

California Ballot Propositions Need to be Examined

While the focus this election cycle has been almost solely on the presidential race, Orindans and Californians alike will have far more to select than just one name this Tuesday. Among those choices are 17 California state ballot propositions. Following are some of the most consequential propositions:

Proposition 51: School Bonds. Funding for K-12 School and Community College Facilities. Initiative Statute

If passed, Proposition 51 would allocate nine billion dollars to developing and updating public school buildings, and provide more funds to charter and technical schools. Both the Democratic and Republican parties of California support the measure, as do most prominent elected officials in California.

But Governor Jerry Brown [opposes](#) it, saying that it “squanders money” that should be appropriated to schools in communities in more dire need.

A [UC Berkeley study](#) concluded that while state funding is necessary to keep schools safe, “Prop. 51 doesn’t achieve the best results...compared to other options.”

Proposition 51 would provide vast improvements to school infrastructure. But with a high price tag and questions about its fairness towards underprivileged schools, voters will have to choose between expensive improvements to school infrastructure or a delay in state funding. And in this case, it seems that help truly is necessary, even if it doesn’t imminently provide [enough](#) funding to fully complete the task. Proposition 51, while flawed, will vastly improve our educational infrastructure, and thus should be passed.

Proposition 58: English Proficiency. Multilingual Education. Initiative Statute

Prop 58 would loosen requirements of K-12 schools to teach class only in English, and aims to provide Spanish speakers with a more smooth transition to the American education system. Since 1998, non-English speakers have been required to take a one-year course on the English language. Prop 58 would repeal this requirement, and allow for bilingual instruction in schools.

Opponents claim that it deceives the public by removing the mandate that children be taught only English in public school, and opens the door to future schooling being almost solely in Spanish.

This is certainly a flawed proposition. But it does try to address the issue in our schooling system of isolating immigrant students, and with California's [large immigrant population](#), Prop 58 warrants a "yes" vote.

Proposition 62: Death Penalty. Initiative Statute/Proposition 66: Death Penalty. Procedures. Initiative Statute

Prop 62 argues for the repeal of the death penalty, which would prevent those who have committed murder from being subject to the death penalty, and thus make the harshest form of punishment a lifetime prison sentence.

There is another layer to this proposition, however. Prop 66 argues to retain the death penalty, but to reduce the maximum amount of time that a criminal may be on death row to five years, and to force inmates to work while on death row.

Only one of these propositions may be passed.

This is an issue that has split the nation for quite some time, with Republicans typically in favor of keeping the death penalty, and the Democrats in favor of abolishing it. This is

an issue which is not easy to have a concrete opinion about. Is capital punishment justifiable for the crime of taking another's life? Or does it contradict the eighth amendment's protection against "cruel and unusual punishment?"

However, most would agree that some change from the current system has to take place. And Prop 62, which would save a projected \$150 million annually in court and prison costs, is more efficient than Prop 66, which would not cut costs by any noticeable margin, according to the state's bipartisan Legislative Analyst's Office. And for that reason, Prop 62 seems to be the better long-term option for California and the state budget.

Proposition 63: Firearms. Ammunition Sales. Initiative Statute

This issue is one of the pillars of the 2016 Democratic Party platform. It would force prospective gun owners to first obtain a permit, and require that sellers perform background checks of customers in conjunction with the justice department. While it may slightly restrict Second Amendment privileges, it is crucial that firearms do not get into the hands of those who are dangerous or mentally unstable.

Guns used in the Aurora, Colorado movie theater shooting, the Orlando nightclub shooting, and many other mass shootings, were purchased in the days or weeks prior to the shooting. This amendment could help prevent these shootings from occurring in the future in California, and especially considering the proposition's relatively minimal fiscal impact, that is certainly an occurrence worth averting.