



# Ballot 2020 Comprehensive Guide

## University of California Graduate & Professional Council

The University of California Graduate and Professional Council (UCGPC) is a non-profit organization that serves the UC graduate and professional students. Our mission is to advocate for policies that bring stability and security to our constituency as they pursue their advanced degrees.

In addition to advocating for students at the institutional, state, and federal levels, UCGPC is committed to raising awareness regarding the issues that graduate and professional students face and how graduate and professional students will be impacted by political decisions.

UCGPC has created the following detailed voter education guide on select 2020 California General Election Ballot Propositions. Our summary includes an analysis not only of the arguments for the Yes campaigns and the No campaigns, but also additional commentary on how the ballot proposition will impact higher education students. UCGPC hopes that this guide will inform students and the general voter and result in a better informed electorate as the November 3, 2020 general election nears.

For UCGPC positions on these select Ballot Propositions and other 2020 CA Election content, visit [ucgpc.org/campaign2020](https://ucgpc.org/campaign2020).

Best,  
UCGPC

## PROP 14 - STEM CELL RESEARCH INSTITUTE BOND INITIATIVE

### CONTENT

**Bonds:** Raise \$5.5 billion in general obligation bonds for the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM).

**Funds:** CIRM can spend no more than 7.5% of funds on operation costs. Funds would be spent as grants to conduct research, trials, and programs related to stem cells, and also start-up costs for facilities.

Establishes training programs for undergraduate students, fellowships for graduate students.

**Governance:** Increases the number of members on the Independent Citizen's Oversight Committee (ICOC), the committee that governs CIRM) from 29 to 35 members, creates a fourth working group that focuses on increasing access to developed therapies.

### BACKGROUND

CA voters approved Prop 71 (2004) which 1) guaranteed a state constitutional right to conduct stem cell research, 2) created the CIRM, and 3) provided \$3.00 billion for such research. The US federal government at that time was intensely debating whether to provide funding or outright ban stem cell research (thank you anti-abortion groups and the Catholic church). In July 2019, CIRM stopped accepting applications for new projects because of depleted funds. In Oct 2019, CIRM disclosed it had \$132 million left in funds. The vast majority of the funds went to research groups in the UC, Stanford, USC, and the Salk Institute (affiliated with UCSD), and hospitals. Smaller portions went to the CSU and private companies.

### IMPACT ANALYSIS

Estimated to cost the state \$260 million per year over the next 30 years to repay the bonds. Maintains or slightly increases the number of stem cell research fellowships available to graduate students. Increases research funding opportunities for the UC and its faculty and students.

### SUMMARY OF ARGUMENTS

#### SUPPORT

Californians for Stem Cell Research, Treatments, and Cures.

Prop 71 (2004) has enabled greater understanding of stem cells and how to derive beneficial therapies from the research. However, additional funding is needed in order to bring broad spectrum solutions to the market. Prop 71 and Prop 14 funding will bring new treatments and increased quality of life for Californians (among others) who live with chronic illnesses and injuries

#### AGAINST

Prop 14 does not address the oversight and conflict of interest issues that CIRM has had since it's creation. The funding climate for stem cell research is no longer hostile, as it was in 2004, thus mooting the need for CA to maintain its own stem cell research funding system. Funding stem cell research since 2004 has not produced as much progress or as many actual therapies as was promised in 2004. In addition, asking voters to green light a multi-billion dollar package during economic hard times is insulting, particularly when there are calls in the legislature to make drastic cuts to programs that benefit all Californians already.

**ENDORSEMENTS**

**SUPPORT**

Basically the entire CA Dem party, UC Regents, patient advocate organizations, science people in CA [\[website\]](#)

**AGAINST**

There is no official group leading the opposition. However, several CA newspaper editorials have come out against Prop 14 because of fiscal reasons.

**CAMPAIGN SPENDING**

**SUPPORT**

\$9,298,860.25

**AGAINST**

\$0.00

## **PROP 15 - TAX ON COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTIES FOR EDUCATION AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING INITIATIVE**

### **CONTENT**

**Taxes:** All commercial and industrial properties will be taxed at their market price starting in 2022-2023. **Exemptions:** Commercial agriculture properties will be taxed at purchase price. Properties of smaller businesses will have later phase in date (2025-2026), with businesses under \$3 million in worth continuing to have their properties taxed purchase price.

**Government:** increased funds will be directed toward K-12 public schools, community colleges and local governments. Funds for education will supplement, not replace, existing school funding guarantees.

