

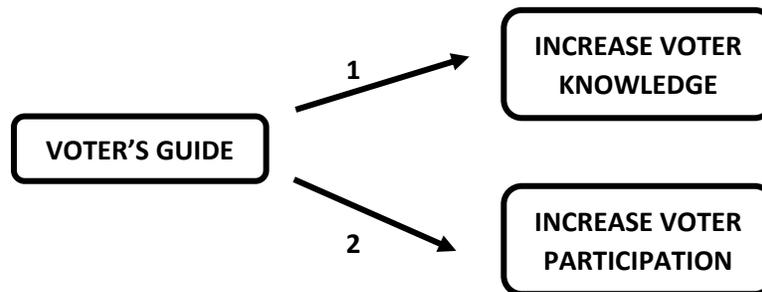
## **The Impact of Voter's Guides on Responsiveness**

MIT Student

17.267 Final Term Paper

12-10-2013

As the first Tuesday of November approaches, voters across the country are bombarded with election-related information. Television commercials are dominated by negative advertisements, mailboxes are full of pamphlets from interest groups, and street corners are plastered with campaign posters. In addition to campaign produced materials, voters in 32 states receive one special piece of information each year: a state-sponsored voter guide. These voter's guides help voters make informed decisions by providing statements from each candidate and/or arguments from supporters and opponents of initiatives. This paper seeks to study the impact of these voter's guides on increasing the responsiveness of our electoral system. I will first provide an introduction to the history, content, and prominence of voter's guides. I will analyze two anticipated mechanisms of how voter's guides can improve representativeness: (1) increasing voter knowledge and (2) increasing voter participation. I will then discuss the prevalence of the problems of inadequate voter knowledge and low voter participation, and argue that state-sponsored voter's guides successfully reduce these issues. Thus, voter's guides do result in electoral outcomes that better represent public opinion and increase policy responsiveness, and should be expanded to all states.



**Figure One:** Logic diagram outlining potential mechanisms for how voter’s guides can increase democratic responsiveness. Each “arrow” will be addressed in this paper.

### **An Introduction to Voter’s Guides**

Voter’s guides, also known as voter’s pamphlets, have been distributed in many state election processes for over one hundred years. These guides were introduced during the Progressive reforms of the turn of the century, with the intention of providing voters with the information necessary to make educated decisions, especially on initiatives and referendums. Today, thirty two states produce and mail voter’s guides to registered or potential voters: all with initiative or constitutional amendment information, and six with additional statements and information about candidates.

This paper focuses on voter’s guides that are created and distributed by the state government. Interest groups often make their own voter’s guides as well; for example, the Sierra Club creates a voter’s guide each year to tell its members which candidates and initiatives are in line with the group’s positions. However, this paper focuses on state-sponsored voter’s guides, which provide statements from all candidates and both supporters and opponents of initiatives,

without supporting one side or candidate. Many state-sponsored guides also include logistical information regarding voting, such as directions on how to accurately complete a ballot and information about registering for an absentee ballot. While this information likely improves voter turnout and reduces spoiled ballots, this paper focuses on the policy-specific information about candidates or propositions and how these summaries improve the responsiveness of electoral outcomes.

Voter's guides vary in the type of information provided, the cost, if any, a candidate must pay to appear in the voter's guide, the recipients of the guide, and the length of statements. One key variation is if the voter's guides, all which include initiative or amendment statements and arguments, also include candidate positions. Figure Two and Figure Three below express this variation, which is also outlined in Table A of the Appendix. Note that while all states produce some sort of "guide," the guides in 18 states only include information about how to physically vote and no policy information. Those guides are not included in this paper's analysis. All states who produce voter's guides also post them on their state's website. For reference, the appendix includes sample pages from the California Voter's Guide.



## 1. Voter's Guides Increase Voter Policy Knowledge

In this section, I will discuss how inadequate policy knowledge negatively impacts responsiveness, and prove that voter's guides combat this problem. The level of voter's policy knowledge can have a substantial impact on the representativeness of outcomes. There are several theories for the mechanisms of this effect. First, uninformed voters may be more susceptible to manipulation by the media, campaign advertisements or interest groups and thus vote in a way that does not reflect their true opinions, but rather inflates support of a policy that benefits an elite subset of the population. This manipulation would be possible because uninformed voters would not have the factual evidence to defend or refute claims. Second, uninformed voters could unintentionally select a policy or candidate that holds conflicting views or interests to their own; if this happens in unequal proportions on each side, policies will not reflect true aggregate opinion. Third, uninformed voters may not understand a policy's implications or previous policy outcomes, and thus support a policy that does not align with their best interests.

