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League of Women Voters of California Education Fund



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Santa Clara County, CA

June 8, 2010 Election



## Measure L

### Library Parcel Tax

#### North County Library Authority

Parcel Tax - 2/3 Approval Required

Pass: 10,404 / 77.62% Yes votes ..... 2,999 / 22.38% No votes

See Also: [Index of all Measures](#)

Results as of Jun 23 2:21pm, 100.0% of Precincts Reporting (37/37)

Information shown below: [Yes/No Meaning](#) | [Impartial Analysis](#) |  
[Arguments](#) | [Full Text](#)

*To maintain Los Altos and Woodland library hours, purchase books and materials, support library programs, and for general purposes, shall the North County Library Authority, a joint powers authority between Los Altos and Los Altos Hills, continue a tax for 20 years, with annual oversight, at the fixed rate of \$76 per year on each developed parcel of land within Los Altos and Los Altos Hills and allowing an exemption for low-income senior households, and establish an appropriations limit?*

YES

NO

#### Meaning of Voting Yes/No

##### A YES vote on this measure means:

A yes vote would authorize the North County Library Authority (Authority) to continue an existing parcel tax and to levy a special tax of \$76.00 per parcel of developed real property for a period of 20 consecutive fiscal years.

##### A NO vote on this measure means:

A no vote would not authorize the North County Library Authority (Authority) to continue an existing parcel tax and to levy a special tax of \$76.00 per parcel of developed real property for a period of 20 consecutive fiscal years.

#### Impartial Analysis from the City Attorney

This ballot measure would continue a parcel tax approved by the voters in 1990. If approved by at least two-thirds of the

#### Official Information

N.B. This is not an official version of the measure. For the official wording contact the Registrar of Voters or the district sponsoring the measure.

#### Events

Pros & Cons Meetings on state Propositions

- May 12, Wednesday, 7-9pm, Los Altos Library, 13 S San Antonio Rd., Los Altos - sponsored by the League of Women Voters
- May 12th, Wednesday, 7:00 PM, Campbell Library, 77 Harrison Ave., Campbell - sponsored by League of Women Voters & AAUW
- May 13th, Thursday, 7:30 PM, Saratoga Library, 13650 Saratoga Ave. Saratoga - sponsored by League of Women Voters

#### News and Analysis

Google News Search

registered voters voting on the ballot measure, the North County Library Authority (Authority) would be authorized to levy a special tax of \$76.00 per parcel of developed real property for a period of 20 consecutive fiscal years, starting in the fiscal year that begins on July 1, 2010, and ending in the fiscal year that begins on July 1, 2029. This proposed parcel tax would be subject to all of the State of California accountability requirements and would provide an exemption for low-income senior households.

The California Constitution restricts governmental spending by setting an annual appropriations limit, which sets the maximum amount a governmental entity may spend in a given fiscal year. This ballot measure establishes an appropriations limit for the Authority at \$2 million for the fiscal year that begins on July 1, 2010, as the limit may be adjusted annually thereafter in accordance with California law.

The revenue generated by the proposed parcel tax would be used for the general purposes of the North County Library Authority. Taxes collected to date have been used to expand the service hours and book collections at the two Los Altos libraries over those levels possible with only County funding. The Authority has stated that future taxes would be used to maintain library hours, purchase books and materials, support library programs, and for other general library purposes.

/s/Ms. Jolie Houston  
City Attorney, Los Altos, acting as counsel to the Authority

- [About this measure](#)

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### Arguments For Measure L

Renewing the Los Altos Library parcel tax for another 20 years assures that this valuable community asset can continue to offer free access to the basic information, learning and culture that are essential to an informed, vibrant society.

The parcel tax of \$52 was established in 1990 to finance the Los Altos library expansion, supplement the book budget and help fund library hours. In 20 years, library circulation has more than doubled--from one million volumes to over 2 million. The main library, open seven days a week, and the Woodland branch, open six days, offer more than 500 programs for children, teens and families, along with strong collections, including classical music CDs and science and technology books. Computers and Wi-Fi access link residents to knowledge at no charge and automated materials handling and self-checkout manage growing volume without staff increases.

The annual \$76 parcel tax- fixed for the next 20 years- will make certain that these services continue by covering current and future costs for library operating hours, staffing, programs and book collections tailored to community needs.