**Legal:** Assigns responsibility of passing laws for phase-in and other taxation mechanisms to the CA State Legislature.

### **BACKGROUND**

CA voters approved Prop 13 (1978, with 65% of the vote in favor) which required residential, commercial, and industrial properties be taxed at 1% of their purchase price, with an annual adjustment equal to the rate of inflation or 2%, whichever is lower. Prop 13 has enjoyed public support since. Even as recent as 2014, former Gov. Jerry Brown (who was also governor in 1978) has said the initiative was “sacred doctrine that should never be questioned.” According to the Legislative Analyst’s Office, property market values in CA tend to increase faster than 2%, meaning that the taxation scheme under Prop 13 leads to lower taxable value than if it were under a taxation scheme based on market value.

### **IMPACT ANALYSIS**

Estimated to generate for the state between \$8-12.5 billion each year. Much of the expected revenue will go towards funding K-12 public schools and community colleges. It is also expected that the additional revenue for local governments will result in less strain on city and county budgets. The likely greatest impact of the Prop 15 will be on the top California businesses, which have been paying 1970’s property tax amounts for the last several decades. Most small businesses (under \$3 million in property value) are expected to not see significant changes in their tax bills.

### **SUMMARY OF ARGUMENTS**

#### **SUPPORT**

Prop 15 will close the de facto corporate tax loophole by requiring the top businesses in California to pay property taxes that are more in-line with fair market values. The resulting revenues will go to fix resource inequities that exist between school districts, greatly improving the prospects of underserved and underrepresented minority communities. Small businesses and minority-owned businesses will not be affected by Prop 15, which aims to remove the large property tax cuts that big corporations currently enjoy. A portion of the revenue generated from Prop 15 will also go towards local government, which are about to face massive budget problems in light of the COVID-19 financial impacts.

#### **AGAINST**

Apart from Prop 13 enjoying popular support in the past and in modern times, this is simply not the right time to even consider raising taxes on businesses, which are already facing immense challenges from the economic impact of COVID-19. In all its coverage, Prop 13 is a valuable law

that protects taxpayers from further payments. Prop 13 provides reliability in tax estimates for any taxpayer in California, rather than leaving property tax values to the whims of the market. Furthermore, Prop 15 would severely harm the ability of California to attract and retain businesses, causing the state to lose potential jobs and growth to other states like Texas and Arizona. Finally, Prop 15 hurts the next generation of Californians when businesses have to increase prices, pushing up the cost of living even more and further threatening our low-income communities.

## **ENDORSEMENTS**

### **SUPPORT**

Several CA US House Reps, several mayors of California's biggest metropolitan regions, CA Governor's office, CA Democratic Party, CA Green Party, many labor unions/organizations, state and national progressive organizations [website]

### **AGAINST**

Chambers of Commerce, taxpayer advocacy organizations, retail and industry associations, members of the CA Republican Party (in office and former officials) [website]

## **CAMPAIGN SPENDING**

### **SUPPORT**

\$42,933,295.63

### **AGAINST**

\$29,906,729.40

## PROP 16 - RESTORING AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

### CONTENT

Government: restores affirmative action in California, meaning universities and government offices could factor in someone's race, gender or ethnicity in making hiring, spending and admissions decisions.

### BACKGROUND

Affirmative action has been illegal in California since 1996, when voters approved another proposition (Prop. 209) that banned affirmative action. Prop. 16 would reverse that vote. More than two-thirds of state lawmakers –motivated by racial inequities highlighted by the police killing of George Floyd– voted to put this measure on the November ballot. Essential to the argument of reinstating affirmative action is the concern that Black, Latino and Native American Students have seen their access to the University of California harmed. The data on the matter is complex, giving fodder to both opponents and backers of Prop 16 to select the data that best fits their arguments. Since affirmative action was banned, the sheer number of Black and Latino students admitted as freshmen to the UC has quadrupled. But while Black and Latino students make up 60% of California's high school enrollment, they comprise just 28% of UC freshmen admits in 2019. Getting into a UC has gotten tougher for all applicants, but Black, Latino and Native American students have seen their admissions rates plunge more than white and Asian American applicants. Some advocates warn that reinstating affirmative action invariably would mean a decline in Asian American enrollment.

### IMPACT ANALYSIS

No immediate fiscal impacts on state or local governments.

