



**PUBLIC HEALTH
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2026 CALIFORNIA GENERAL ELECTION VOTER GUIDE

Vote for a healthier California.

Public Health Advocates developed this voter guide for the 2026 general election to provide a public health perspective on the propositions. We have provided a brief description of each proposition and a public health perspective, where relevant.

For more detailed information on the 2026 General Election propositions, please see the California Secretary of State [website](#).

At a glance

YES

Prop 1 · Affordable housing
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NO

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Prop 45 · Environmental Quality Act changes

No position

Prop 2 · State reserves
Prop 37 · Homebuyers financing
Prop 38 · Health research bond

We say YES



Prop 1 Affordable housing

✓ VOTE YES

WHAT IT WOULD DO

Prop 1 would let the state borrow \$11.25 billion by selling bonds. The money would pay for affordable housing. This would include housing for veterans, farm workers, students, and tribal communities. It would also fund apartment buildings, housing with support services, and programs that help people buy a home.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Having a stable, affordable place to live is one of the biggest drivers of good health. Prop 1 could help lower housing costs and reduce crowding and homelessness. These problems are linked to chronic disease, poor mental health, and worse outcomes for children.

OUR POSITION PHA supports Prop 1 because it invests directly in affordable housing, and stable housing is key to good health.

Prop 3 High-income tax

✓ VOTE YES

WHAT IT WOULD DO

Prop 3 would make permanent the income tax on the state's highest earners (the top 2%). Right now, this tax is set to end in 2031. Voters first passed the tax in 2012 and extended it in 2016. It raises an estimated \$5 billion to \$15 billion each year, with roughly 40% continuing to support schools and community colleges, and the remainder supporting other state programs, like Medi-Cal and other health and human services, and some being added to the state reserve.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Education is one of the strongest predictors of lifelong health, and access to health care is key to public health. Prop 3 would keep billions of dollars flowing to schools, community colleges, and public health care.

OUR POSITION PHA supports Prop 3 because it invests in education and health care.



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Prop 4 Public campaign funds

✓ VOTE YES

WHAT IT WOULD DO

Prop 4 would allow, but not require, state and local governments to create public campaign financing. Right now, public campaign financing is banned in California for state, county, and district elections. It is also banned in some cities (see below). Communities would determine their own rules, like spending limits or limits to specific types of donors. Running for office is expensive. This often limits who can run. It also leads many candidates to rely on corporate donors, who then gain more political power than residents.

Most California cities are “general law” cities. This means they follow state law for how they are run. However, the state’s largest cities have their own charters, which work like a city constitution. Charter cities are already allowed to use public campaign financing.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Prop 4 is not directly related to public health. However, public financing could help candidates rely less on big and corporate donors. It could also make it easier for local leaders from neighborhoods with the biggest health gaps to run for office. Many industries that give money to campaigns also spend heavily to fight policies that protect health.

OUR POSITION PHA supports Prop 4 because helping grassroots candidates run for office supports PHA’s commitment to ensuring communities have a voice in the policy decisions that affect their lives.

Prop 5 Recall process

✓ VOTE YES

WHAT IT WOULD DO

Prop 5 would change the state recall process for state offices. Under the current process, in the case of a recall, voters vote both on if the elected person should be recalled and who should replace them. The person being recalled cannot also be listed as a candidate for the replacement. Prop 5 would split the recall process into two steps for state offices: 1) in a special election, voters would decide whether to remove an elected official, and 2) if the recall passes, vacancies would be filled by either a second special election or by appointment* (the appointment process is for a recall of the Governor only, see below for more information). Prop 5 would allow the recalled candidate to run in the second special election.

*If the Governor were recalled during the first half of a term (within the first two years), the Lieutenant Governor would be appointed until the next scheduled statewide election. If the Governor is recalled during the second half of a term (within the last two years), the Lieutenant Governor would be appointed for the remainder of the term.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Recall elections often happen quickly and can be driven by politics. Two separate elections would cost more, but they would also slow the process down and address two concerns about the current process. First, many voters find it confusing to vote on the recall and the replacement at the same time. Second, it would give candidates who want to run as a replacement more time to organize a campaign, providing voters more time to understand who the replacement choices are.

OUR POSITION PHA supports Prop 5. Although it does not have a direct link to public health, fair and open government processes are key to healthy communities.



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Prop 40 Billionaire tax

✓ VOTE YES

WHAT IT WOULD DO

Prop 40 would create a one-time 5% tax on people whose total wealth, not just their income, is more than \$1 billion.

