

## **Election Notes by Janice Kluth**

**10/24/2024**

For November 5, 2024 Election

### **Elected Officials:**

**President** - Kamala Harris/Tim Walz

**US Senator** (6-year term) - Adam Schiff. Schiff currently serves as a US Congressman (CA District 30). He is a Democrat who has a track record of supporting affordable housing, fair taxes and pay, public healthcare, and protecting the environment. Read more at <https://www.adamschiff.com/>

**US Senator** (temp term) - Adam Schiff (Diane Feinstein died in 2023, vacating her seat and that term expires in January 2025. Newsom appointed Laphonza Butler to fill Feinstein's seat temporarily.) Butler is not running in the election. See above for a little more about Schiff.

**US Representative** - Scott Peters. Peters is a lawyer and former City of San Diego Councilmember who served as a Congressman for District 52 for 10 years. For the past two years he has served as our District's (50) Congressional Representative. Read more at <https://scottpeters.com/>

**State Senator** - Akilah Weber. Weber has served as a CA State Representative/Assembly since 2021 and is now running for CA State Senate. Her mother, Shirley Weber, served as State Rep prior to 2021 and is now California's Secretary Of State. Prior to the Assembly, Akilah Weber was a pediatrician at Rady Children's Hospital and served on La Mesa City Council. Read more at <https://drakilahweber.com/>

**State Assembly - Chris Ward** (former City Councilmember for our District. Kate Ferrier worked for him. He is running unopposed.)

**County Board of Education, 1st District** - Gregg Robinson (He is running unopposed.)

**SD Unified School District, District D** - Richard Barrera (He is running unopposed.)

**City of San Diego, Mayor** - Todd Gloria. We watched the debate and were not impressed with Larry Turner's knowledge or professionalism. Todd Gloria definitely has some issues, but he understands politics, is very committed to the City of SD, and is a relatively effective leader. Read more at <https://toddgloria.com/>

**City of San Diego, Council District 3** - Stephen Whitburn is running for re-election. He is closely aligned with Mayor Gloria and helped establish a camping ban (signs posted in our neighborhood) and open a homeless shelter near the airport. He is also the Board Chairman of the Metropolitan Transit System. Read more about Whitburn at <https://www.instagram.com/stephenwhitburn/>

Colleen Cusack is an attorney and substitute teacher running against Whitburn. Her son, Justus, played baseball with you guys. Dad and I watched the Mayoral debate, and she is smart, but doesn't seem to have a broad range of knowledge/interest in the issues. She is a Progressive Democrat who is critical of the way the City (and Whitburn) have dealt with our homeless population. She doesn't like the camping ban (signs put up in our neighborhood) and she says the homeless encampments are poorly managed. I don't know what her plan is to fix these things. Read more about Cusack at <https://coleen4sd.com/>

**City of San Diego, City Attorney** - Heather Ferbert and Brian Maienschein are running. They are both Democrats.

Ferbert is currently the Deputy City Attorney and is endorsed by the current City Attorney. She previously served as the lead attorney for the San Diego Housing Commission.

Maienschein is a State Representative and former City Councilmember and attorney. Note: he hasn't practiced law in over 30 years. He was a Republican but switched to Democrat in 2019, because he believed the Republican Party had shifted too far right.

### **State Propositions:**

**Proposition 2, Bonds for Public School and Community College Facilities** - This measure provides funds to modernize education facilities. Read more at <https://www.kpbs.org/news/politics/2024/10/07/california-propositions-election-novemeber-2024#prop-2>.

Supported by League of Women Voters - although the proposition could have been written to be more equitable (still requires matching funds from even the poorest communities), we need this funding for all students.

*Note: The last school facilities bond was passed in 2016.*

**Proposition 3 Constitutional Right to Marriage.** Constitutional Amendment - This measure changes the constitution from “only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California,” to “the right to marry is a fundamental right.”

Supported by League of Women Voters - Prop 3 reinforces California’s commitment to equality and dignity, setting a precedent that personal freedoms and civil rights are foundational and non-negotiable.

**Proposition 4, Bonds for Safe Drinking Water, Wildfire Prevention, and Protecting Communities and Natural Lands from Climate Risks** - This measure would provide \$10 billion total, at \$400 million per year (repaid over 40 years from general tax revenue/General Fund). Could provide a cost savings over time if the funding prevents disasters. Also could reduce local costs for natural resources and climate activities, as State would take on more of the burden/cost with these funds.