### SUMMARY OF ARGUMENTS

#### SUPPORT

What's past shouldn't be prologue. California is far more diverse than it was in the mid-1990s, when a Republican governor backed propositions to banish affirmative action and deny undocumented immigrants the access to public services. Structural racism exists and to preach a color-blind philosophy is to be blind to the impacts of racism. Instead, for example, principals should be able to specifically seek to employ qualified Latino teachers in a school where most teachers are white, but most students are Latino. Public universities should be able to consider a student's race as one of numerous admissions factors, including grades and schoolwork. As for the growth in Latino admissions at the UCs, that's good news, but affirmative action could have led to those increases much sooner.

#### AGAINST

Allowing schools and government offices to make decisions based on race, ethnicity or sex is its own kind of prejudice. Equal rights mean everyone is treated equally. The claim that America is systemically racist is a false narrative that "fuels racial paranoia, division and hatred." The state already has made strides in diversity. And it's legal now to give preference to students who really need it – those who grew up in low-income families. As for who gets into the public universities, the fault lies with inadequate K-12 schooling.

**ENDORSEMENTS****SUPPORT**

California Community Colleges and the California State University, Gov. Gavin Newsom, University of California, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce [website]

**AGAINST**

Californians for Equal Rights, Chinese American Civic Action Alliance, Students for Fair Admissions, California Republican Party [website]

**CAMPAIGN SPENDING****SUPPORT**

\$13,671,794

**AGAINST**

\$1,031,421

## PROP 18-PRIMARY VOTING FOR 17-YEAR-OLDS AMENDMENT

### CONTENT

Voting: permits 17-year-olds who will be at least 18 years old during the general election to vote in any primary or special election(s) that occur before said general election.

### BACKGROUND

Currently 18 states and DC allow 17-year-old persons to vote in primaries if they will be 18 by the time of the general elections.

### IMPACT ANALYSIS

Estimated to cost the counties several hundreds of thousands of dollars to \$1 million in order to send and process voting materials from newly eligible 17-year-olds. The 16-17 age range contains approximately 2-3% of California's population, meaning that California's voting population could potentially increase by 500,000 to 750,000 persons.

### SUMMARY OF ARGUMENTS

#### SUPPORT

Minors can currently engage in many serious responsibilities like working, pay taxes, and enlist in the armed forces before they are legal adults. If a 17-year-old can pay taxes, why should they not be allowed to vote? With the younger generation becoming increasingly politically active around issues like climate change and social movements, they deserve to select who they want to represent them in political office. Young adults consistently have lower voter turnout compared to other age groups. Engaging citizens from an earlier age allows more opportunities for building the habit to vote and participate in other civic duties that enriches the community and brings more representation to a political arena where there are currently few young people.

#### AGAINST

People and groups against Prop 18 point out that anyone under 18 years of age are not allowed to enter into legal contracts and are not allowed to engage in other legal responsibilities. Allowing legal minors to participate in electoral questions like approving tax increases and bond measures in primary and/or special elections contradicts the spirit of what California, and the federal government, law dictates. In addition, some Prop 18 opponents believe that 16- and 17-year old minors will not be able to exercise personal judgement in primary elections because the minors are heavily influenced by other people in their lives (parents, teachers, peers, etc.) Finally, other forms of political participation (canvassing, volunteering in a political office, phone banking, attending rallies, etc.) are also available to minors and are equally effective ways for a minor to express their political opinions, if they so choose.

### ENDORSEMENTS

#### SUPPORT

CA Governor's office, some of the Democratic members in the CA Legislature, CA Democratic Party, CA College Dems, CA High School Dems [website]



**AGAINST**

There is no official group leading the opposition. However, some taxpayer groups and election monitoring groups are concerned with the provisions of Prop 18 and the impact under-18-year-old voters would have on CA electoral results.

**CAMPAIGN SPENDING**

**SUPPORT**

\$342,424.10

**AGAINST**

\$0.00

## PROP 21 - LOCAL RENT CONTROL INITIATIVE

### CONTENT

Local government: Allows local governments to enact rent control measures on residential properties over 15 years old and for rent control measures to differ from statewide limit.

Vacancy decontrol: allows rent-controlled properties to increase rent by up to 15% over three years at the start of new tenancy.

Exemptions: Exempts individuals who own no more than two homes.