Without the parcel tax, the main library would shut its doors for a day and a half each week and the Woodland branch would lose nearly half its operating hours and have to curtail services severely. Fewer hours equals fewer programs and services for the entire community: toddlers, schoolchildren, college students, adults and seniors. Renewing the parcel tax is a low-cost investment in the vitality of Los Altos.

/s/ Lawrence Chu Jr.  
Business Owner

/s/ Nancy A. Geschke  
Community Volunteer

/s/ Jeanne MacVicar  
Realtor

/s/ Judy Hannemann  
School (Bd) Board Member

/s/ Curtis Cole  
Former Mayor

**(No arguments against Measure L were submitted)**

#### **Full Text of Measure L**

To maintain Los Altos and Woodland library hours, purchase books and materials, support library programs, and for general purposes, shall the North County Library Authority, a joint powers authority between Los Altos and Los Altos Hills, continue a tax for 20 years, with annual oversight, at the fixed rate of \$76 per year on each developed parcel of land within Los Altos and Los Altos Hills and allowing an exemption for low-income senior households, and establish an appropriations limit?

#### **PARCEL TAX AUTHORIZATION**

By approval of this proposition by at least two-thirds of the registered voters voting on the proposition, the Authority will be authorized to levy a qualified special tax of \$76 per parcel per year, subject to all the accountability requirements specified below. If approved, the special tax will be levied for 20 consecutive fiscal years, starting in the fiscal year that begins on July 1, 2010, and ending in the fiscal year that begins on July 1, 2029.

#### **EXEMPTIONS FROM PARCEL TAX**

The Authority has provided an exemption from the special tax will be available to households made up of low-income persons who are 65 years or older and own and occupy a parcel as their principal residence, and who apply to the Authority for such exemption pursuant to guidelines established by the Authority.

#### **ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS**

The provisions in this section are specifically included in this proposition in order that the voters and taxpayers in the Authority may be assured that their money will be spent wisely. As required by

the laws of the State of California, the proceeds of the qualified special tax will be deposited into a special account established by the Authority and will be applied only to the specific purposes identified below. The Authority has covenanted to have on file with its governing board no later than January 1 of each year a report stating the amount of the funds collected and expended and the status of any project authorized to be funded.

### APPROPRIATIONS LIMIT

The California Constitution restricts governmental spending by setting an annual appropriations limit, which is the maximum amount a public entity may spend in a given fiscal year. The Constitution authorizes a public entity to establish or change its appropriations limit upon approval of a majority of voters voting on the measure. This ballot measure establishes the appropriations limit for the Authority at \$2 million for the fiscal year that begins on July 1, 2010, as it may be adjusted annually thereafter in accordance with California law.

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSES

The statement shown below is a part of the ballot proposition and must be reproduced in any official document required to contain the full statement of the proposition.

The current parcel tax of \$52 was established in 1990 to finance an expansion of the library and supplement the operating hours and book budget. In time, and with inflation taking its toll, the parcel tax has come to pay for a significant portion of the operating hours. Since the current parcel tax is scheduled to expire in tax year 2011-2012, a new parcel tax is necessary if the Los Altos Library is to continue the current level of service. Successful passage of the new parcel tax will require the Authority to terminate the current existing tax.

Maintain Library hours. The Main Library in Los Altos is currently open **7 days a week** for a total of 66 hours. Funding from the Santa Clara County Library system pays for 53 hours. The NCLA parcel tax pays for the additional 13 hours which currently cover all day Monday and Tuesday morning.

The Woodland Branch is currently open 6 days a week. Funding from the Santa Clara Library system pays for 20 hours of the 39 hours that the Branch is open. Absent the renewal of this parcel tax, Woodland Branch hours will be reduced by approximately 49%.

Purchase Books and Materials. The proceeds of the parcel tax will also be used to supplement the ability of the Santa Clara County Library system to purchase books and materials tailored to our Community's specific interests, such as its Science and Technology Collection.

Support Library Programs. Last fiscal year, our Library presented a total of 501 programs for all age groups: Toddler and Pre-School, Elementary and Middle School, Teens, Adults and Family. Programs were well attended and the number of participants increased by 9% over the prior fiscal year. While NCLA does not currently pay for programs directly, a reduction of service hours would negatively impact the Library's capability to deliver the current level of programs.

General Purposes. Any other expenditure necessary to uphold the level of service, including expenses related to a future election when the new parcel tax expires.

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