These theoretical problems of inadequate policy knowledge have been proven empirically. Studies have found that increasing knowledge can actually change one's opinion; thus, if voters are uninformed, they could be voting in a way that does not align with their best interests. For example, one study found that while 74% of respondents surveyed initially opposed a tax increase, when informed about the rising deficit, that number dropped to 56%, resulting in an "effect of ignorance" of 18%. (Gilens 2001) Another study found that individuals' opinions regarding tax cuts were dramatically different than their stated values on economic inequality would imply, suggesting that their true values were not being represented by their

ballots. (Bartels 2000) Public ignorance can have a dramatic effect on electoral outcomes. Thus, it is in the public's best interest to ensure that voters are informed.

I propose that voter's guides serve that precise purpose: adequately educating voters so they can make informed decisions that are in line with their values and interests. This hypothesis will be tested with three sources. First, I will assess if providing summarized information such as the arguments in voter's guides adequately informs the public. Second, I will look at studies of what voter's cite as the sources that inform their electoral decisions. Unfortunately, it is difficult to perform a transient analysis on the impact of voter's guides on voter knowledge because many of the states with these guides have published them for over a century; for example, Washington began publishing their guide in 1912 and Oregon in 1903. (Canary 2003) However, one study created a time comparison experiment by distributing voter's guides in a county previously without a guide. These sources all suggest that voter's guides assist voters in making more informed decisions, increasing democratic responsiveness.

### **Voter's Guides Adequately Inform the Public**

It is impossible to completely inform voters about a candidate or an initiative. However, voter's guides provide an important resource through their distilled, summarized arguments for each candidate or position. While the information is limited, often by a maximum word count, these summarized, concise statements are an impactful source because of voters' cognitive capabilities. In the information-rich environment we have today, where campaign stories dominate the media and are widespread on the internet, voters have access to essentially unlimited information. However, these massive quantities of information are often not remembered; rather, concise arguments that easily point out the differences between two sides are more likely to remain with the voter. (Lau, Redlawsk 2006) Through voter's guides, voters

are spared the effort of seeking out information, assessing its credibility, and considering all pros and cons of a position- an exhaustive effort most voters do not have the time to make. Instead, voter's guides provide the most critical information to them. The main points of each argument are captured in a couple of paragraphs, leaving the voter's time and cognitive power to determining the better candidate or position. The benefits of summarized arguments could also be captured through an interest-group sponsored voter guide; however, a state-sponsored guide has the added benefit of neutrality in its creation and distribution, and provides information on all sides and candidates instead of only the favored positions of an interest group. Finally, a state-sponsored voter guide includes all questions on the ballot. While voters may be able to make an informed decision based on campaign advertisements or media coverage for President or Governor, they will likely be unable to form an opinion about the state auditor or a similarly obscure position because its candidates have limited campaign budgets and media coverage. Voter's guides serve an essential purpose by providing information about these races when otherwise it would not be distributed. In total, the summarized arguments in voter's guides successfully allow voters to make informed decisions that the difficulties of obtaining complete, unbiased information on all candidates would otherwise hinder.

### **What Voters Cite as Their Information Source**

In addition to the hypothetical reasons why voter's guides prove good sources of information, voters state that in practice, the guides are very important to informing their decisions. For example, a "1998 survey of California registered voters found that they considered the voter pamphlets issued by the state to be their most important source of election information." (Brien 2002) A 1992 survey of Utah voters found 92% of respondents who read the state's voter pamphlet found it to be "very helpful" or "somewhat helpful." (Brien 2002) In

Washington State, four surveys conducted between 1990 and 1998<sup>1</sup> found that between 64% and 70% relied on the state-provided voter pamphlets as their primary source of information. (Brien 2002) Thus, voter's guides are utilized and serve an important purpose to voters. It would be interesting to analyze the increased prevalence of the internet on the relative impact of these voter's guides on informing voters. States who publish voter's guides also post them online, providing an additional medium for the information to be shared. However, the increased use of the internet may also make candidate information more readily available to voters and thus decrease the impact of the voter's guides; for example, candidates can make extensive websites with information about their views on all issues instead of limiting their candidate statement to a few key positions. However, these voter's guides still may serve an important purpose despite the increased prevalence of the internet. Due to the increased availability of partisan news sources, both online and on television, it is rare that citizens can receive undistorted facts about both sides of an issue or unaltered statements from all candidate. Voter's guides do just that: provide the unedited positions of each candidate and arguments from both sides of initiatives. Thus, though the format of these guides may shift with the internet revolution, the practice of providing state-sponsored guides ensures voters can make an educated decision.