### BACKGROUND

Prior to the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act (1995), California local governments were able to set rent control provided that landlords receive just and reasonable returns on their rental properties (a provision accorded by the CA law). The Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act limited local government's ability to set rent controls by 1) forbidding rent controls on housing units built after 1995, and 2) forbidding rent controls on "housing units with distinct titles," which includes things like condos, townhouses, and single-family homes. In 2019, AB 1482 was passed and it contained the following clauses: 1) caps annual rent increases at 5%+inflation for housing units except those with distinct titles and those built after 1995, 2) required landlords to have just cause to evict tenants that have occupied rentals for at least one year, and 3) the law will sunset after 10 years. This is all taking place in the background of California's housing rental market. California has the second highest median rent in the US (\$1,297/mo.), with median rents even higher in urban areas (SF Bay Area over \$1,600/mo., LA-SD area over \$1,500/mo.). As a result of high rents, more than 50% of renters in 14 of California's 15 largest cities pay more than 30% of their income on housing, a metric that the US Department of Housing and Urban Planning uses to define cost-burdened households. California leads the nation in the number of homeless persons, estimated at over 151,000 persons on any given day or 22% of the nation's population that are experiencing inadequate housing.

### IMPACT ANALYSIS

Estimated to decrease local government revenues by high tens of millions per year over time, depending on whether local communities will enact rent control measures. As a result, it is difficult to estimate the effect Prop 21 will have on median rents. Prop 21 will regulate the practice of "vacancy decontrol," when a landlord raises the rent to market value after a tenant moves out.

### SUMMARY OF ARGUMENTS

#### SUPPORT

At a time when rents are rising and wages are stagnant, Prop 21 is needed more than ever. Prop 21 would cap the increases in rent and prevent people from being forced out of their communities. Rising rents take money that would otherwise go to small businesses in the community and puts it towards housing instead, harming small businesses and the local economy. Prop 21 will actually save taxpayers money because the rent controls will stop the rise in California's homeless population, which studies have estimated that the state spends \$35,000-\$45,000 per year per homeless person. Passing Prop 21 will allow for teachers, grocery clerks, healthcare workers, and more to stay in the communities that they serve, rather than moving farther away.

**AGAINST**

Prop 21 does nothing to address California's homelessness and housing shortage crises. Rent controls introduced by Prop 21 is a financial disincentive that will discourage the building of new housing units. Non-partisan research has shown rent control measures like Prop 21 will reduce the property values up to 20%. The rent control measures threaten California's senior citizen and veteran population by decreasing available housing, increasing the severity of the housing shortage, and making housing even less affordable across the entire state.

**ENDORSEMENTS****SUPPORT**

AIDS Healthcare Foundation, CA Democratic Party, several CA Legislators, several labor unions/organizations including UAW 2865, state and national progressive organizations [website]

**AGAINST**

Gov. Gavin Newsom, Chambers of Commerce, taxpayer advocacy organizations, construction and housing associations, unions of construction and related professions, senior citizen advocate groups, veteran advocate groups [website]

**CAMPAIGN SPENDING****SUPPORT**

\$24,013,727.12

**AGAINST**

\$41,494,558.63

## **PROP 22 - REAFFIRMS THAT APP-BASED DRIVERS ARE CATEGORIZED AS INDEPENDENT CONTRACTORS**

### **CONTENT**

**Worker Employment Status:** Proposition 22 would exempt app-based rideshare and delivery drivers from being categorized as employees.

**Worker Protections:** Independent contractors are not covered by various state employment laws - including minimum wage, overtime, unemployment insurance, and workers' compensation.

### **BACKGROUND**

Proposition 22 comes off the back of California's recently enacted Assembly Bill 5 (AB5), in 2019. The enactment of AB5 in September of 2019 is to determine a worker's status as either an independent contractor or an employee, the presumption that a worker is an employee, rather than an independent contractor, unless the hiring business can prove each part of the ABC test. (A) The person is free from the control and direction of the hiring entity in connection with the performance of the work, both under the contract for the performance of the work and in fact, (B) The person performs work that is outside of the usual course of the hiring entity's business, and (C) The person is customarily engaged in an independently established trade, occupation, or business of the same nature as that involved in the work performed. Proposition 22 would not completely eliminate the legal precedent set in AB5, but instead, would exempt app-based rideshare and delivery companies from needing to prove each part of the ABC test.

### **IMPACT ANALYSIS**

The fiscal impact of this ballot measure, as researched and analyzed by California's Legislative Analyst Office, concludes that. By approving Proposition 22, app-based rideshare and delivery companies will be able to hire more drivers as independent contractors while being able to charge lower fares and delivery fees. These lower fees will enable customers to take more rides and place more orders. Inevitably, increasing the app-based rideshare or delivery company's overall profits. Thus, making the app-based companies stock increase in value. Overall, the fiscal impacts of Proposition 22 would lead to a minor increase in state income taxes paid by rideshare and delivery company drivers and investors.

