



THE LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF OAKLAND

PROS and CONS

Local Measures

June 5, 2018 PRIMARY ELECTION

Alameda County Measure A

County ordinance, Sales tax

Two-thirds (66.67%) vote required for passage

Alameda County Childcare and Early Education Measure

The Question

“To expand access to childcare and preschool for low- and middle-income families; help homeless and at-risk children, including help preventing child abuse and neglect; attract and retain quality childcare workers; and add spaces for childcare at locations throughout the county, shall the County of Alameda enact a 30-year ½% sales tax providing approximately 140 million dollars annually with citizens’ oversight, public disclosure of spending, and mandatory annual audits?”

The Situation

Child care and early education services that are partially or fully funded by the government – primarily by the State of California -- are provided by non-profit and public agencies and by community-based organizations and individuals. Services are provided at centers and schools, in homes caring for up to 14 children, and in informal settings. School programs operate under regulations of the California Department of Education; centers and home-based care are licensed by the California Department of Social Services. Child care and early education providers have varying requirements for staffing and facilities. All must meet basic health and safety standards. Informal care is that provided by friends, families, or others who can meet the needs of particular families and situations; it is unlicensed.

The need for affordable services by low and middle income families in Alameda County far exceeds the supply. Only about a third of children whose parents are working for \$15 an hour or less have access to a licensed child care or early education setting.

Subsidies do not cover the full costs of quality care.

Most child care workers are poorly paid and struggle to earn decent livings. Those who are employed at centers and as family care assistants are covered by state and municipal minimum wage laws. Low wages lead to high staff turnover and difficulty in finding and keeping qualified staff.

The Alameda County Early Care and Education Planning Council “serves as a forum to address the child care needs of all families and in all child care programs, both subsidized and nonsubsidized, in Alameda County. The Council’s major responsibilities are ... 1) provide a forum for the recommendation of local priorities for child care funding and the development of policies to meet the needs identified within those priorities when appropriate and requested; and 2) advise the County Board of Supervisors (CBS) and County Superintendent of Schools (CSS) on child care program and policy issues.” Council membership includes members of the Board

of Supervisors as well as individuals knowledgeable about the care and education of very young children.

The Alameda County Children and Families First Commission (“First 5”) was created after passage of Proposition 10 in 1998 and uses and disburses funds generated from that 50 cents a pack tobacco tax. First 5 works with other agencies and organizations to provide child care, early education, and health services for children 0-5 years of age and their families. Prop. 10 funds have declined 40 percent since 2000 as the number of smokers decreases.

After many meetings and listening sessions throughout the county, the Council took the lead to develop and present to the Board a plan for the expenditure of prospective county funds for child care and early education. The key components of the plan are “new high quality child care and early education scholarships for Alameda County families” and improvement in the quality and compensation of the child care and early education providers. Attention is given to the needs of homeless families. Plan implementation will be constantly reviewed, and a revised plan issued every five years.

The Proposal

Measure A will enact a half-percent sales tax effective for 30 years, from October 1, 2018 through September 30, 2048. Proceeds will be deposited in a special fund entitled “child care and early education tax fund,” and allocated by the County Board of Supervisors “based on the demonstrated unmet child care and early education needs and the county’s commitment to a geographically dispersed network of child care and early education providers, for any of the following purposes:

1. To increase access to affordable, high quality child care and early education services for low and middle income children from birth through 12 years of age, especially for children who are homeless and have other high priority needs;
2. To improve and maintain the quality of new and existing child care and early education services throughout the county; or
3. To improve the wages and benefits of child care providers and early educators who provide these services.”

Funds may not supplant those budgeted by the county for child care and early education services in 2016-17 unless state, federal, or other non-county funding sources have been reduced.

A citizen oversight committee appointed by the Board of Supervisors shall annually review and report on the fund’s expenditures for the prior year.

Measure A calls for a planning and advisory council for the fund; this will most likely be the existing Alameda County Early Care and Education Planning Council. Implementation will be done by an entity designated by the Board, most likely the Alameda County Children and Families First Commission (“First 5”). This entity will administer the county’s plan for providing services.

(N.B. Not detailed in Measure A itself is the Planning Council’s plan to fulfill the purposes of the measure. A draft of this plan was published in February 2018 and is available at www.acgov.org/ece/ballotmeasure.)

Fiscal Effect

The half-percent sales tax is expected to raise \$140 million a year for services related to child care and early education. Allocations are described in the county plan. The tax will expire in 2048 unless modified or extended before then.

Funds from the tax will help leverage additional funds from other sources.

