LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF SOUTH SAN MATEO COUNTY

MEASURE V | *Bond Measure*

Measure V - San Mateo County Community College District: Bond Measure

The Question:
Without increasing current tax rates and to protect affordable higher education at College of San Mateo, Cañada College, and Skyline College by repairing/constructing science, engineering, math, technology, skilled trades, and career-training classrooms that prepare students for in-demand careers; and repairing roofs, plumbing, electrical, shall San Mateo County Community College District's measure authorizing $848,000,000 in bonds at legal rates be adopted, levying approximately $18 per $100,000 assessed value ($75,000,000 annually). In contrast, bonds are outstanding, with independent audits, oversight, and all money locally controlled.

The Situation:
The San Mateo Community College District has facilities over 60 years old across all three community college campuses that need improvement and upgrades. Many of these facilities need upgrades to meet current safety and accessibility standards.

The Proposal:
Measure V would authorize the District to issue up to $848,000,000 in general obligation bonds to finance the acquisition, construction, and improvement of the following:

- General district-wide projects including upgrading infrastructure, upgrading computer labs, and improving traffic management systems
- Cañada College specific projects including modernizing the fine arts facilities
- College of San Mateo specific projects including modernizing the maintenance center, library, and gymnasium
- Skyline College specific projects including modernizing the library, constructing a new athletic center, and modernizing the visual and performing arts center

The District would appoint an independent citizens' oversight committee, establish a special account for bond proceeds, and conduct annual independent performance and financial audits to ensure bond funds are spent only for the purposes listed in the Bond Project List.

Voting "Yes" would mean authorizing the District to issue up to $848,000,000 in general obligation bond.

Voting “No” would mean the District would not be authorized to issue the bonds.

A majority of 55% is required to approve the measure.

Fiscal Effects:
Measure V would authorize the District to issue bonds in a principal amount not to exceed $848 million. The bonds will have an interest rate not exceeding the legal maximum and will be repaid within the time permitted by law. The District's best estimate of the highest annual tax rate levy to fund this bond is $18 per $100,000 ($0.018 per $100) of assessed valuation. The bonds are expected to last until June 2049. The District estimates that the total amount repayable during the life of the bond, including principal and interest, will be approximately $1.35 billion.

Supporters Say:

- Measure V would maintain the current tax rate rather than raise it, providing dedicated local funding that state or federal government can't redirect.
- Local community colleges (CSM, Cañada, Skyline) are a lower-cost path to quality education and job training; 42% of local high school graduates choose them over a UC/CSU degree and its associated debt.
- These colleges train nurses, firefighters, and skilled workers essential to the local economy, making them "irreplaceable" for vocational training.
- Many campus buildings are over 50 years old, don't meet modern safety codes, and need repairs—including removing hazardous materials (asbestos, lead pipes) and fixing deteriorated roofs, plumbing, heating, and electrical systems.
- Measure V will provide clear, transparent oversight of all spending, with a detailed project list, independent oversight, mandatory annual audits, and all funds staying in San Mateo County rather than going to state/federal coffers.
- Measure V brings millions back to San Mateo County that would otherwise go elsewhere, stretching local dollars further.

Opponents Say:

- Repeat borrowing: This would be the district's fifth bond request since 2001, adding $848 million in new debt on top of over $1.1 billion already approved by taxpayers.
- Broken promises on past spending: Prior bond funds were pitched as modernizing classrooms and job-training facilities, but money instead went to lavish extras—admin offices, private event spaces, and health clubs at CSM and Cañada.
- Measure V's stated purposes obscure the real plans, which it says include new wellness/fine arts facilities and possible demolition of CSM's library and gym.

- The district doesn't need more money, especially with flat enrollment and growth in online learning—the construction-union-consultant complex is pushing new construction over repairs.
- It's still a tax increase: Even if the tax rate stays flat, extending debt over more years means paying more in total taxes—like stretching a mortgage or car loan over a longer term.
- The Board-appointed oversight committee is stacked with people from building and construction-related backgrounds, only reviews spending after the fact, and has no say in which projects get funded; Measure V can use funds for staff salaries.

Supporters:

- David McLain
- Ben Feldman (San Mateo Community College Federation of Teachers)
- Mark Volkman (San Mateo County Firefighters)
- Nicole Taylor (Silicon Valley Community Foundation)
- Julie Lind (San Mateo County Central Labor Council)
- Larry Moody (Former Mayor, East Palo Alto)
- Mike Claire (Former Independent Auditor)
- Anne Oliva Marshall (San Mateo County Realtor)
- Joe Cotchett (60-year San Mateo County Resident)
- Genel Morgan (Retired San Mateo County Nurse)
- Anthony Friis (SMCCCP Bond Oversight Committee)

Opponents:

- Mark W.A. Hinkle (Silicon Valley Taxpayers Association)
- Alan Hanson (Redwood City School District Board Oversight Committee Member)
- Michele Casale (Teacher)
- Lisa Taner (Community Advocate)
- Thomas Weissmiller (Army Veteran)
- Gregg Dieguez (Former Chair - SMC MCC)
- Christopher M. Robell (Former Vice-Chair, San Mateo County Comm. College District Citizen)
- Frank Vella (Business Owner)
- Sharon Vella (Business Owner)

Sources:

- https://smcacre.gov/elections/november-3-2026-statewide-general-election