

# **HOW TO PLACE A MEASURE ON THE BALLOT**

## **A GUIDE FOR THE COUNTY, CITIES, SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND SPECIAL DISTRICTS**



**A GUIDE PREPARED BY:  
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**These guidelines have been established to help guide you through the process. Code sections have been referenced; it is your responsibility to check the code sections to verify the referenced code sections are correct and up to date.**

## **WHAT THE ELECTIONS OFFICIAL NEEDS FROM YOU:**

The Resolution to call the election and consolidate:

**Districts & Cities:** Submit a “Resolution Requesting Consolidation of Election and Ordering of Such Election” along with the “Notice to County Clerk of Measure Submitted to the 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 “Notice to County Clerk of Measure Submitted to the Voters”.

Calendar of dates when these items are due is available at the Elections Department.

## **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 (Sample Ballot).

If you do not want any measure text printed in the Voter’s Information Pamphlet, please provide this direction in writing within the resolution as shown in the example. In this case, instead of measure text, before the analysis of the measure, voters will be directed to contact the Elections Department or the District for a copy of the proposed measure. Jurisdictions will be billed for costs.

## **THE 75-WORD BALLOT QUESTION:**

Elections Code §13247 and §9051 requires the ballot question to be limited to 75 words. Measures are followed by the words “YES” and “NO”. See next page on “How to Count Words”. Jurisdictions may want to consider beginning their ballot question with a few key summary words to summarize the measure. The words will count toward the 75-word limit. See examples on Page 5.

The words to appear on the ballot for school bond measures are” “Bonds—YES”, “Bonds—NO” (Education Code §15122). The words to appear on a ballot for a school reorganization measure, according to Education Code §35762 are: “Reorganization of School Districts – Yes” and “Reorganization Similar words may be used.

Letters designating measures will be assigned by the elections official pursuant to Elections Code §13166. Measures will be assigned in alphabetical order beginning with the letter following the last letter assigned in the previous election and continuing through Z, or as close to the end of the alphabet as possible to accommodate all measures filed for the current election. For example, if the previous election ended with Measure V, and five measures are on the next ballot, the measures will be assigned A, B, C, D and E, rather than W, X, Y, Z and A.

For districts that overlap into other counties, the counties will mutually agree to use a letter designation for the measure that will not conflict or confuse the voter.

Measures will appear on the ballot in the following order pursuant to Elections Code §13109: County Board of Education, College, Unified Schools, High Schools, Elementary Schools, County, Cities, 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 (OPTIONAL)**

If more than one argument is submitted, Elections Code §9166, 9287 and 9503 require the elections official to select one argument based on the following preference: 1) the governing body or members thereof, 2) an individual voter, bona fide association of citizens who are sponsors or proponents of the measure, 3) bona fide association of citizens, and 4) individual voters eligible to vote on the measure.

Obtain the manual “A Guide to Writing Arguments: from the Elections Department if you are planning on submitting an argument. Arguments are limited to 300 words.

## **OTHER BALLOT MATERIALS**

If arguments in favor and against are submitted, authors will have the opportunity to submit rebuttals.

An impartial analysis will be submitted by county counsel or the city attorney, whichever is applicable.

Bond measures require a tax rate statement to be filed by the 88<sup>th</sup> day before the election.

A fiscal impact statement may also be ordered.

## **HOW TO COUNT WORDS**

(Pursuant to Elections Code Section 9) This section shall not apply to counting words for ballot designations.

### **EACH WORD IS COUNTED AS ONE WORD EXCEPT:**

**PUNCTUATION:** Punctuation is not counted.

**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. Areas that have boundaries and can be mapped are considered geographic areas. For example, “County of Mendocino” and Fort Bragg Unified School District” shall each be counted as one word.

**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 a separate word.
- DATES:** Dates consisting of a combination of words, and digits shall be counted as two words. Dates consisting of only a combination of digits shall be counted as one word. January 1, 2000 shall be counted as two words, whereas 1/1/00 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 a separate word. “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.
- PERCENT, ETC.:** It is our policy to count numbers consisting of a digit or digits used with a dollar sign (\$), percentage sign (%), or number sign (#) as one word.

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

**First:** Obtain from the County Clerk a copy of information **Manual D** (for ballot measure committees) – Campaign Provisions of the Political Reform Act.

**Second:** File a Form 410 – Statement of Organization – with the County Clerk. Any committee that receives contributions totaling \$2,000 or more within a calendar year, qualified 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 a Form 460 for ballot measure committees that plan on raising or spending more than \$2,000. A Form 470 may be filed for committees that do not plan on raising or spending more than \$2,000.

Pre-Election Statements and Semi-Annual 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.

For technical advice on completing the forms, contact the

**Fair Political Practices Commission**

P.O. Box 807 (95812-0807)

428 J Street, Suite 450

Sacramento, CA 95814

916 322-5660 / FAX: 916 322-0886

Website: [www.fppc.ca.gov/fppc/](http://www.fppc.ca.gov/fppc/)

**Fourth:** File a Form 460 to terminate the committee upon completion of your efforts.

**EXAMPLE OF MEASURE AS IT WILL APPEAR ON THE BALLOT**

<b>MEASURES SUBMITTED TO THE VOTERS</b>		
<b>CITY</b>		
CITY OF UKIAH		
<b>A KEY WORD SUMMARY OF MEASURE.</b> Followed by the ballot question. The number of words may not exceed 75. (§13247)	Yes	
	No	

Example with the first few words summarizing the measure in all caps and in bold.

<b>MEASURES SUBMITTED TO THE VOTERS</b>		
<b>CITY</b>		
CITY OF UKIAH		
<b>A</b> 75-word ballot question without a summary. (§13247)	Yes	
	No	

Example of a ballot question without a few key words summarizing the measure.

**Other attributes such as bullets, italics, underlining, and bolding beyond the title, are not permitted in the ballot question.**