What a Yes or No Vote Means

A YES vote means purchases subject to sales tax in Alameda County will be taxed an additional one-half of one percent (.5%). This will bring the combined state and county sales tax rate to 9.75%. Proceeds of the additional tax will expand and improve child care and early education services.

A NO vote means that sales tax rates in Alameda County and county funding for child care and early education will remain the same as they are now.

Supporters say

- Measure A will provide safe, affordable, quality child care and pre-school to thousands more children from low and middle income families.
- Research shows the critical importance of positive learning experiences to children in the first five years of life.
- Measure A provides for strict accountability for the use of funds.
- Better compensation will benefit caregivers and educators, help attract and retain qualified staff, and help build stable relationships essential to children.

Opponents say

- Measure A fails to specify the programs it will fund. Taxpayers deserve to know how their money will be spent.
- The county has failed to demonstrate sufficient accountability for the use of existing sales tax revenues.

City of Oakland Measure D

City ordinance, Parcel tax
Two thirds (66.7%) vote required for passage

The 2018 Oakland Public Library Preservation Act

The Question

“Shall the Measure to maintain, protect, and improve library services throughout Oakland, including: providing safe places for children and teens after school; preventing library closures; providing youth reading and senior programs, evening and weekend hours for students and families, and literacy services for adults; establishing a parcel tax (\$75 annually for single family parcels, other parcel types at specified rates) for 20 years, providing about \$10,000,000 annually, with independent audits and citizens’ oversight, be adopted?”

The Situation

The Oakland Public Library system receives funding from the city’s general fund and from the proceeds of a parcel tax approved as Measure Q in 2004. Measure Q extended a then-existing

parcel tax, and was dedicated exclusively to library services. The initial Measure Q tax was \$75, with provision for cost-of-living increases; the tax for 2017-18 is \$101.62. It will expire in 2024.

The city's general fund appropriation for the library for 2017-18 is \$12,992,267. Measure Q funds added \$15,384,850.

The libraries are well used, and have worked hard to meet the needs of a growing and ever-more diverse population. However, rising costs have led to the libraries' cutting back on days and hours of operation, and the system currently has an annual operating deficit of over \$2 million.

The libraries serve as community centers that offer a broad selection of services, including senior, teen, and early literacy programs, internet and wireless access, online references and databases, and public instruction. Updating, expansion, and improvement of library facilities need are needed to guarantee adequate services across the city.

The Proposal

Measure D will enact a new parcel tax of \$75 annually, effective July 1, 2018. The tax may be increased annually by the San Francisco Bay Area CPI or the fiscal year change in California per capita personal income. The tax will be imposed for 20 years.

The measure includes provisions outlining the amounts of taxes to be collected for different kinds of properties. The basic tax of \$75 is imposed on the owners of single family residential parcels. There are other tax amounts for multi-family and commercial properties. There are exemptions for low income households and low income seniors, for which they must apply each year. Affordable housing projects may have their taxes reduced by 50 percent.

Parcel tax proceeds "may be used only to pay for costs or expenses relating to or arising from efforts to achieve the stabilization of funding for the Library and allow for Library service enhancements..." A comprehensive list of services and library improvements defines permissible expenditures.

Proceeds from the tax may not be used to replace general fund appropriations.

"The City Auditor shall perform an annual audit to ensure accountability and proper disbursement of all revenue collected by the City from the special tax ..."

"The City Council shall assign to an existing Board or Commission the responsibility for citizen oversight ... This Board or Commission shall review reports related to the expenditure of all revenue collected by the City from the special tax... and provide reports to the City Council when necessary."

Fiscal Effect

The parcel tax will increase library revenues by about \$10 million, a figure that will rise as the amount of the tax increases. However, unless another tax is enacted when Measure Q expires in 2024, or other funding sources increase library revenues significantly, total library appropriations will decrease by about \$16 million at that time.

What a Yes or No Vote Means

A YES vote means that Oakland property owners will pay a new parcel tax of \$75 for 2018-19, raising an estimated \$10 million to pay for library services. The tax will be in effect until 2038.

A NO vote means that the new tax will not be imposed, and current funding for the libraries will not increase.

Supporters say

- Demands for library services are increasing.
- Residents want all city libraries to be open every day and most evenings.
- Students need safe, quiet, and supportive places to study and do research, and to do their homework.
- The libraries need to update and upgrade their facilities and technology.

Opponents say

- Property taxes are reaching a tipping point for many, if not most, property owners.
- The City Auditor has not performed the audits required by Measure Q since 2013.