Supporters say this is an urgent matter and the measure is backed by many environmental groups. This is a shift from disaster response to disaster prevention.

Supported by League of Women Voters - by funding proactive measures, Prop 4 will enhance resilience, protect communities, and ensure California continues to lead in environmental stewardship and innovation.

Opponents say bonds are the most expensive way to pay for things and money could go to unproven technology. CA should pay without taking on more debt.

*Note: New water management (\$3.8 B); Forest management (\$1.5 B); Coastal management (\$1.2 B); Land conservation (\$1.2 B); Wind turbines, transmission lines, better development (\$850 M); Public parks (\$700 M); Heat protection, disaster shelters, local environmental projects (\$450 M); Farmland/Farmworker support, community gardens, soil health, water conservation (\$300M).*

*Note: 40% of funds to be spent in low-income communities or communities sensitive to climate change (Del Mar?!).*

*Note: value of today's dollar...worth more today for most people. Interest rates reflect the cost of using the money now.*

Who will administer the funding? Chris Kluth says this is an important consideration. Many public agencies can't seem to get projects built. Example: \$7.5 B bond for dams and water facilities in 2015 - no projects built to date. ([reason.org](http://reason.org))

**Proposition 5, Local Bonds for Affordable Housing and Public Infrastructure with 55% Voter Approval.** Constitutional Amendment - This measure would allow municipalities to get future bond measures (only for housing assistance or public infrastructure) approved with 55% of the vote (currently 2/3 is required.)

Supporters say future bond measures passed could impact our taxes, but the measure would give local voters and taxpayers more autonomy to address issues in their own communities.

Supported by League of Women Voters

Opponents say legislators need to change state policy to prioritize these projects. Bonds are expensive and the local debt that could be incurred would be repaid primarily by property owners. This could be a way to undo the protections in Prop 13.

**Proposition 6, Eliminates Constitutional Provision allowing involuntary servitude for incarcerated persons.** Legislative Constitutional Amendment - This measure would remove the requirement for people in jail to work (with little or no compensation). Prisoners could not be punished for refusing to work, but they could still choose to work to reduce their time spent in jail. If approved, the measure could reduce costs (if prisoners choose to work for 'time credit,' but would increase costs if the laws change and prisoners get paid for work.

Supported by League of Women Voters

**Proposition 32, Raises Minimum Wage** - Minimum wage in CA is currently \$16/hour. This measure would increase min. wage to \$17/hour (companies with <25 employees) and \$18 for larger companies in 2025, and all companies in 2026.

Supporters say this still isn't enough to live in CA.

Supported by League of Women Voters

Opponents say businesses are still recovering from Covid impacts and inflation. Can't afford the immediate jump to higher mw.

**Proposition 33, Authority for Local Government to enact Rent Control on Residential Property** - this measure would limit some of the State's control over rents, allowing local municipalities to expand their rent control programs. Rents are too high and 30% of renters spend more than half their income on rent. Currently, cities cannot set rent control on single family homes or apartments built after 1995 (Costa-Hawkins). And, landlords are free to set their own rental rates when new tenants move in. Since 2019, landlords across the state cannot raise rent more than 5% plus inflation annually.

Approval of the bill would allow local governments to control rents on any type of housing. Rent control can be an effective short-term solution in a housing crisis.

Opponents say this will hurt property values and developers will be less likely to build new units, making the housing shortage worse.

**Proposition 34, Restricts Spending of Prescription Drug Revenues by Certain Health Care Providers** (non-profits that provide care to low-income people) — this measure permanently authorizes the State to negotiate prescription drug prices for Medi-Cal. Health care providers that serve low-income and at-risk patients get a discount on pharmaceuticals. They can then sell those same drugs at retail rates. This measure requires these companies **that also have a housing component** must spend 98% of net drug sale revenues on direct patient care. Not many entities meet the criteria, so would this measure have an impact?

Supporters say the measure would require all state agencies to negotiate for lower drug prices as one entity, for more buying power. They also say the public deserves accountability- knowing that the net revenues are being used to help the neediest patients.

Opponents say the requirements are oddly specific and the only provider that falls in this category is the AIDS Healthcare Foundation, which is run by Michael Weinstein, and could be construed as targeting. It may end up in court.