### **Cook County Voter's Guide Case Study**

In 1998, an experiment was conducted in Cook County, Illinois to analyze the impact of voter's guides. Researchers created a pamphlet of candidate submitted biographies and statements along with voting information, such as polling place addresses. The researchers mailed the pamphlets to all 32,000 registered voters in the county, and surveyed 700 randomly selected voters as they exited the polling place on Election Day. They found that "90% of voters

---

<sup>1</sup> Data could not be found on studies from more recent years.

who received the guide read at least part of it, while 60% reported reading all or most of it. 75% of the voters reported using the guide as a source of voter information, second only to newspapers (82%).” (Canary 2003) These findings show that the voter’s guides are read and provided many voters with information to make their decision. Similar positive results could be found in other states upon implementing voter’s guides.

## **2. Voter's Guides Increase Voter Participation**

This section seeks to ascertain if voter's guides increase voter participation. Here, voter participation is defined not as turnout to the election, but rather as participation in the full suite of ballot questions, especially the typically low-information contests for local, less prominent positions. The phenomena of voting in "top of the ballot" contests (i.e. presidential or gubernatorial) but abstaining on latter contests is known as "roll-off" or "fall-off," and is the focus of this analysis. Abstention is largely linked to a lack of information; a study replicating the behavior of voters with varying information on ballot questions found that a voter's primary determinant for whether or not they cast a ballot was his or her level of information. (Coupe 2004) Thus, we can assume that roll-off is largely caused by a lack of information. Roll-off can have an important effect; in close-contests, 5% of voters abstaining can shift the electoral outcome. (Wattenberg 2000) The prevalence of roll-off is a widespread issue that faces many states; for example, in 1996, 12 states had initiative votes with roll-off rates greater than 20%. (Wattenberg 2000) Thus, if voter's guides can decrease roll-off in typically low-information contests, they could dramatically improve the representativeness of electoral outcomes. First, I will look at a case study conducted in Washington State that analyzes the effect of voter's guides on roll-off. Second, I will compare roll-off rates between states with and without voter's guides. I conclude that voter's guides can decrease voter roll-off and thus could improve responsiveness if expanded to more states.

## Washington Case Study

While Washington State has issued voter's pamphlets since 1912, it did not begin issuing a Primary Election Voters Pamphlet until 2000.<sup>2</sup> Thus, the Washington primary election provides a natural experiment, which Peter Brien used to compare voter roll-off rates in 1996 and 2000. The primary source of voter roll-off is not fatigue or confusion, but low-information about the questions at hand. (Wattenberg 2000) Thus, improvements in roll-off rates between 1996 and 2000 could be attributed, at least in part, to improved voter information from the voter's guide. Washington's primary election roll-off rates fell 17% between 1996 and 2000. (Brien 2002) This dramatic improvement was not part of a trend of previous years; in fact, up until 1996 roll-off rates had been worsening. (Brien 2002) When analyzing "bottom of the ballot" offices specifically, Brien found that roll-off rates for the seventh office on the ballot dropped 33%: 55,000 more voters selected a candidate for the office of Commissioner of Public Lands in 2000 than in 1996. While a more robust statistical analysis would account for other differences in these elections, and assess if the implementation of primary voter's guides was itself done, along with other measures, to combat a larger trend, the first-order analysis shows the voter's guides had a positive impact on roll-off. Thus, the voter guide may have had a significant impact in decreasing voter roll-off and improving voter participation. An interesting area of further study would be to analyze if the voter guide not only changes participation rates, but also changes electoral outcomes. Is the new group of previously uninformed voters casting ballots for a different candidate or position in aggregate than their previously informed peers? Are the positions of voters changing with the information provided by these voter's guides, or are these

---

<sup>2</sup> California began its Primary Election Voters Pamphlet in 1960, and thus California could not be a good case study.

the positions they would have “naturally” held? These are questions that could be studied with further analysis.

### **Comparing States Roll-Off Rates**

To assess the impact of voter’s guides on educating voters on typically low-information ballot questions, I compare roll-off rates between states with and without voter’s guides. This is a cursory, first order-analysis to assess the impact of voter’s guides on electoral outcomes. A more accurate statistical model would control for other differences between the states besides just the content of their voter’s guides. However, I simply chose four neighboring states, two with voter’s guides on candidates (Utah and Arizona) and two without (Colorado- which has a voter’s guide on initiatives but not on candidates- and New Mexico- which has no voter’s guide) and compared their roll-off rates in the 2012 election. I also only considered state-wide “bottom of the ballot” elections (for example, state court justices). My analysis could be extended by also looking at state legislative representative elections in each district as another example of low-information elections. I define roll-off as the number of voters who did not select a position or candidate divided by the amount of votes cast for the U.S. President.