Two other measures on the ballot, Props 41 and 42, aim to cancel Prop 40. If Prop 40 passes, but Prop 41 or Prop 42 also passes with more votes, Prop 40 could be prevented from taking effect, which may depend on a court ruling.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Prop 40 would send most of an estimated tens of billions of dollars to health care, with some money for food assistance. This would make it one of the largest possible new investments in health and safety-net programs on this ballot. This amount is estimated, as individuals impacted by the tax may take actions to reduce their taxes.

OUR POSITION PHA supports Prop 40 for two reasons. First, the wealth gap between the very rich and everyone else drives gaps in health. Second, although the tax would not create lasting funding, the money raised over five years would give the state needed resources to support the health of all Californians, especially those most in need.

Propositions 40 + 41 + 42 are linked

Props 41 and 42 aim to cancel Prop 40. If Prop 40 passes, but Prop 41 or Prop 42 also passes with more votes, Prop 40 could be prevented from taking effect, which may depend on a court ruling.

PHA says YES on 40 and NO on 41 and 42.

We say NO

Prop 39 Voter ID required

✗ VOTE NO

WHAT IT WOULD DO

Prop 39 would require voters to show ID when voting in person. People voting by mail would need to include the last four digits of a government-issued ID. The proposition would also require election officials to verify that voters are citizens.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Prop 39 has no direct link to public health. But taking part in civic life, like voting, is one of the conditions that shape community health. Registering to vote in California already requires a driver's license, ID, or Social Security number. Voter fraud is very rare, yet this proposition would add hurdles for all voters. It would hit hardest those who already face barriers to voting, such as low-income voters, voters of color, and older, disabled, and rural voters.

OUR POSITION PHA opposes Prop 39 because it would do the most harm to voters who already face the biggest obstacles.



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Prop 41 Restricting special taxes

X VOTE NO

WHAT IT WOULD DO

Prop 41 would change the state constitution. Special taxes, which are taxes that must be used for a specific purpose, can be established by voters or the legislature. Prop 41 would make it harder to create special taxes and utilize the revenue from them in several ways. First, the State Constitution limits how much of our tax revenue can be spent each year. Currently, special taxes can be excluded from this limit. Prop 41 would require special taxes be included in the limit. This could limit how much of special tax revenue could be spent, including special taxes established by voters. Second, the proposition would require the state auditor to review any ballot measure that includes a special tax. This review would happen once 25% of the signatures needed to put the measure on the ballot are collected. The state would also audit programs funded by a new special tax every four years. If the tax passed, it would pay for the audits. If not, the state's General Fund would pay.

If Prop 41 gets more votes than Prop 40, it could prevent Prop 40 from taking effect, even if both pass. The outcome may depend on a court ruling.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Special taxes often pay for important programs that voters or the legislature identify as pressing needs, such as services for children and families, housing, health programs, and roads and other public works.

**Propositions
40 + 41 + 42
are linked**

**PHA says YES on 40
and NO on 41 and 42.**

OUR POSITION PHA opposes Prop 41 because it could limit not only the creation of, but also the use of, future taxes that often support health and community investments. Accountability and oversight are important for good policy. However, this proposition conflates accountability and oversight with other restrictions on spending of tax revenue approved by either voters or the legislature.

Prop 42 Asset taxes

X VOTE NO

WHAT IT WOULD DO

Prop 42 would limit current and future efforts to create wealth taxes, which are taxes on things people own, like stocks and business shares.

If Prop 42 gets more votes than Prop 40, it could prevent Prop 40 from taking effect, even if both pass. The outcome may depend on a court ruling. Prop 42 would also ban any future wealth taxes.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

By banning taxes on owning assets, Prop 42 would block a possible long-term source of money for health and safety-net programs.

OUR POSITION PHA opposes Prop 42 because it would limit the state's ability to raise money for health and safety-net initiatives, both now and in the future.



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Prop 43 Local tax threshold

X VOTE NO

WHAT IT WOULD DO

Prop 43 would change the state constitution to make it harder to pass local special tax measures that residents put on the ballot. Right now, these measures need a simple majority (more than half) of votes to pass. Prop 43 would raise that to two-thirds.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Special taxes are meant to meet community needs. Local measures started by residents have become an important way to fund community health priorities, like services for children, homelessness programs, and parks. Requiring two-thirds of the vote would make these local investments much harder to pass.

OUR POSITION PHA opposes Prop 43. Being able to invest in local priorities is key to the health of California's communities.

