parks. Schools and public agencies do not have to pay the same charges as other property owners.

What Prop 218 will do: Change the state constitution to require voter approval for local governments and districts to charge these local taxes and fees. The amount of these fees and charges would also be changed to match the actual costs of providing the service to each property owner. Schools and other public agencies would have to pay their share of costs for improvements.

What it will cost: Short term, local governments would lose about \$100 million. It will also cost them \$10 million or more to reallocate fees and hold elections. Over time, local services would be reduced even more because it would be harder to put new local taxes and fees in place.

Pro:

- It is our right to vote on how we are taxed. Prop 218 gets rid of the loophole in Prop 13 that lets local governments raise taxes without our input.
- There are over 5,000 special tax districts and we have no control over what they charge us.
- Local government can still raise money for important services. They just have to convince voters why it is needed.

Con:

- Prop 218 will cut local services like police, fire, libraries and parks. It adds new charges to public schools which will take money away from classrooms.
- This measure will require thousands of small elections and favors the interests of big landowners over the rest of the community.
- Prop 218 is the wrong way to clean up our local tax system. It should not become part of our state constitution.



Easy Reader

Voter Guide

November 5, 1996 Election

Voting is easy!

- 1** To vote in the November 5th election, you must sign up to vote by October 7th.
- 2** When you sign up to vote, you will be asked if you want to choose a political party. It does not cost anything to join a party. For more information about the parties, look on pages 3 and 4.
- 3** Before the election, you will get a booklet called the "Sample Ballot" from your County Elections Office. It will list all of the candidates and measures that you will be asked to vote on.
- 4** You don't have to vote on everything in an election. Just choose the things that interest you and learn more about them.
- 5** You can choose to vote by mail. Apply for an 'absentee ballot' using the form that comes with your Sample Ballot. Someone can help you fill it out if you like. Just be sure to return the absentee ballot by election day.
- 6** To vote at the polls on election day, find the address of your polling place on the mailing label of the Sample Ballot. Or call your County Elections office before the election to ask where to go. Write the address in the box below to keep it handy. The polls will be open from 7 AM to 8 PM on election day.
- 7** You can mark your choices on your Sample Ballot and take it with you. When you vote, do not feel rushed or be afraid to ask for help if you need it. It is your right to vote!

My Polling Place: