

# LPSM Endorsements for March Ballot Measures

Summary by Christopher Schmidt

At the December 16 and January 20 meetings, we discussed the upcoming election and voted to make the following ballot recommendations:

<p><b>Prop 1A Gambling on Tribal Lands</b> Vote: <b>Yes</b> (501) (YNA) Notes: We recommend a 'Yes' vote, affirming compacts with 57 tribes, permitting various forms of gambling on tribal lands. These compacts supercede those of Proposition 29, and apply to more tribes (including all those who had previously agreed to the Prop. 29 compacts).</p>
<p><b>Props 12, 13 14, 15, 16 Various Bonds</b> Vote: <b>No</b> (042) Notes: Guided mostly by principled opposition to public indebtedness, we recommend 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.</p>
<p><b>Prop 17 Charitable Lotteries &amp; Raffles</b> Vote: <b>Yes</b> (600) Notes: We recommend a 'Yes' vote, formally permitting charitable nonprofit organizations to conduct raffles (subject to regulation by the state legislature).</p>
<p><b>Prop 18 Murder: Special Circumstances</b> Vote: <b>Position not taken</b> (330) Notes: We split 330, yielding no recommendation from the LPSM. The vote was colored somewhat by differing opinions regarding the death penalty itself, rather than disagreement concerning the terms of the special circumstances covered by the measure.</p>
<p><b>Prop 19 Murder: BART and CSU peace officers</b> Vote: <b>No</b>(060) Notes: We saw the question as "Should the penalty for killing certain government security guards be greater than the penalty for killing ordinary citizens?" We answered 'No'.</p>
<p><b>Prop 20 State Lottery: Textbook Allocation</b> Vote: <b>No</b> (150) Notes: We recommend a 'No' vote on this measure (that would earmark a certain portion of lottery proceeds above a certain level for instructional materials). Why tie the hands of local school authorities needlessly?</p>
<p><b>Prop 21 Juvenile Crime</b> Vote: <b>No</b> (060) Notes: The sheer size of the proposed expansion of the criminal justice system (hundreds of millions of dollars per year) alarmed some of us. I was agog to note the incredible length of this legislation (an authoritarian laundry list of 13 pages of fine print), all of it directed at the goal of keeping more of California's population in prison (already record-setting). We started to read the details, like reducing the discretionary powers of the courts, and increasing the use of wiretapping, but soon realized that our position was already obvious.</p>
<p><b>Prop 22 Definition of Marriage</b> Vote: <b>No</b> (161) Notes: 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.</p>
<p><b>Prop 23 None of the Above (NOTA)</b> Vote: <b>Yes</b> (620) Notes: 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 urge people to use conversations about NOTA to promote Instant Runoff Voting (preference voting) as a more potent reform addressing the same issue. <a href="http://www.fairvote.org/">http://www.fairvote.org/</a></p>
<p><b>Prop 25 Public Campaign Funding; Donation Limits</b> Vote: <b>No</b> (080) Notes: 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).</p>

**Prop 26 Repeal  $\frac{2}{3}$  Vote Requirement for Bond Issues**

Vote: **No** (070)

Notes: We recommend 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.  
<http://www.saveourhomes.com/>

**Prop 27 Term Limit Declarations**

Vote: **No** (080)

Notes: 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.

**Prop 28 Repeal of Prop. 10 Tobacco Surtax**

Vote: **Yes** (700)

Notes: 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.

**Prop 29 Gambling on Tribal Lands**

Vote: **No** (042)

Notes: For tactical reasons, **Proposition 29** did not get our approval. See Prop. 1A.

**Props 30, 31 Insurance Reforms**

Vote: **Position not taken** (006)

Notes: Respecting the complexity of **Propositions 30 and 31** (and conscious that libertarians have not historically agreed on the proper balance between the goal of protecting citizens' right to redress through the courts and the competing goal of protecting insurance consumers from paying for the fraudulent insurance claims of others), we voted to take no position on these measures.