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Capitol News

GENERAL ELECTION ON NOVEMBER 3, 2020
Don't Forget to Vote!

California voters will have another long and complicated ballot on November 3rd when the presidential race between **GOP President Donald Trump** and **former Democratic Vice President Joe Biden** takes place. The outcome statewide isn't doubtful. President Trump in 2016 won less than a third of the vote in California and polls continue to show Joe Biden leading with more than two-thirds of the voters in California.

California voters will make very important decisions on the following:

- Determining the makeup of the Legislature, now controlled by a "gigamajority" of Democrats.

- Deciding the outcome of 12 statewide ballot measures including changing the provisions of Proposition 13 of 1978 and the restoration of affirmative action.

It is important to note that California Democrats won three-quarters of the seats in the California legislature in 2018—a "gigamajority." They intend to keep their majority and are hoping to surpass this.

LEGISLATIVE RACES TO WATCH

The Assembly is dominated by Democrats — 61 to the GOP's 17, plus one independent. While Democrats are the majority, there are still differences of opinion among the Democratic members, as reflected by the "mod squad," a loose confederation of Democrats who do not always vote according to the party's progressive base. Political pundits state that even if Republicans win every one of their target seats in this election, Democrats will continue to retain a supermajority. There are 11 competitive state races. They are Assembly Districts 13, 35, 36, 42, 55, 59, 68, 72, 74, 76 and 77.

Democrats hold nearly three-quarters of the seats in the Senate, which at half the size of the Assembly, is the Legislature's more liberal-leaning chamber. There are a handful of competitive races; 6 total. They are Senate Districts 11, 15, 21, 23, 29 and 37.

For more information regarding the makeup of the Assembly and Senate Districts and the candidates that are running in those districts please go to the Secretary of State website: http://www.sos.ca.gov.

PROPOSITIONS TO WATCH

As was previously mentioned there are 12 statewide ballot measures (propositions) on the November ballot. Below are summaries of two of those ballot measures, Propositions 15 and 16.

Proposition 15: Business Property Taxes (*Schools and Communities First Initiative)* Initiative Constitutional Amendment

The proposition would increase funding sources for public schools, community colleges and local government services by changing the tax assessment of commercial and industrial property.

The **California Legislative Analyst Office** estimates increased property taxes on commercial properties worth more than $3 million providing approximately $6.5 billion to $11.5 billion in new funding to local governments and schools. 60 percent would go to cities, counties, and special districts and the other 40 percent would increase funding for schools and community colleges.

Currently owners pay property taxes based on the price they originally paid for that real estate — typically a lot less than what it's worth today. If this measure passes, property taxes for many large businesses would be elevated to the property's current, probably higher, market value.

Not affected directly would be homeowners, and businesses with under $3 million in California property. Farmland would be exempt. An analysis by the nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's Office wasn't able to determine whether the buildings and other improvements on that land would be exempt, too.

In 1978, California voters passed Proposition 13—a permanent tax cut for landowners. It amended the state constitution to reset property taxes based on the purchase price of a home or commercial property, and capped how much the tax could increase each year after that. To strip commercial properties worth more than $3 million, a majority of voters must approve Proposition 15, amending the constitution again.

👍 Supporters include: Governor Gavin Newsom, California Teachers Association, California Democratic Party and Mark Zuckerberg

👎 Opponents include: California Chamber of Commerce, California Retailers Association and Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association

Per the Secretary of State California Official Voter Information Guide:

✔ **A YES vote** on this measure means: Property taxes on most commercial properties worth more than $3 million would go up in order to provide new funding to local governments and schools.

✘ **A NO vote** on this measure means: Property taxes on commercial properties would stay the same. Local governments and schools would not get new funding.

Proposition 16: Allows Diversity as a Factor in Public Employment, Education and Contracting Decisions. Legislative Constitutional Amendment
(*Put on the Ballot by the California Legislature*.)

The proposition would repeal Proposition 209 of 1996—Section 31 of Article I of the California Constitution. Proposition 16 would eliminate the ban on the consideration of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in public education, public employment, and public contracting. As a result, state and local entities could establish a wider range of policies and programs so long as they are consistent with federal and state law related to equal protection. Essentially, this proposition would reinstate affirmative action. This proposition **would not** create racial quotas in university admissions. The **U.S. Supreme Court** banned those in 1978.

The **California Legislative Analyst Office** states there is no direct fiscal effect on state and local entities because the measure does not require any change to current policies or programs.

Possible fiscal effects would depend on future choices by state and local entities to implement policies or programs that consider race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in public education, public employment, and public contracting. These fiscal effects are highly uncertain.

More than two-thirds of state lawmakers—motivated by racial inequities—voted to put this measure on the November ballot.

Essential to the argument of reinstating affirmative action is the concern that Black, Latino and Native American Students have seen their access to the **University of California** harmed. Getting into a UC has gotten tougher for all applicants, but Black, Latino and Native American students have seen their admissions rates plunge more than white and Asian American applicants. Those opposing the proposition state that reinstating affirmative action invariably would mean a decline in Asian American enrollment in the UC's.

👍 Supporters include: California Community Colleges, the California State University, University of California, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce and Gov. Gavin Newsom.

👎 Opponents include: Californians for Equal Rights, Chinese American Civic Action Alliance, Students for Fair Admissions and the California Republican Party.

Per the Secretary of State California Official Voter Information Guide…

A **YES vote** on this measure means: State and local entities could consider race, sex, color, ethnicity, and national origin in public education, public employment, and public contracting to the extent allowed under federal and state law.

A **NO vote** on this measure means: The current ban on the consideration of race, sex, color, ethnicity, and national origin in public education, public employment, and public contracting would remain in effect.

For further information on these and other propositions on the November 3rd Ballot please go to:

Secretary of State: https://voterguide.sos.ca.gov/propositions/.

California Legislative Analyst: https://lao.ca.gov/BallotAnalysis/Propositions.

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT VOTING!

Important Dates and Deadlines:

- All registered and active California voters should receive a ballot in the mail by October 12, 2020.
- The last day to register to vote online is October 19, 2020.
- The deadline to request a mail-in ballot (if you don't receive one automatically) is October 27, 2020.
- The last day to vote, either in person or by mail, is November 9, 2020.

If you have yet to register, you can register online before October 19. The state will try to find your signature on file with the **Department of Motor Vehicles** (DMV). If the DMV doesn't have it, you may have to print out the application and mail it in. And if you missed the October deadline, you can still register at your local county elections office, polling place, or vote center. You can also call your county registrar's office.

Due to COVID-19, California decided to send every registered and active voter a ballot. If you aren't registered — or if you've moved and haven't voted in a while — you probably won't get one.

Check your registration status and make sure it's accurate here: https://voterstatus.sos.ca.gov/

State law requires county election officials to begin mailing ballots out on Monday, October 5th and they have five days to get them all in the mail. If you still haven't received your ballot by the following Monday, October 12, and you were expecting one, please contact your county registrar's office.

One last note: You do not have to vote by mail, if you are more comfortable voting in person. Depending on where you live, your county may have a reduced number of polling places. Find your closest polling place or drop box here: https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/polling-place/

MOST IMPORTANTLY—VOTE ON NOVEMBER 3, 2020!