Prop 44 Community clinic spending

X VOTE NO

WHAT IT WOULD DO

Prop 44 would require Federally Qualified Health Centers to spend at least 90% of their revenue on direct patient care. What counts as a qualifying expense is not outlined in the proposition and would be defined by the Attorney General.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Prop 44 directly affects access to health care and leaves an important question unanswered: what counts as "direct patient care"? Community clinics are a main source of care for low-income Californians. Support services, such as rides to appointments and case management, are often critical to ensuring that patients can and do access the care they need. The proposition also limits the amount of revenue that can be used for overhead costs. Nonprofits often cannot cover these costs even with the standard 15% allowed for overhead on grants. Prop 44 could force some clinics to close because they could not cover the basic costs of doing business.

OUR POSITION PHA opposes Prop 44 because the proposition does not define "direct patient care," which could force clinics to cut the support services patients rely on or close their doors.



Prop 45 Environmental Quality Act changes

X VOTE NO

WHAT IT WOULD DO

Prop 45 would change the review process for some projects labeled “essential.” It would shorten the time and reduce the steps needed for review. Much of this review is required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This law is meant to make sure that a project’s effects on the environment and nearby communities are studied. Prop 45 would also limit the role of courts. It would narrow the information courts could consider when a project is challenged and shorten the time for court review.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Prop 45 would weaken the state’s main environmental review law. Local governments would have less time to study a project’s effects, hear from the community, and make decisions. Courts would also have less power to review projects. Environmental review is one of the main ways communities can speak up about how new projects, like data centers, affect their air, water, and health.

OUR POSITION PHA opposes Prop 45. Fast-tracking projects would reduce opportunities for thorough assessments and community input, which are especially important for communities already harmed by environmental issues.

No position

Prop 2 State reserves

— NO POSITION

WHAT IT WOULD DO

Prop 2 would change the state constitution to update the state’s savings account, often called the Rainy Day Fund. The goal would be to better protect the state when the economy slows down. Each year, the state collects tax money for its main budget, called the General Fund. Right now, the state can save up to 10% of this money in the Rainy Day Fund. Prop 2 would raise that limit to 20%. It would also let the state use General Fund money to pay down more types of state debt. It would keep the rule that some General Fund money must go toward state debt for 10 more years, through 2040. It would change how the state declares a budget emergency. It would also make tax rebates less likely. These rebates are given when the state collects more tax money than it is allowed to spend.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Prop 2 does not directly address public health. A larger savings account could help protect health and safety net programs, like Medi-Cal and CalFresh, from cuts when the economy is weak. However, because this proposition also changes how the state declares a budget emergency and reduces opportunities for taxpayer rebates, the impact on the day-to-day lives of Californians is not clear.

OUR POSITION PHA has decided not to take a position on Prop 2 because of the complexity of the proposition. In theory, we support ensuring we have reserves for times when the economy slows down, and we are not convinced that all components of the proposition are the right solution.



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Prop 37 Homebuyers financing

— NO POSITION

WHAT IT WOULD DO

Prop 37 would let the state's housing finance agency borrow up to \$25 billion to help people buy newly built homes. Buyers could get a second loan to help cover the home's price. People earning up to twice their area's median (middle) income would qualify.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Owning a home is linked to stability and building wealth, which support good health. However, Prop 37 has several limits. It is not aimed at lower-income or first-time buyers. It only applies to newly built homes. It does not protect buyers from unfair lending practices. It also does not require new homes to be near transit, jobs, or community resources. Because of these limits, it would likely do little to help low-income people buy homes or to close health gaps.

OUR POSITION PHA has decided not to take a position on Prop 37. Owning a home helps families build wealth over generations. We are concerned that this proposition lacks the protections that buyers and communities need.

Prop 38 Health research bond

— NO POSITION

WHAT IT WOULD DO

Prop 38 would create an \$8.4 billion bond to fund research on new treatments. The research would focus on cancer, Alzheimer's, heart disease, and other diseases that can be treated with immunotherapy. (Immunotherapy uses the body's immune system to fight disease.) Californians would get discounts on any drugs developed with this money.

WHY IT MATTERS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Prop 38 is the most directly health-related measure on the ballot. At first glance, it seems to match PHA's values. However, it raises questions about who would control the money and how they would be held accountable. It would also lock the state into funding this specific research, even if health priorities change in the future.

OUR POSITION PHA has decided not to take a position on Prop 38 after weighing the pros and cons of the bond governance.

Want more detail?

For more detailed information on the 2026 General Election propositions, please see the California Secretary of State [website](#)

CHECK YOUR REGISTRATION

FIND YOUR POLLING PLACE



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