

C A L I F O R N I A 2 0 1 8
INITIATIVE EDITORIAL
SCORECARD

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FORWARD
OBSERVER

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During the past eight weeks, Forward Observer and Klink Campaigns tracked editorial endorsements (pro and con) from the top 20 California newspapers by circulation. These newspapers issued a total of 193 editorials for or against the 11 initiatives on the November 2018 ballot.

Overall, the recommendations of California’s leading newspapers generally aligned with the wishes of California voters. Voters agreed with the recommendations of a majority of leading newspapers on 8 of the 11 measures on the November 2018 ballot.

Editorial support continues to be a leading indicator of success at the ballot box. Each of the four measures on the 2018 ballot endorsed by a majority of leading newspapers was approved by the voters.

Of the seven initiatives opposed by a majority of leading newspapers, only two (Propositions 7 and 12), were approved by California voters.

Endorsement Correlation to Election Results		
Proposition	Consensus (And by what %)*	Election Outcome
Proposition 1 (Housing Bond)	Yes (56%)	Passed
Proposition 2 (Tax Revenue for Homeless Prevention)	Yes (61%)	Passed
Proposition 3 (Water Bond)	No (82%)	Failed
Proposition 4 (Children’s Hospitals bond)	Yes (61%)	Passed
Proposition 5 (Property Tax Transfers)	No (52%)	Failed
Proposition 6 (Gas Tax Repeal)	No (63%)	Failed
Proposition 7 (Repeals Daylight Savings Time)	No (72%)	Passed
Proposition 8 (Kidney Dialysis Clinic Requirements)	No (100%)	Failed
Proposition 10 (Rent Control Regulations)	No (90%)	Failed
Proposition 11 (Ambulance Employees Regulations)	Yes (94%)	Passed
Proposition 12 (Animal Space Requirements)	No (82%)	Passed

**Consensus of the papers that gave a recommendation for that measure. Some papers did not take a position on every measure.*

Which Newspaper Editorial Boards Most Closely Matched the California Voter?

Of the eight papers that published endorsements for all 11 ballot measures, the Los Angeles Times, the San Jose Mercury News and the East Bay Times were the most in-line with California voters. Ten of their 11 endorsements (91 percent) matched the final statewide vote.

The seven newspapers in the Southern California News Group had the fewest endorsements match the ballot outcome, and were in alignment with the California voter on only 4 of 10 initiatives (Note: The Southern California News Group took no position on Proposition 7).

The Los Angeles Times and Sacramento Bee were the only newspapers among the top 20 to endorse Proposition 10, the initiative to repeal the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act which sets guidance for local rent control ordinances. Proposition 10 was decisively defeated statewide (61.7% to 38.3%). Interestingly, the Times and the Bee endorsements did not align with the will of the voters in either Los Angeles County (which voted against Prop 10 by 52.8% to 47.2%) or Sacramento County (62.7% to 37.3%).

2018 California Initiative Editorial Endorsement Scorecard		
Proposition	Yes	No
Proposition 1 (Housing Bond)	10	8
Proposition 2 (Tax Revenue for Homeless Prevention)	11	7
Proposition 3 (Water Bond)	3	14
Proposition 4 (Children's Hospitals bond)	11	7
Proposition 5 (Property Tax Transfers)	9	10
Proposition 6 (Gas Tax Repeal)	7	12
Proposition 7 (Repeals Daylight Savings Time)	3	8
Proposition 8 (Kidney Dialysis Clinic Requirements)	0	19
Proposition 10 (Rent Control Regulations)	2	18
Proposition 11 (Ambulance Employees Regulations)	16	1
Proposition 12 (Animal Space Requirements)	3	14

Endorsements from the Top 20 California Papers

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	11	12
Los Angeles Times	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
San Francisco Chronicle	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
San Diego Union Tribune	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No
Orange County Register	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes		No	No	Yes	No
San Jose Mercury News	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Sacramento Bee	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No
The Mercury News East Bay Times	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
La Opinión						No		No	No		
Riverside Press-Enterprise	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes		No	No	Yes	No
Fresno Bee	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No		No	No	No	Yes	No
Santa Rosa Press Democrat	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Los Angeles Daily News	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes		No	No	Yes	No
Ventura County Star					No	No	Yes		No		
Torrance Daily Breeze	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes		No	No	Yes	No
Modesto Bee	Yes	Yes		Yes	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
Palm Springs Desert Sun	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No		No	No		
Long Beach Press-Telegram	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes		No	No	Yes	No
Bakersfield Californian	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
San Bernardino Sun	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes		No	No	Yes	No
Inland Valley Daily Bulletin	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes		No	No	Yes	No

The top 20 California newspapers, by circulation:

Rank	Paper	Circulation
1	Los Angeles Times	689,113
2	San Francisco Chronicle	218,941
3	San Diego Union Tribune	194,550
4	Orange County Register	186,864
5	San Jose Mercury News	162,429
6	Sacramento Bee	157,365
7	The Mercury News East Bay Times	141,879
8	La Opinión	104,000
9	Riverside Press-Enterprise	90,227
10	Fresno Bee	58,217
11	Santa Rosa Press Democrat	54,830
12	Los Angeles Daily News	50,868
13	Ventura County Star	36,855
14	Torrance Daily Breeze	35,709
15	Modesto Bee	34,581
16	Palm Springs Desert Sun	34,283
17	Long Beach Press-Telegram	29,623
18	Bakersfield Californian	27,362
19	San Bernardino Sun	25,313
20	Inland Valley Daily Bulletin	24,933

Our top 20 list includes California based publications that regularly publish editorial content endorsing or opposing state ballot measures. Circulation data provided by the Alliance for Audited Media. Circulation figures represent data reported between Q4 2017 and Q2 2018.

Thank you for reading and circulating this year’s Initiative Editorial Scorecard. And special thanks to Joel Fox and Fox and Hounds Daily, and Scott Lay and “The Nooner,” for circulating previous editions of the Scorecard over the past eight weeks.

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