

LPSM weighs March ballot measures

Our recommendations for March's propositions (part 1 of 2)
by Christopher Schmidt

At the time of December's meeting, the state ballot pamphlet was not available, so we voted only on the measures about which we felt we had enough information to make recommendations. We'll be discussing the remaining measures at the January business meeting (see the end of this article for more details).

Guided mostly by principled opposition to public indebtedness, we voted **042** (Yes-No-Abstain), on **Propositions 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16** (as a group), recommending a 'No' vote on all bond measures. The present state budget surplus makes the proposed borrowing unnecessary, as well as unfair to future generations, who would pay for today's spending. Those who abstained wanted to wait to read the ballot arguments before adding their votes to the opposition (or possibly approval) of the bonds on an individual basis.

On **Proposition 22** (Definition of Marriage), we voted **161**, recommending another 'No' vote. One member felt the measure is merely a codification of the obvious; the status quo, but most of us opposed the measure for a variety of reasons, including the transparent intent to demonize gay couples for political ends.

On **Proposition 23** (None of the Above (NOTA)), we voted **620**, recommending a 'Yes' vote. Although the measure (creating a NOTA option in every race) is toothless, most of us thought it would give voters one more way to express dissatisfaction with the status quo politicians. Opponents thought the measure would clutter ballots and the election code to no practical purpose. Jack and I urged people to use conversations about NOTA to promote Instant Runoff Voting (preference voting) as a more potent reform addressing the same issue (<http://www.fairvote.org/>).

On **Proposition 25** (Public Campaign Funding; Donation Limits), we voted **080**, recommending a 'No' vote. The measure would heap new donation limits and reporting requirements on all candidates (mostly affecting challengers), while creating government subsidies for the campaigns of big money politicians (mostly incumbents).

On **Proposition 26** (Repeal $\frac{2}{3}$ Vote Requirement for Bond Issues), we voted **070**, recommending a big 'NO' vote. The state constitution has protected taxpayers (and those who can't or don't vote) from excessive borrowing since 1879 by requiring public debt to be approved by $\frac{2}{3}$ of the voters at the polls. In practice, this means 12% of the electorate at an election where only 18% of the electorate turn out, (cf. November 1999). This measure would lower the threshold to $\frac{1}{2}$ of the voters turning out only 9% of the electorate at an election where only 18% of the electorate turn out. The ballot title calling this a "local majority vote" mocks the meaning of the word.

On **Proposition 27** (Term Limit Declarations), we voted **080**, recommending a 'No' vote. The measure would clutter ballots and encourage liars (oops, I mean politicians) to declare whether they might voluntarily leave office after a number of terms but would not actually require them to do so. Obviously, a liar will have the advantage over a truth-teller under such a system. It would be like an auction where the high bidder takes home the prize, but faces no penalty if his check bounces.

On **Proposition 28** (Repeal of Prop. 10 Tobacco Surtax), we voted **700**, recommending a 'Yes' vote. We opposed 1998's Prop. 10 because it was an unnecessary new tax, because it made government larger, because it demonized smokers, and because it violated the state constitution's requirement that initiatives be limited to one subject. (Prop. 10 created a new education bureaucracy.) Supporting the repeal of Prop. 10 was an easy decision.

At January's meeting, we've allocated 60 minutes to discuss and make endorsements regarding the other 9 measures on the March ballot, including those on Indian gaming and insurance reforms. Historically, the process has required more time, but we expect to post material on our LPSM_Discuss@ListBot.com mailing list to cover some ground in advance and discussion is encouraged. You can sign up for this mailing list on our website.

December meeting notes

by Christopher Schmidt

Most of the December meeting at Hobee's was dedicated to discussing the measures on the March 2000 ballot [*see feature article above Ed*].

Outreach program

But first, Bob Green urged more outreach suggesting letters-to-the-editor as a good way to promote our name and ideals. [Note that you can join a low-traffic mailing list for libertarian writers of LTE's at <http://onelist.com/community/LTE2000>]

Treasurer's YTD report

I commented on a year-to-date report submitted by Treasurer Margret Schmidt. We're in good financial health. Dues and donations for the year covered our expenditures and we have more cash in the bank than at the beginning of the year.

Final petition mailing results

Owing to last-minute signature gathering, we had to remit only \$127 to put Barbara Less on the ballot for the 12th Congressional District (joining libertarians Steve Lundry, Joe Dehn, and Jack Hickey on the March Primary ballot for legislative offices representing San Mateo County). This was the only filing fee we were forced to pay in this election cycle. All together, petition signatures saved us over \$4,500 in filing fees! The cash cost of collecting petitions by mail totaled roughly \$750, so we owe our nearly full slate of candidates to donors as well as to signers and to mailing party volunteers. Thanks, everyone!

Nine central committee candidates on ballot

All of the libertarian candidates for the government-sponsored central committee elections (listed in the last issue) succeeded in collecting enough signatures to appear on the ballot. Thus, we have more than a full slate of libertarian central committee candidates (a first in our county, as far as I know).

Republicans jump ship

In related news, 4 local Republican central committeemen have quit their party to follow Patrick Buchanan into the Reform Party. Buchanan, as cynics have noted, joined the Reform Party gold rush after that party qualified for millions of dollars of federal funding (resulting from Perot's '96 vote percentage). At least one Republican will go directly to the local Reform Party central committee, because their election is not contested.

LPSM Annual Meeting to be held January 20

Agenda: officer elections for Y2K
by Robert Giedt

The Annual Meeting of the Libertarian Party of San Mateo County will be held **Thursday**, January 20 at Hobee's Restaurant in Redwood City (see address in the box at the bottom of the page). During this business meeting, officers will be elected to fill and hold available positions for the calendar year 2000 (until January 2001).

Dues-paying members of the Libertarian Party are qualified to vote and become an officer in the LPSM. A number of incumbents are up for reelection, but this doesn't mean they're guaranteed to win! If you'd like to become an officer and take on the tasks and responsibilities that come with that position, by all means drop by! We'd like to see more members step forward and become active officers.

A list of the officers can be found on the reverse side and descriptions of those positions are located on our website at <http://www.california.com/~lpsm/>.

In addition to officer elections, we'll be tackling the remainder of the March 2000 ballot propositions so bring your thinking caps and opinions!