My data is summarized below. I find that roll-off rates for initiative questions are lower for the three states with guides that provide information on amendments and initiatives than the states who do not. I also find that Colorado (who does not provide a candidate guide) has a much higher roll-off rate for candidate elections than Utah, who does provide a candidate voter’s guide. Interestingly, I find that Colorado’s roll-off rate for candidate elections is nearly three times its roll-off rate for amendments, a phenomena opposite that of the other states; this could be because the content of the state’s guide led Colorado voters to have more information about the amendments than about “bottom of the ballot” candidates. Arizona did not have a state-wide

election for a candidate. Additionally, I did not include Senate elections in the roll-off rates because they were low across all states, likely because this is a more advertised and prominent position. In summation, this first-order analysis does suggest that voter's guides could cause a reduction in roll-off rates. The data suggests that even in states with voter's guides, roll-off rates are still high, especially regarding amendments or initiatives. Perhaps voter's guides can be improved in these states to even further increase "bottom of the ballot" participation. While the variables not accounted for (specific amendments, candidates, exceptions to the 2012 elections, differences between states, etc.) could be causing these trends, this cursory analysis provides first-order evidence that voter's guide do improve voter participation.

<b>STATE</b>	<b>Candidate Guide?</b>	<b>Average Roll-Off, Candidates</b>	<b>Amendment Guide?</b>	<b>Average Roll-Off, Amendments</b>
NM	No	5.14%	No	15.37%
AZ	Yes	---	Yes	14.45%
CO	No	22.02%	Yes	7.84%
UT	Yes	5.36%	Yes	9.43%

**Table:** Summary of Roll-Off Information. Detailed data in the appendix.

### **Issues Facing Voter's Guides**

Despite the benefits of state-sponsored voter's guides, there are still features of voter's guides that should be further studied in order to ensure they result in the most democratic outcomes. For example, many states have fees for candidates wishing to appear in the official voter's guide. The fees help pay for the costs of printing and distributing the pamphlets. Oregon charges candidates between \$300 and \$1,000 to appear in the guide, depending on the position, while in Los Angeles, a candidate for Supreme Court Judge must pay \$27,500 to appear in the

guide- and twice as much to appear in both English and Spanish. (Brien 2002) High fees may provide unequal benefits or disadvantages to candidates when the guides are intended to be neutral. The impact of these fees on the dissemination of candidate information should be an area of further research. The specific content of voter's guides should be further improved and studied as well. After the close Florida election in 2000, many advocated for voter's guides that provided ballot instructions to reduce the number of spoiled ballots. Additionally, many advocate for the distribution of information on other election logistics like polling place locations and registration instructions. The best methods for conveying this information, along with its utility, should be analyzed.

As previously mentioned, it is necessary to consider the future format of voter's guides with the increased prevalence of the internet. Many voters, especially young voters, may be seeking information on candidates and measures online. How do voter's guides still provide a balanced view? Social scientist Dana Chisnell studied state-sponsored election information websites, and found that many are not the top "hit" when searching for election information, hidden beneath candidate websites and media outlets. These balanced election sites must find a way to ensure their prominence when voters seek election information. The prevalence of the internet may cause some to advocate for moving to an online-only model of voter's guides to reduce costs. However, "the provision of voter information on a website is an essentially passive measure that fails to specifically target registered and potential voters, and target them at the appropriate time (i.e. before the registration period closes) in the way that mailing a voter pamphlet to a specific household does." (Wattenberg 2000) Researchers should consider these effects and continue to study ways to improve the implementation of voter's guides.

While voter's guides serve an important purpose, it is important to continue to improve their implementation and future as technology changes. The implementation of voter's guides is an important area of future research, and the actions of different states- the "laboratories of democracy-" will surely provide best practices as time continues.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, voter's guides serve several important purposes to improve the responsiveness of electoral outcomes. First, voter's guides provide citizens with the information necessary to make an educated decision. These guides are impartial and provide arguments from both sides of an issue, allowing voters to make a decision that is in line with their best interests and thus ensuring electoral outcomes are in aggregate more representative of the population. Second, voter's guides can increase participation in contests with typically high roll-off rates. The guides provide information on candidates in contests that do not have campaign advertisements or media coverage, allowing voters to make an informed decision instead of abstaining. The success of the voter's guides in increasing voter information and participation was proven with empirical data and case studies. Finally, these guides serve an important normative purpose. Our democracy hinges on the choices made by the American public. It is possible for candidates or interest groups with unlimited money to attempt to sway public opinion without including all of the facts; this trend has been especially prevalent with the prominence of negative campaign attack advertisements, which neglect to adequately inform voters on all opinions. Voter's guides allow each side to provide their arguments so voters can make the final decision and facilitate the debate and conversation that our founders envisioned for our democracy. For these reasons, voter's guides should be expanded to all states.