### **SUMMARY OF ARGUMENTS**

#### **SUPPORT**

Supports of Proposition 22 explain that more than 80% of drivers work less than 20 hours a week, have other jobs or responsibilities, and can't work set shifts as employees. Additionally, Proposition 22 protects the ability of app-based drivers to choose to work as independent contractors with control over where, when, how long and for who they work. The proposition goes forward with establishing new benefits for app-based rideshare and delivery drivers like guaranteeing a minimum earning that amounts to at least 120% of minimum wage plus .30 cents per mile compensation towards expenses. Furthermore, Proposition 22 establishes a health care stipend equal to 100% of the average employer payment towards a Covered California Plan, which is around \$367.00 per month to a driver on average.

**AGAINST**

Opponents of Proposition 22 argue that app-based companies have made billions are spending in the hundreds of millions to create a special law that will allow for further worker exploitation. 78% of these app-based rideshare and delivery drivers come from communities of color, and 70% work more than 30 hours a week. California law, as it currently stands, exemplified in Assembly Bill 5 (AB5), requires app companies to provide their drivers with basic benefits and protections - like paid sick leave and unemployment insurance. In order to circumvent these employment regulations, proponents of proposition 22 argue these billion-dollar companies are buying themselves a special exemption in the law to avoid ever having to pay their fair share to keep drivers safe on the job.

**ENDORSEMENTS****SUPPORT**

Support for Proposition 22 comes from a collective Political Action Committee (PAC) comprising of such large-scale app-based rideshare and delivery companies such as, Uber Technologies, Inc., Lyft, Inc., DoorDash, Inc., Postmates Inc., and Maplebear Inc., DBA Instacart. [Website]

**AGAINST**

Opposition for Proposition 22 comes from various worker unions such as the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, SEIU-UHW West, Service Employees International Union, United Food & Commercial Workers Local 770, and United Food & Commercial Workers Western States Issues PAC. [Website]

**CAMPAIGN SPENDING****SUPPORT**

\$184,344,108.14

**AGAINST**

\$10,647,645.53

## **PROP 25 - REPLACE CASH BAIL WITH RISK ASSESSMENT**

### **CONTENT**

Bail system: replaces money bail system (for obtaining release from jail before trial) with a system based on a determination of public safety and flight risk.

Detention: pre-trial jail greatly limited for persons who allegedly committed misdemeanors.

### **BACKGROUND**

The practice of cash bail has been criticized for perpetuating income inequality. Cash bail disproportionately affects lower-income and underrepresented minority groups. In California, the average posted bail amount is \$50,000. SB 10 (2018) was passed in August 2018. However, replacing cash bail has been opposed on by several groups since the bill was introduced in 2016.

### **IMPACT ANALYSIS**

Likely increased costs of mid-hundreds of millions to implement new legal processes. Likely decreased costs of high tens of millions in county jail costs. Decreased financial, mental, and social impacts on individuals who would have otherwise been in subject to bail or jail time pre-trial.

### **SUMMARY OF ARGUMENTS**

#### **SUPPORT**

Prop 25 replaces the cash bail system with a more just system that is based on safety and fairness. The current cash bail system unfairly places additional burdens on persons from low-income backgrounds while wealthier persons are able to pay out their pre-trial detention. Prop 25 will save local governments millions per year as county jail facilities will be utilized less. Prop 25 is needed to overcome the resistance of the predatory money bail industry that profits off those held on bail in the current unjust system.

#### **AGAINST**

While the cash bail system needs reform, Prop 25 will not provide the necessary changes and will even introduce a worse system. SB 10 replaces cash bail with an algorithm that assess safety and flight risk, leaving the system vulnerable to unacceptable racial and random biases. The government should not have any role in deciding whether a person poses a danger to society or not, as that could lead to abuse of the system and further existing racial and income inequalities. The government should not be legislating morality and SB 10 is a seriously flawed attempt to fix a discriminatory system by replacing it with even more problems.

### **ENDORSEMENTS**

#### **SUPPORT**

CA Democratic Party, many CA Legislature Democrats, progressive advocacy groups, a couple labor unions [Website].

**AGAINST**

Several Chambers of Commerce, bail industry groups, several mayors and city councilmembers, county sheriffs and law enforcement groups [Website].

**CAMPAIGN SPENDING****SUPPORT**

\$8,341,735.57

**AGAINST**

\$9,027,986.76

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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For more information and content related to the 2020 California General Election Ballot Propositions, visit [ucgpc.org/campaign2020](https://ucgpc.org/campaign2020).

For more information about UCGPC or how to get involved, visit [ucgpc.org](https://ucgpc.org).

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