

VOTER'S PAMPHLET

MEASURES, ANALYSES AND ARGUMENTS

(whichever is applicable to your ballot)

Arguments in support of, or in opposition to, the proposed laws are the opinions of the authors.

SANTA CRUZ CITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

A **HIGH SCHOOLS FUNDING RENEWAL.** To provide continued funding to retain quality teachers, credentialed librarians, academic and career counseling programs, and counselors for at-risk youth, shall the High School District of the Santa Cruz City Schools renew without increase its existing assessment of \$28/year per parcel for seven years, beginning July 1, 2006, exempting parcels owned/occupied by seniors (65+), with independent community oversight and accountability to ensure funds are used only to improve student learning?

FULL TEXT OF BALLOT MEASURE A

Local High Schools Funding Renewal

To provide continued funding to retain quality teachers, credentialed librarians and counselors for at-risk youth and students with academic needs, shall the High School District of the Santa Cruz City Schools renew without increase its existing assessment of \$28/year per parcel for seven years, beginning July 1, 2006, exempting parcels owned/occupied by seniors (65+), with no funds taken by the state, independent community oversight and accountability to ensure funds are used only to improve student learning as specified below?

In order to retain qualified and experienced teachers, librarians and counselors, the following educational programs and services for students in grades 9 through 12 shall be supported by this assessment:

School libraries: Credentialed librarians and other resources to support the development of independent research skills and the study of literature by all students.

Counseling Services: Credentialed counselors and other resources to support academic and career counseling for all students as well as counseling for at-risk youth.

The parcel tax will be imposed at the rate of \$28 per year for each assessor's parcel within the High School District (grades 9-12). A parcel is defined as any unit of land in the District that now receives a separate tax bill from Santa Cruz County. All property that would otherwise be exempt from property taxes will also be exempt from the imposition of said qualified special tax.

An exemption from the assessment will be made available to each individual in the District who will attain 65 years of age prior to July 1 of the assessment year, and who owns a beneficial interest in the parcel, and who uses that parcel as his or her principal place of residence, and who applies to the Schools on or before July 1, 2006, or July 1 of any succeeding assessment year. Any one application from a qualified applicant will provide an exemption for the parcel for the remaining term of the assessment so long as such applicant continues to own and use the parcel as his or her principal residence.

In addition to the accountability measures required by law, an independent community oversight committee shall be appointed by the Board of Education to oversee all expenditures funded by the measure in order to ensure that said funds are spent wisely and used only for the purposes approved by the voters. The oversight committee shall monitor the expenditures of these funds by the District and shall report on an annual basis to the community on how these funds have been spent.

IMPARTIAL ANALYSIS BY COUNTY COUNSEL MEASURE A

If this measure is approved by at least two-thirds of those voting on it, the Santa Cruz City High School District ("the School District") will be authorized to levy a special tax assessment on real property. The tax would be imposed for seven years beginning July 1, 2006, at the rate of \$28 per year on each parcel within the School District.

The proceeds of the special tax, if approved, may be applied only for the purposes set out in the full text of Measure A which is included in this pamphlet.

In accordance with State law, the School District Board would create a designated account into which the proceeds of the special tax shall be deposited. Furthermore, an annual written report would show the amount of the special taxes which have been collected and expended, and the status of projects to be funded from those proceeds. Additionally, an independent community oversight committee would be appointed to monitor expenditures and report annually.

The special tax shall be collected in the same manner as those property taxes which are based upon property value. An exemption from the tax will be granted for any parcel owned by one or more persons 65 years of age or over who occupy the parcel as a principal residence, if the owner makes a one-time application for exemption.

A separate parcel tax of \$28 per parcel per year approved by the District's voters in March 2002 was for a four-year period which ends June 30, 2006; therefore that particular tax will have expired as of the commencement of this new \$28 tax presently before the voters, and it is the existing assessment to which the ballot question refers.

A "yes" vote is to approve imposition of the special parcel tax.

A "no" vote is against imposition of the special parcel tax.

DANA McRAE, COUNTY COUNSEL

By Jane M. Scott, Assistant County Counsel

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ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE A

Yes on Measure A: Better High Schools, No Tax Increase.

Years of state budget cuts have threatened the quality of education in Santa Cruz high schools. Fortunately, our community has invested in local high schools to protect students, teachers and academic programs from state cuts.

Voter-approved local funds have helped Soquel High, Harbor High and Santa Cruz High retain experienced teachers and librarians, college and career counselors, and programs to keep at-risk youth on the right track. These funds have also supported academic instruction in science, English and math, as well as small class sizes and basic classroom supplies.

These critical funds are set to expire next year, unless we act to renew them. Measure A will renew this vital school funding – without increasing taxes.

If Measure A does not pass, all three local high schools face across-the-board cuts to teachers, librarians, academic programs and small class sizes will be threatened.

All of the money raised by Measure A will support teachers and programs in our local high schools.

No funds can be taken away by the state or used for administrative salaries.

A citizen oversight committee will review all spending.

Senior citizens 65 and older can file a one-time, permanent exemption.

Measure A funds will:

- Retain qualified, experienced teachers and librarians
- Provide counseling for at-risk youth
- Provide career and college counseling
- Prevent cuts that could impact small class sizes and academic instruction in core subjects

In the face of ongoing state cuts, this measure is an opportunity for our community to step forward and support our local high schools – without increasing taxes. Vote YES on Measure A to support Soquel High, Harbor High and Santa Cruz High – without increasing taxes.