**Appendix:****Table A, States with Voter's guides: Candidate or Amendments/Initiatives Information**

<b>State</b>	<b>Candidate Information Guide</b>	<b>Amendments or Initiatives Information Guide</b>
Alabama	No	No
Alaska	Yes	Yes
Arizona	Yes	Yes
Arkansas	No	Yes
California	Yes	Yes
Colorado	No	Yes
Connecticut	No	Yes
Delaware	No	No
Florida	No	Yes
Georgia	No	No
Hawaii	No	No
Idaho	No	No
Illinois	No	Yes
Indiana	No	No
Iowa	No	No
Kansas	No	No
Kentucky	No	No
Louisiana	No	Yes
Maine	No	Yes
Maryland	No	Yes
Massachusetts	No	Yes
Michigan	No	Yes
Minnesota	No	Yes
Mississippi	No	No
Missouri	No	Yes
Montana	No	Yes
Nebraska	No	Yes
Nevada	No	Yes
New Hampshire	No	Yes
New Jersey	No	No
New Mexico	No	No
New York	No	Yes
North Carolina	No	No
North Dakota	No	Yes
Ohio	No	Yes
Oklahoma	No	Yes
Oregon	Yes	Yes
Pennsylvania	No	No
Rhode Island	No	Yes

South Carolina	No	Yes
South Dakota	No	Yes
Tennessee	No	No
Texas	No	No
Utah	Yes	Yes
Vermont	No	No
Virginia	No	Yes
Washington	Yes	Yes
West Virginia	No	Yes
Wisconsin	No	No
Wyoming	No	Yes

**Appendix: Table B, Roll-Off Rate Underlying Data**

<b>OFFICE</b>	<b>VOTES CAST</b>	<b>ROLL- OFF</b>
<b>NEW MEXICO</b>		
President	783758	---
Supreme Court	748061	4.55%
Court of Appeals	738872	5.73%
Constitutional Amendment 1	669320	14.60%
Constitutional Amendment 2	671166	14.37%
Constitutional Amendment 3	643029	17.96%
Constitutional Amendment 4	651928	16.82%
Constitutional Amendment 5	651374	16.89%
Bond 1	674160	13.98%
Bond 2	672769	14.16%
Bond 3	672769	14.16%
<b>COLORADO</b>		
Presidential Votes Cast	2584719	---
CU Regents (State Wide)	2303287	10.89%
Judicial Retention, Supreme Court	1960251	24.16%
Court of Appeals, Justice 1	1898085	26.57%
Court of Appeals, Justice 2	1900961	26.45%
Amendment S	2264974	12.37%
Amendment 64	2500034	3.28%
Amendment 65	2381589	7.86%
<b>UTAH</b>		
President	178850	---
Attorney General	171228	4.26%
State Auditor	168585	5.74%
State Treasurer	167990	6.07%
Constitutional Amendment A	158290	11.50%
Constitutional Amendment B	165683	7.36%
<b>ARIZONA</b>		
President	2323579	---
Proposition 114	2081904	10.40%
Proposition 115	2000102	13.92%
Proposition 116	1942275	16.41%
Proposition 117	1999015	13.97%
Proposition 118	1882176	19.00%
Proposition 119	1928501	17.00%
Proposition 120	1931760	16.86%

Proposition 121	2002652	13.81%
Proposition 204	2121634	8.69%

## Appendix: Sample Pages from California Official Voter Guide

### Proposition: Official Title and Summary, prepared by the Attorney General

<b>PROPOSITION</b> <b>30</b>	<b>TEMPORARY TAXES TO FUND EDUCATION. GUARANTEED LOCAL PUBLIC SAFETY FUNDING. INITIATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.</b>
<b>OFFICIAL TITLE AND SUMMARY</b>	<b>PREPARED BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL</b>

#### **TEMPORARY TAXES TO FUND EDUCATION. GUARANTEED LOCAL PUBLIC SAFETY FUNDING. INITIATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.**

- Increases personal income tax on annual earnings over \$250,000 for seven years.
- Increases sales and use tax by ¼ cent for four years.
- Allocates temporary tax revenues 89% to K–12 schools and 11% to community colleges.
- Bars use of funds for administrative costs, but provides local school governing boards discretion to decide, in open meetings and subject to annual audit, how funds are to be spent.
- Guarantees funding for public safety services realigned from state to local governments.

#### **Summary of Legislative Analyst's Estimate of Net State and Local Government Fiscal Impact:**

- Additional state tax revenues of about \$6 billion annually from 2012–13 through 2016–17. Smaller amounts of additional revenue would be available in 2011–12, 2017–18, and 2018–19.
- These additional revenues would be available to fund programs in the state budget. Spending reductions of about \$6 billion in 2012–13, mainly to education programs, would not take effect.

