



The League of Women Voters - where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement

June 14, 2020

Oakland City Council
Council President Rebecca Kaplan
Vice Mayor Larry Reid
President Pro Tempore Dan Kalb
Council Member Nikki Fortunato Bas
Council Member Lynnette Gibson McElhaney
Council Member Sheng Thao
Council Member Noel Gallo
Council Member Loren Taylor
Oakland City Hall
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza
Oakland, CA 94612

Re: Agenda Item 7 on the 6/16/2020, agenda of the City Council
concerning Budgeting and Implementation of Measure Q

Dear Oakland City Council Members:

The League of Women Voters of Oakland (LWVO) was a strong supporter of Measure Q. As we canvassed, phone banked, and fielded questions online, we often had to reassure skeptical voters that the money raised by Measure Q's parcel tax would be used for its intended purposes. We cannot emphasize enough how close Oakland is to having exhausted voters' good will and trust that Oakland's budget will implement voters' intentions. However difficult the current fiscal crisis, it is critical that the interim budget adjustments keep faith with those who voted for Measure Q.

One of the ways that the mid-cycle budget adjustments confirm voters' fears is the inclusion of expenses for three Oakland police officers among the expenses for the portion of Measure Q funds devoted to services to the homeless. Persons experiencing homelessness need support and a path to permanent housing. Using the funds in Measure Q to pay for OPD personnel not only fails to use the monies in the most effective way, but also confirms voters' fear that funds voted for one purpose will be used to mitigate budget shortfalls in unrelated areas.

Finance Department responses (Response 3, Q11) indicate that the OPD team is a necessary part of cleanup and servicing of encampments. Measure Q emphasizes programs and services to prevent homelessness and to create paths to permanent housing; it is to these programs that Measure Q funds for services to the homeless should be directed. Whether the police teams are necessary for the encampments can be debated, but they clearly are not a proper expenditure for these Measure Q funds. **We urge you to eliminate the funding for police teams from the proposed interim budget adjustments relating to Measure Q.**

We also urge that you scrupulously adhere to Measure Q's maintenance of effort provision as addressed in Questions 2 and 3 of the Finance Department's third set of responses.

P.O. Box 71838 • Oakland, California 94612
Phone & fax: (510) 834-7640 • Email: info@lwvoakland.org
www.lwvoakland.org



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Finally, we underscore the importance of clear funding for each of the deliverables so meticulously outlined in Measure Q.

The League recognizes that enacting a balanced budget in this year of pandemic and strife is a daunting task, and we are appreciative of the seriousness with which you have approached it. We appreciate the opportunity to comment. Thank you for your efforts, and, we hope, for not using Measure Q funds for the teams of police officers.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah Shefler". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the typed name.

Deborah Shefler
President, League of Women Voters of Oakland

cc: The Honorable Libby Schaaf
Gail Wallace and Mary Bergan, LWVO Action Committee
Brooke Levin and John Bliss, Measure Q Co-chairs