

# HOW TO PLACE A MEASURE ON THE BALLOT FOR COUNTY, CITIES, SCHOOL DISTRICTS, AND SPECIAL DISTRICTS



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Updated May 2015

This guide was developed in an effort to provide answers to questions frequently asked the Placer County Elections Division concerning placing measures on the ballot. It is for general information only and does not have the force and effect of law, regulation, or rule. In case of conflict, the law, regulation, or rule will apply. Persons using this guide must bear full responsibility to make their own determinations as to all legal standards and duties.

# WHAT THE ELECTIONS OFFICIAL NEEDS FROM YOU

## THE RESOLUTION TO CALL THE ELECTION

**DISTRICTS & CITIES:** Submit a "Resolution Requesting Consolidation of Election and Ordering of Such Election" along with the "Notice Placer County Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters."

**COUNTY:** Submit a "Resolution Requesting Consolidation of Election and Ordering of Such Election."

**SCHOOLS:** Submit the "Resolution Ordering Election, Specifications of the Election Order, and Requesting Consolidation" along with the "Placer County Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters."

## THE MEASURE TEXT

When submitting materials to place a measure on the ballot, indicate clearly in writing, which portion of the resolution or ordinance is to be printed in the Voter's Information Pamphlet.

## THE 75-WORD BALLOT QUESTION

Elections Code Section 13247 requires ballot questions to be limited to 75 words. Most measures are followed by the words "YES" and "NO." In order to comply with this rule, we have summarized the word counting guidelines set forth in elections code section 9 in the chapter "how to count words" below. Jurisdictions may want to consider beginning their ballot question with a title, heading for a few key words to summarize the measure. The words will count toward the 75-word limit.

The exceptions to this rule are school bond measures and school district reorganization measures. The words to appear on the ballot for school bond measures are "Bonds-Yes" or "Bonds-No." (Ed. Code 15122) The words to appear on a ballot for a school reorganization measure are "Reorganization of School Districts-Yes" and "Reorganization of School Districts-No." (Ed. Code 35762) Similar words may be used.

Letters designating measures will be assigned by the elections official pursuant to Elections Code 13116. Each calendar year measures will be assigned in alphabetical order beginning with the letter skipping the letter l and o (due to there similarities to the numbers 1 and 0 respectively) alphabetical order will continue until the cu of the calendar year. Letters may be assigned out of alphabetical order if the election official believes clarity may be better archived for the voters.

For example for districts that overlap into other counties, the counties will mutually agree to use a letter designation for the measure that is the same in all jurisdiction, that may require a letter selection out of alphabetical order.

Measures will appear on the ballot in the following order pursuant to Elections Code Sections 13109: County Boards of Education, Community College, Unified School, High School, Elementary School, County, Cities, and Special Districts. In order to allow for the most efficient use of space, the county elections official may vary the order of the measures.

### **ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OR AGAINST MEASURES**

If more than one argument in favor or argument against a measure is submitted, Elections Code sections 9166, 9287, and 9503 require the elections official to select one argument based on the following order:

- a) The board of supervisors, or member or members of the board.
- b) The individual voter or bona fide association of citizens, or combination of voters and associations, who are the bona fide sponsors or proponents of the measure.
- c) Bona fide associations of citizens.
- d) Individual voters who are eligible to vote on the measure.

Obtain the manual "Guide to Writing Arguments" from the Elections Division if you plan to submit an argument. Arguments are limited to 300 words. In accordance with state law. For a summary of state law on word counting guidelines. Please see the section "How to Count Words" below.

### **OTHER BALLOT MATERIALS**

If at least one argument in favor and one argument against is submitted for a particular measure, authors will have the opportunity to submit rebuttals. For more information on submitting rebuttals, please see our guide "Guide to Writing Arguments"

An impartial analysis will be submitted by county counsel or the city attorney, whichever is applicable. For more information on impartial analysis, please see our guide "Guide to Writing Arguments"

Bond measures require a tax rate statement to be filed by the requesting jurisdiction no later than 88 days before the election.

While an initiative petition is being circulated or when presented with a valid initiative petition. A fiscal impact statement may also be ordered by the political jurisdiction before the initiative is adopted as an ordinance or approved to appear on a ballot for a vote for the voters.

### **HOW TO COUNT WORDS**

Each word is counted as one word except:

**PUNCTUATION:** Punctuation marks are not counted as words.

**TITLES:** Words used in the title of the document, such as "Argument in Favor of Measure A" are not counted.

**CITIES/COUNTIES:** All geographical names shall be counted as one word. Geographic names include cities, counties, and states. Examples: County of Placer, Granite Bay, and San Francisco.

**ABBREVIATIONS:** Each abbreviation for a word, phrase, or expression shall be counted as one word.

**HYPHENATIONS:** Hyphenated words that appear in any generally available dictionary shall be considered as one word. Each part of all other hyphenated words shall be counted as separate words.

**DATES:** Dates shall be counted as one word.

**NUMBERS:** Any number consisting of a digit or digits shall be considered as one word. Any number that is spelled shall be considered as separate words. "100" shall be counted as one word, whereas "one hundred" shall be counted as two words.

**PHONE & INTERNET:** Website addresses and telephone numbers are one word.

## **HOW TO RAISE OR SPEND MONEY**

**FIRST:** Obtain from the Elections Division a copy of the Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) Information Manual D (for ballot measure committees), Campaign Provisions of the Political Reform Act.

**SECOND:** File an original FPPC Form 410 (Statement of Organization) with the Secretary of State and a copy with the Elections Division. Any committee that receives contributions totaling \$1,000 or more within a calendar year qualifies as a recipient committee and within 10 days of qualifying must file a Form 410 with the Secretary of State and the county. A Form 410 may be filed prior to qualifying. Upon receipt of the Form 410, the Secretary of State will issue an identification number that must be included on all campaign disclosure forms.

**THIRD:** Be prepared to file an FPPC Form 460 (long form) for ballot measure committees that plan on raising or spending more than \$1,000. An FPPC Form 450 (short form) may be filed for reporting periods in which the committee has not received contributions or increases to cash, which must be itemized, have no outstanding loans made or received, and have no accrued expenses.

Campaign disclosure statements must be filed at certain times prior to the election and then semi-annually until the committee terminates. These reports detail your committee's contributions and expenditures. Know the deadlines and the type of forms you must file.

**FOURTH:** File the FPPC Forms 460 and 410 to terminate the committee upon completion of your efforts.

For technical advice on completing the forms, contact the FPPC:

**Fair Political Practices Commission**

**P.O. Box 807 (95812-0807) 428 J Street, Suite 450, Sacramento, CA 95814**

**PHONE: 916-322-5660 / FAX: 916-322-0886 / Website: [www.fppc.ca.gov](http://www.fppc.ca.gov)**