#### **ANALYSIS BY THE LEGISLATIVE ANALYST**

##### **OVERVIEW**

This measure temporarily increases the state sales tax rate for all taxpayers and the personal income tax (PIT) rates for upper-income taxpayers. These temporary tax increases provide additional revenues to pay for programs funded in the state budget. The state's 2012–13 budget plan—approved by the Legislature and the Governor in June 2012—assumes

passage of this measure. The budget, however, also includes a backup plan that requires spending reductions (known as “trigger cuts”) in the event that voters reject this measure. This measure also places into the State Constitution certain requirements related to the recent transfer of some state program responsibilities to local governments. Figure 1 summarizes the main provisions of this proposition, which are discussed in more detail below.

**Figure 1**

#### **Overview of Proposition 30**

##### **State Taxes and Revenues**

- Increases sales tax rate by one-quarter cent for every dollar for four years.
- Increases personal income tax rates on upper-income taxpayers for seven years.
- Raises about \$6 billion in additional annual state revenues from 2012–13 through 2016–17, with smaller amounts in 2011–12, 2017–18, and 2018–19.

##### **State Spending**

- If approved by voters, additional revenues available to help balance state budget through 2018–19.
- If rejected by voters, 2012–13 budget reduced by \$6 billion. State revenues lower through 2018–19.

##### **Local Government Programs**

- Guarantees local governments receive tax revenues annually to fund program responsibilities transferred to them by the state in 2011.

## Proposition: Arguments For, Rebuttal

### 30 TEMPORARY TAXES TO FUND EDUCATION. GUARANTEED LOCAL PUBLIC SAFETY FUNDING. INITIATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

30

#### ★ ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF PROPOSITION 30 ★

*A Message from the League of Women Voters of California and California Teachers and Law Enforcement Professionals Fellow Californians,*

After years of cuts, California's public schools, universities, and public safety services are at the breaking point.

In the last four years alone, our schools have been hit with \$20 billion in cuts, over 30,000 fewer teachers, and class sizes that are among the largest in the country. Our children deserve better.

It's time to take a stand and get California back on track.

Proposition 30, the Schools & Local Public Safety Protection Act, is supported by Governor Jerry Brown, the League of Women Voters and a statewide coalition of leaders from education, law enforcement and business.

*There is broad support for Prop. 30 because it's the only initiative that will protect school and safety funding and help address the state's chronic budget mess:*

- **Prevents deep school cuts.** Without Prop. 30, our schools and colleges face an additional \$6 billion in devastating cuts this year. Prop. 30 is the *only* initiative that prevents those cuts and provides billions in new funding for our schools starting this year—money that can be spent on smaller class sizes, up-to-date textbooks and rehiring teachers.
- **Guarantees local public safety funding.** Prop. 30 is the *only* measure that establishes a guarantee for public safety funding in our state's constitution, where it can't be touched without voter approval. Prop. 30 keeps cops on the street.
- **Helps balance the budget.** Prop. 30 balances our budget and helps pay down California's debt—built up by years of gimmicks and borrowing. It is a critical step in stopping the budget shortfalls that plague California.

To protect schools and safety, Prop. 30 temporarily increases personal income taxes on the highest earners—couples with incomes over \$500,000 a year—and establishes the sales tax at a rate lower than it was last year.

*Prop. 30's taxes are temporary, balanced and necessary to protect schools and safety:*

- **Only highest-income earners pay more income tax:** Prop. 30 asks those who earn the most to temporarily pay more income taxes. Couples earning below \$500,000 a year will pay *no* additional income taxes.
- **All new revenue is temporary:** Prop. 30's taxes are temporary, and this initiative *cannot be modified without a vote of the people.* The very highest earners will pay more for seven years. The sales tax provision will be in effect for four years.
- **Money goes into a special accounts the legislature can't touch:** The money raised for schools is directed into a special fund the legislature can't touch and can't be used for state bureaucracy.
- **Prop. 30 provides for mandatory audits:** Mandatory, independent annual audits will insure funds are spent **ONLY** for schools and public safety.

Join with the League of Women Voters and California teachers and public safety professionals.

Vote YES on Proposition 30.

*Take a stand for schools and public safety.*

To learn more, visit [YesOnProp30.com](http://YesOnProp30.com).

JENNIFER A. WAGGONER, President  
League of Women Voters of California  
DEAN E. VOGEL, President  
California Teachers Association  
KEITH ROYAL, President  
California State Sheriffs' Association

#### ★ REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF PROPOSITION 30 ★

Supporters of Prop. 30 say we either have to approve a huge tax hike or schools get cut.

We all want excellent schools in California, but raising taxes isn't the only way to accomplish this.