*Note: the Weinstein organization has bought up thousands of units and he has used his fortune to influence politics around housing. Weinstein has spent over \$15 million fighting this proposition and is behind Prop 33 for local rent control...maybe because he believes he can influence local politicians?*

**Proposition 35, Provides Permanent Funding for Medi-Cal Healthcare Services** - The State currently charges a tax on certain health plans (approximately \$7-8 billion). The tax money is used to help fund Medi-Cal. This measure makes the tax permanent. Almost a third of CA residents use Medi-Cal. Over the last 10 years, coverage has been expanded to include all residents, regardless of citizenship, as well as dental, hearing aids and doulas...but payments to doctors and other Medi-Cal providers has increased very little. As a result, many doctors won't serve Medi-Cal patients.

Supporters say the tax should be used for new investments in Medi-Cal and needs to be restricted to that - it should not go into the general fund.

Opponents say the permanent tax regulations are too restrictive. Future legislators may need the money to balance the state budget.

Opposed by League of Women Voters - Although the intent to fund Medi-Cal is admirable, earmarking funds through ballot initiatives can undermine the state's fiscal stability and its ability to respond to changing conditions.

**Proposition 36, Allows Felony Charges and Increases Sentences for Certain Drug and Theft Crimes** - This measure would provide tougher penalties for certain theft and drug crimes (currently misdemeanor, would become felony). Could result in over-incarceration. The measure does provide for drug treatment (certain cases) as an alternative to prison time.

*Note: Prop 47 was approved ten years ago to address prison overcrowding by making certain theft and drug crimes misdemeanors, rather than felonies.*

Supporters (mostly big box retail - Walmart, Home Depot, Target) say shoplifting and commercial burglaries have increased dramatically since the pandemic, as has homelessness. Drug dependence pushes people to the street. Harsher penalties would force them to get treatment.

Opponents say that no studies support the idea that harsher punishment prevents crime or gets people off the street. The money spent on court and prison costs will impact/take away from schools, health care and other essential services.

Opposed by League of Women Voters - imposes stricter sentencing laws that disproportionately impact people of color and those with low-income, exacerbating existing racial and socioeconomic disparities in the criminal justice system.

### **County Measures:**

**Measure G, Fund San Diego County Transportation, Infrastructure, and Safety Projects through a Half-Cent Sales Tax** - This measure would add a half cent tax on the sale of all personal property, generating approximately \$350 million annually for transportation infrastructure and repair projects (roads, bridges, railways, bikeways, etc.) This is a voter initiative, so it can be approved by a simple majority and only be removed or amended by voters.

Supporters say we need to invest more in public transit (50% of this tax would go to that), as well as highways (27%) to meet clean energy/environmental goals.

Opponents say we already pay too much in taxes. Also, this tax would put too much into public transportation and not enough into highways.

*Note: Public Transit Infrastructure (50%); Roads & Highways (27%); Public transit operations (12%); Local streets and roads (7%); Rail infrastructure (2%); Admin (2%)*

## **City Measures:**

**Measure C, Amendments to Charter Section 66 Regarding Board of Education Elections** - this measure eliminates the primary when 2 or fewer candidates qualify to run. The candidates would be automatically moved forward to the general election. This would save the Board of Education approximately \$130,000 per seat, per election.

**Measure D, Adding Charter Section 41.3 and Amending 41 to Strengthen the Independence of the Ethics Commission** - This measure gives the Ethics Commission independence from those it regulates. Currently, the City Council has control over the budget, leadership and existence of this commission. This measure will amend the City Charter to make the commission more autonomous.

**Measure E, City of San Diego Sales Tax** - This measure would increase sales tax by 1%. If approved sales tax would be 8.75%, and the City would collect approximately \$400K M per year to use for infrastructure (roads, sidewalks, storm drains, street lights, parks, libraries, etc.) The new tax would stay in effect until repealed or amended by voters. City currently has a deficit of \$200 million. If measure doesn't pass, City will have to make budget cuts.

Supporters say there are infrastructure needs that are long overdue and the tax would address a huge backlog of projects.

Opponents say the focus of items to fix with this tax is too broad, and there is no end date for the tax.

## **School Measures:**

**Measure HH, San Diego Community College District Classroom Repair, Affordable Education, Careers Measure** - This measure preserves affordable college options. If approved, the District will issue and sell \$3.5 billion in general obligation bonds (\$168 million annually). The bonds will be repaid over 40 years with a levy on the assessed value of taxable property in the District. This will increase our property taxes by approximately \$25 per \$100K of assessed value.