

## California Initiative Editorial Scorecard

October 2020 (2020-6)

[California Strategies](#) and [Forward Observer](#) are pleased to present the California Initiative Editorial Scorecard.

For this 2020 edition of the scorecard, we track editorials on the 12 ballot measures that California voters will decide on Tuesday, November 3.

This year's editorial scorecard is based on circulation data from the Alliance for Audited Media for 22 newspaper outlets. **To date, more than 90% of possible editorials have run (243 of 264). If we remove the *Stockton Record*, which has taken no editorial positions this election cycle, 96% of all possible editorials have run.**

2020 California Initiative Editorial Endorsement Scorecard		
Rank	Paper	Circulation
1	Los Angeles Times	653,868
2	San Jose Mercury News	527,568
3	Sacramento Bee	279,032
4	Orange County Register	250,724
5	East Bay Times	168,362
6	San Francisco Chronicle	164,820
7	Fresno Bee	157,546
8	San Diego Union-Tribune	121,321
9	La Opinion	116,256
10	The Press-Enterprise	92,697
11	The Record - Stockton	58,888
12	San Gabriel Valley Tribune	57,558
13	The Daily Breeze	57,185
14	Modesto Bee	56,723
15	Los Angeles Daily News	56,493
16	The Santa Rosa Press Democrat	54,000
17	Long Beach Press-Telegram	41,038
18	Inland Valley Daily Bulletin	38,286
19	San Bernardino Sun	36,076
20	The Desert Sun	30,555
21	Chico Enterprise-Record	29,000
22	Bakersfield Californian	22,000

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**In both 2016 and 2018, we observed that editorial endorsements (pro or con) were a leading indicator of success at the ballot.**

- Of the 10 measures on the 2016 ballot with a majority of editorials in favor, only one failed to pass (Prop 62, repeal death penalty); out of the seven measures with a majority of editorials against, only three passed.
- Of the 11 initiatives on the 2018 ballot, each of the four measures endorsed by a majority of leading newspapers was approved by voters (Prop 1 – Housing Bond; Prop 2 – Tax Revenue for Homeless Prevention; Prop 4 – Children’s Hospital Bond; Prop 11 – Ambulance Employee Regulations). Of the seven initiatives opposed by a majority of leading newspapers, only two (Prop 7 – Repeals Daylight Savings Time and Prop 12 – Animal Space Requirements) were approved by California voters. The remaining five were defeated.

For many measures, endorsements have been lopsided – as indicated below.

<b>2020 California Initiative Editorial Endorsement Scorecard</b>		
<b>Proposition</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Prop 14 (Authorizes stem cell bonds)	3	16
Prop 15 (Removes commercial, industrial and some agricultural property from Prop 13’s tax protections)	4	16
Prop 16 (Removes voter-approved prohibition on race-conscious university admissions, public hiring and contracting)	11	9
Prop 17 (Allows felony parolees to vote)	17	3
Prop 18 (Allows 17-year-olds to vote in primaries and special elections if they’ll be 18 for general elections)	9	12
Prop 19 (Allows elderly, disabled and wildfire victims to retain lower property tax rates when they change properties)	4	16
Prop 20 (Rolls back sentencing and parole reforms enacted in Props 47 and 57)	2	18
Prop 21 (Removes statewide constraints on local governments enacting rent control)	1	20
Prop 22 (Allows gig tech companies to remain as independent contractors)	17	4
Prop 23 (New regulation of kidney dialysis clinics)	0	21
Prop 24 (Expands online consumer privacy)	4	16
Prop 25 (Repeals a state law replacing money bail with a system based on public safety and flight risk)	18	2

## Endorsements from the Top 22 California Papers

	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Los Angeles Times	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>
Mercury News	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>
Sacramento Bee	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>
Orange County Register	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>
East Bay Times	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>
San Francisco Chronicle	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>
Fresno Bee	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>
San Diego Union-Tribune		<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>
La Opinion		<a href="#">YES</a>			<a href="#">YES</a>			<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>		
The Press-Enterprise	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>
The Record - Stockton												
San Gabriel Valley Tribune	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>
The Daily Breeze	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>
Modesto Bee	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>
Los Angeles Daily News	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>
The Santa Rosa Press Democrat	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>
Long Beach Press-Telegram	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>
Inland Valley Daily Bulletin	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>
San Bernardino Sun	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>
The Desert Sun	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>
Chico Enterprise-Record	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>
Bakersfield Californian	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">NO</a>	<a href="#">YES</a>

### Noteworthy Editorial Quotes

#### Proposition 15

Sacramento Bee – Yes

*“Prop. 15’s opponents may consider it imperfect, but it’s a big improvement over the current system. For too long, Prop. 13 has robbed California’s schools and local governments of desperately needed funds. Prop. 15 provides a tangible solution.” [Link](#)*

#### Proposition 18

La Opinion – Yes

*“Es más: si uno de los candidatos llega a tener el 50% o más de los votos en las primarias, ya es elegido y no pasa a la segunda ronda de la elección general. En la actualidad, quien tiene 18 años para la elección general pero no para la primaria no puede participar en esta última. De esa manera su participación es trunca, parcial y no decisiva. Si el puesto que le interesa ya fue decidido, su derecho al voto aunque tenga 18 años ya no es absoluto... Cuanto más joven el votante, mayor es la proporción de latinos en el total. Mientras que entre votantes de 56 años*

para arriba el 75% son blancos y el 8% hispanos, en el grupo de 18 a 23 la proporción es 55% y 22%. Si pasa la propuesta podría subir entonces el número de votantes latinos.” [Link](#)

*“What's more: if one of the candidates has 50% or more of the votes in the primaries, they are already elected and do not go to the second round of the general election. Currently, those who are 18 years old for the general election but not for the primary cannot participate in the latter. In this way their participation is truncated, partial and not decisive. If the position you are interested in has already been decided, your right to vote even if you are 18 years old is no longer absolute... The younger the voter, the greater the proportion of Latinos in the total. While among voters aged 56 and over 75% are white and 8% Hispanic, in the 18 to 23 group the proportion is 55% and 22%. If the proposal passes, then the number of Latino voters could rise.”* [Link](#)

## **Proposition 25**

The Desert Sun – No

*“We believe Californians deserve a system that corrects inequities in how criminal justice is administered — especially when it comes to those only accused, but not convicted. The new system must be better than what it replaces, however. The Legislature’s SB 10 creation that would be affirmed under Proposition 25 is not that system. Californians should revoke this potentially harmful misstep at reform by voting “no” on Proposition 25.”* [Link](#)

We will continue to update the 2020 California Initiative Editorial Scorecard in the coming weeks. Please feel free to share on social media and circulate to your colleagues, clients and friends.

Thanks,

Matt Klink & Joe Rodota