The politicians would rather raise taxes instead of streamlining thousands of state funded programs, massive bureaucracy and waste.

Look at what they just did: politicians authorized nearly \$5 billion in California bonds for the "bullet train to nowhere," costing taxpayers \$380 million per year. Let's use those dollars for schools!

Instead, the politicians give us a false choice—raise sales taxes by \$1 billion per year and raise income taxes on small business OR cut schools.

**PROP. 30 IS NOT WHAT IT SEEMS:** It doesn't guarantee even one new dollar of funding for classrooms.

No on Prop. 30: It allows the politicians to take money currently earmarked for education and spend it on other programs. We'll never know where the money really goes.

No on Prop. 30: It gives the Sacramento politicians a blank check without requiring budget, pension or education reform.

No on Prop. 30: It hurts small businesses and kills jobs.

No on Prop. 30: It's just more money for the Sacramento politicians to keep on spending.

Don't be misled, Prop. 30 is not what it seems. It is just an excuse for Sacramento politicians to take more of your money, while hurting the economy and doing nothing to help education.

Californians are too smart to be fooled: *Vote No on Prop. 30!*

JOEL FOX, President  
Small Business Action Committee  
JOHN KABATECK, Executive Director  
National Federation of Independent Business/California  
KENNETH PAYNE, President  
Sacramento Taxpayers Association

## Proposition: Arguments Against, Rebuttal

### PROP 30 TEMPORARY TAXES TO FUND EDUCATION. GUARANTEED LOCAL PUBLIC SAFETY FUNDING. INITIATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.

30

#### ★ ARGUMENT AGAINST PROPOSITION 30 ★

NO on Prop. 30: It is just a \$50 Billion Political "Shell Game"—But Doesn't Guarantee New Funds for Schools

The politicians behind Prop. 30 want us to believe that if voters approve Prop. 30's seven years of massive tax hikes, the new money will go to classrooms. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Prop. 30 allows the politicians to play a "shell game" instead of providing new funding for schools:

- They can take existing money for schools and use it for other purposes and then replace that money with the money from the new taxes. They take it away with one hand and put it back with the other hand. No matter how you move it around, Prop. 30 does not guarantee one penny of new funding for schools.
- Many educators have exposed this flaw and even the California School Boards Association stated that ". . . the Governor's initiative does not provide new funding for schools." (May 20, 2012)
- The Wall Street Journal identified the same flaw, stating that "California Governor Jerry Brown is trying to sell his tax hike to voters this November by saying it will go to schools. The dirty little secret is that the new revenues are needed to backfill the insolvent teacher's pension fund." Wall Street Journal Editorial, April 22, 2012
- Even the official Title and Summary of Prop. 30 says the money can be used for ". . . paying for other spending commitments."

In addition, there are no requirements or assurances that any more money actually gets to the classroom and nothing in Prop. 30 reforms our education system to cut waste, eliminate bureaucracy or cut administrative overhead.

NO on Prop. 30—No Reforms

The politicians and special interests behind Prop. 30 want to raise taxes to pay for their out of control spending, but refuse to pass meaningful reforms:

- Special interests and the politicians they control have blocked pension reforms. We have \$500 billion in unfunded pension liabilities in California and still the politicians refuse to enact real reforms.
- The same people have blocked budget reform. The politicians continue to spend more than the state has. Prop. 30 rewards this dangerous behavior by giving them billions of dollars more to spend with no reforms, no guarantee the money won't be wasted or that it will really get to the classroom.

NO on Prop. 30—Stop the Politician's Threats

The Governor, politicians and special interests behind Prop. 30 threaten voters. They say "vote for our massive tax increase or we'll take it out on schools," but at the same time, they refuse to reform the education or pension systems to save money.

We need to grow our economy to create jobs and cut waste, clean up government, reform our budget process and hold the politicians accountable instead of approving a \$50 billion tax hike on small businesses and working families that doesn't provide any accountability or guarantee new funding for schools.

NO on Prop. 30—Reforms and Jobs First, Not Higher Taxes

**JON COUPAL**, President  
Howard Jarvis Taxpayers' Association  
**TOM BOGETICH**, Executive Director (Retired)  
California State Board of Education  
**DOUG BOYD**, Member  
Los Angeles County Board of Education

#### ★ REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT AGAINST PROPOSITION 30 ★

After years of cuts, it's time to draw a line to protect schools and local public safety.

Prop. 30's TOUGH FISCAL CONTROLS insure money is spent ONLY on schools and public safety:

- Revenue is guaranteed in the constitution to go into a special account for schools that the legislature can't touch.
- Money will be audited every year and can't be spent on administration or Sacramento bureaucracy.
- Prop. 30 authorizes criminal prosecution for misuse of money.