Please Join Us - Yes on Measure A: Better High Schools, No Tax Increase.

s/ Fred Keeley
Treasurer, County of Santa Cruz

s/ Sister Julie Hyer, O.P.
President/CEO Dominican Hospital

s/ Pete Newell
Teacher Santa Cruz City Schools

s/ Kathy Bisbee
Marketing Director for a Local Internet Provider

s/ George "Bud" Winslow
Retired School Superintendent, Senior Senator

REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE A

VOTE NO on MEASURE A

- ***A NO VOTE is our best opportunity for Local Control !***

The City of Capitola & Soquel already enjoys a community identity that is unique from the City of Santa Cruz. Local school decision-making has been governing successfully and operating effectively here for many years. It is clear that we are ready for a clean separation from the City of Santa Cruz.

- ***A NO VOTE gives us the ability to make local decisions for Our Children !***

Santa Cruz City Schools claims severe budget challenges as a result of reduced State funding. This is the same for ALL local school districts. Local funds for future fiscal emergencies will be held hostage for another 7 years if Measure A passes.

- ***A NO VOTE allows more Parental involvement that directly affect their Kids !***

Local control means having local communities make decisions for their own students. Let's put a stop to Santa Cruz City School Administrators siphoning scarce school funding for their City Schools.

- ***A NO VOTE gives our students a better chance for academic and life success !***

In 1995, the Santa Cruz County Office of Education determined that unification of Soquel High School into a New Capitola/Soquel K-12 district was feasible. A solution would be for voters to support unification to allow Mid-County Parents local control over decisions for their kids and a more cohesive curriculum for their students.

Why have this expensive Special Election now?

The Parcel Tax does not expire until June 2006 !

VOTE NO on MEASURE A

s/ Mike Crocker
Local Business Owner

s/ Lou Tuosto
Soquel Union Elementary School District Trustee

s/ Barbara Barnes
School Occupational Therapist, Retired

s/ Juan Escamilla
Soquel Village Business Owner

The Senior Coalition
s/ Tom Walsh, Executive Director

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ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE A

VOTE NO on MEASURE A

Are your children getting their "Fair Share"?

The Santa Cruz City High School District has been **UNFAIR** to Bonny Doon, Capitola, Happy Valley, Live Oak, Mountain, Pacific and Soquel Elementary Schools. In the past, public funds spent by the High School District have gone to subsidize only the elementary schools in the City of Santa Cruz.

Should the City of Santa Cruz schools get more money?

Historically, **taxpayers in the outlying areas have been forced to pay an unfair subsidy** for the City of Santa Cruz elementary schools and administration. Sacramento-based School Services of California, Inc. found that during one school year alone **the total subsidy amounted to \$877,000.**

For how long do taxpayers foot the bill for this Parcel Tax?

Originally, this Parcel Tax was for a temporary crisis and would expire at the end of five years. Now, the High School District **wants YOU to PAY for EXTRA SEVEN YEARS!** Measure A is a classic "bait and switch" tax scheme, and tantamount to you paying a permanent parcel tax.

Why is there little Local Control over the High Schools?

The State of California has well over 1,000 School Districts, and **only a handful have the antiquated organizational structure as the Santa Cruz City Schools.** This has led many Parents in portions of our School District to voice serious concerns over High School finances, curriculum and academic success.

What can Voters do to find a solution to these problems?

Join us in Defeating Measure A. Our community deserves very serious High School restructuring, and this will lead to more local control over our children's educational future. Now is the time to put all of our students at the front of the classroom.

VOTE NO on MEASURE A

s/ Robert "Bob" Begun
City of Capitola Treasurer

s/ Kevin G. McGibben
Soquel Union Elementary School District Trustee

s/ Alice Ponza
Grandmother and Community Volunteer

s/ John Galli
Concerned Parent and Local Business Owner

s/ Mary Frances Smith
Legislative Analyst, Retired Library of Congress

REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE A

We agree with our opponents: local control of our high schools is vital. That's why a citizens' oversight committee will review and report on all Measure A spending.

In fact, Measure A is the *only* guaranteed funding for high school instruction and operations the state *can't* steal.

Measure A funds can't be diverted by the state, county – or even local elementary schools. In the City of Santa Cruz, *Measure B* would renew funding for Santa Cruz *elementary and middle schools*. Measure A funds can be spent **only** for Soquel High, Harbor High, Santa Cruz High, and local alternative schools for at-risk teens.

We also agree that our kids aren't getting their fair share. The state has shortchanged schools for years, and Sacramento politicians aren't reversing the trend.

Eliminating local support for local high school students is not the answer.

Voter-approved local funds have supported teachers, librarians, English, math and science instruction, and small class sizes at Soquel, Harbor and Santa Cruz High. For less than \$2.50 per month, our community has helped sustain high student achievement and prepare local graduates for college or careers – despite state funding cuts.

Measure A renews this small commitment. It does not increase taxes.

If Measure A fails, local high schools face over \$1 million in across-the-board cuts. We know the state won't bridge the gap. We must support local students ourselves.

Like our opponents, we are frustrated with Sacramento politics. But why take it out on local kids? Please vote Yes on A.

s/ Beverly Bargetto
CEO, Bargetto Winery

s/ Dewey Tompkins
Retired Coach, Soquel High School

s/ Stephanie Harlan
Capitola City Councilmember and Registered Nurse

s/ John Leopold
Soquel Parent and Cabrillo College Trustee

s/ Mike Arnone
Soquel High Parent and Capitola Businessman