Our kids deserve better than the most crowded classrooms in the country. Prop. 30 asks the very wealthy to pay their FAIR SHARE to keep classrooms open and cops on the street.

- PREVENTS DEEP SCHOOL CUTS THIS YEAR: Prop. 30 is the only initiative that prevents \$6 billion in automatic cuts to schools and universities this year. Without Prop. 30, we face a shortened school year, teacher layoffs and steep tuition increases this year.

- PROVIDES BILLIONS IN NEW SCHOOL FUNDING: Prop. 30 provides billions in additional funds to reduce class sizes and restore programs like art and PE.
- PROTECTS LOCAL PUBLIC SAFETY: Prop. 30 guarantees local public safety funding in the State Constitution and helps save billions in future prison costs.
- HELPS BALANCE THE BUDGET: Prop. 30 is part of a long-term solution to balance the state budget. Teachers, law enforcement, business leaders and Governor Jerry Brown all support Proposition 30 because it's the only measure that will put California on the road to recovery. Learn more at [www.YesOnProp30.com](http://www.YesOnProp30.com).

**JENNIFER A. WAGGONER**, President  
League of Women Voters of California  
**JOSHUA PECHTHALT**, President  
California Federation of Teachers  
**SCOTT R. SEAMAN**, President  
California Police Chiefs Association

## Position Description and Candidate Information

### U.S. SENATE CANDIDATE STATEMENTS

---

A U.S. Senator:

- Serves as one of two Senators who represent California's interests in the U.S. Congress.
- Proposes and votes on new national laws.
- Votes on confirming federal judges, U.S. Supreme Court Justices, and many high-level presidential appointments to civilian and military positions.

---

DIANNE FEINSTEIN

1801 Avenue of the Stars, Suite 829

(310) 203-1012

Party Preference:

Los Angeles, CA 90067

[www.diannefeinstein2012.com](http://www.diannefeinstein2012.com)

Democratic

These are difficult times for our state and our nation. The economy, while in the early days of a recovery, is emerging from one of the worst recessions in American history. The country faces critical economic and national security challenges throughout the world. California needs proven leadership in the U.S. Senate that is prepared to meet those challenges. My number one priority is to bring stability to California's and the nation's economy. I support sensible measures to grow the economy like payroll tax cuts, a refinancing plan to help homeowners with their mortgages and end the epidemic of foreclosures in our state, a much needed infrastructure plan to create jobs, support for teacher and first responder salaries, and tax credits for employers to hire unemployed veterans and the long-term unemployed. I am also deeply committed to protecting the Social Security and Medicare programs that are so vital to our seniors. The Senate Intelligence Committee, which I chair, is now run in a nonpartisan manner, making us more effective in protecting the nation's security, disrupting terrorist activity, and providing critical oversight of the 16 agencies of the Intelligence Community. As a member of the Judiciary Committee, I remain vigilant in safeguarding the civil rights of all our citizens and am unwavering in protecting a woman's right to choose against all assaults. I'm running for U.S. Senate because I believe I possess the know-how, experience, and commitment to make a difference for California. Your support will be deeply appreciated.

---

## Bibliography

### Readings:

Bartels, Larry. *Homer Gets a Tax Cut: Inequality and Public Policy in the American Mind*, 2002.

Brien, Peter. VOTER PAMPHLETS: THE NEXT BEST STEP IN ELECTION REFORM.

*Journal of Legislation*, 2002  
Canary, Cynthia. *Know Before You Go: A Case for Publicly Funded Voters' Guides*. 2003

Coupe, Tom and Noury, Abdul G. *Choosing Not to Choose: on the link Between Information and Abstention*, 2004

Gilens, Martin: "Political Ignorance and Collective Policy Preferences," *The American Political Science Review*, 2001.

Lau, Richard and Redlawsk, David. *How Voters Decide: Information Processing in Election Campaigns*. 2006.

<http://techpresident.com/news/23686/study-recommends-local-election-websites-focus-ballot>

Wattenberg, Martin, McAllister, Ian and Salvanto, Anthony: *How Voting is Like Taking an SAT Test: An Analysis of American Voter Rolloff*. 2000.

### Data Sources:

Ballotpedia, produced by the Lucy Burns Institute. August 2011 research. [www.ballotpedia.org](http://www.ballotpedia.org).

Arizona: [www.azsos.gov/election](http://www.azsos.gov/election)

Colorado: [www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections](http://www.sos.state.co.us/pubs/elections)

New Mexico: [www.sos.state.nm.us/](http://www.sos.state.nm.us/)

Utah: [elections.utah.gov](http://elections.utah.gov)

MIT OpenCourseWare  
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

17.267 Democracy in America  
Fall 2013

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.