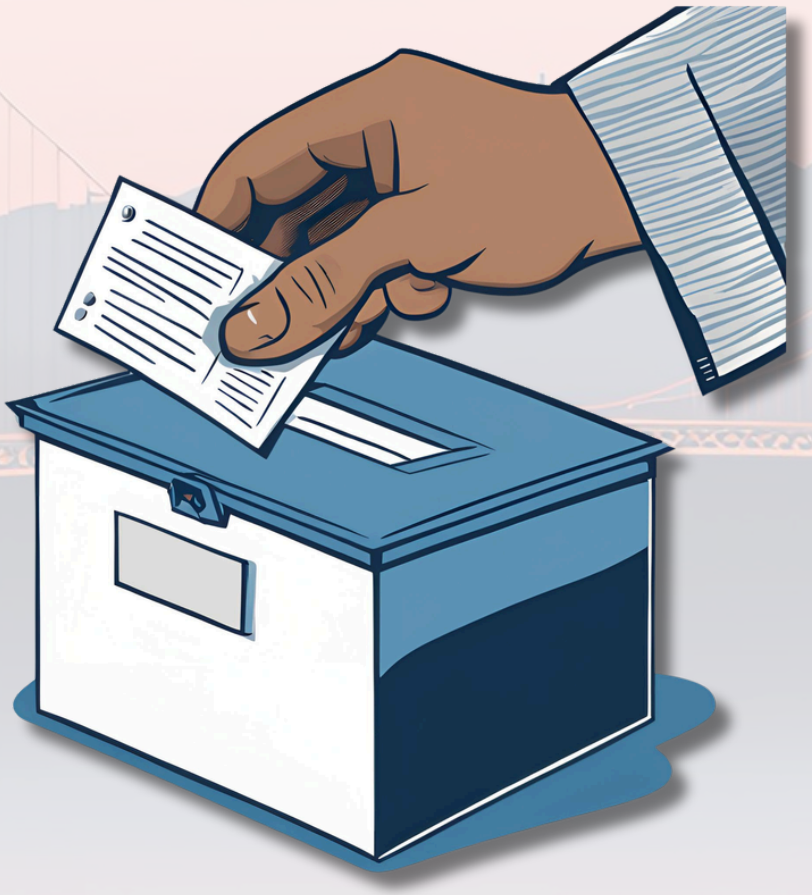
RUBICON PROGRAMS

2026 VOTER GUIDE

Rubicon's Stance on California Voter Propositions, along with additional information on Local Measures in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.



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www.rubiconprograms.org

Introduction

Rubicon Programs is an anti-poverty organization located in the San Francisco Bay Area.

We work at the individual and systems levels to remove barriers to economic mobility in our communities. We provide comprehensive workforce development and reentry services across Contra Costa and Alameda Counties to help participants build assets, income, wellness, and community connections. We live by our values of hope, justice, and humility in all of the actions we take.

About this guide

The following pages contain Rubicon's stances on California propositions and local measures that affect the communities we serve. Our positions were decided by Rubicon's Voter Guide Committee, which consisted of Rubicon staff and Participant Advisory Board members. For each recommendation, the Committee looked at the potential impacts of the proposed legislation, previous case studies, and the relevance to Rubicon's work, among other considerations.

We have included information regarding all California propositions, even if the Committee decided not to make a recommendation. We encourage you to read more about the measures on the ballot where you live and vote on them according to your own values and community needs.

Exercise your right to vote

- ☑ Register to vote or check your registration status before the October 19th deadline: Visit registertovote.ca.gov.
- ☑ Missed the deadline? You can still register and vote through same-day voter registration at any county elections office or polling location up until Election Day on November 3, 2026.
- ☑ Find your polling place: https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/polling-place

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Proposition 1: Authorizes Bonds for Housing Affordability Programs

Rubicon's stance: Yes

Proposition 1 would authorize the state to borrow $11.25 billion through bonds to fund affordable housing programs. $10 billion would be allocated to expand affordable housing for low- and middle-income individuals, and $1.25 billion would be allocated to the CalVet Home Loan Program to assist veterans. Repayment of this bond would come from the state's General Fund.

Rubicon believes that investing in equitable access to housing for people experiencing housing insecurity offers the opportunity to achieve stability while working toward breaking the cycle of poverty.

Proposition 2: Increases State's "Rainy Day" Fund

Rubicon's stance: Neutral

Proposition 2 would increase the cap on how much money the state can save from income taxes in reserves to be used at a later date in case of economic downturn. In order to access these funds, the Governor must declare a budget emergency. The current cap is 10%, and Proposition 2 would increase it to 20%.

This proposition does not seem to be particularly relevant to the work of Rubicon.

Proposition 3: Provides Permanent Funding for Schools and Health Care by Extending Existing Tax on High Incomes

Rubicon's stance: Yes

Proposition 3 would permanently extend a tax on high-income earners to fund public schools in the state. This tax, which was approved by voters in 2012, currently raises between $5 and $15 billion annually for K-12 schools and community colleges. If it is allowed to expire in 2031, public schools will lose this funding. Proposition 3 would make the tax permanent, guaranteeing this funding stream for public schools into the future.

Access to education is essential to break the cycle of poverty. Communities deserve well-funded public education, and this tax is a way to guarantee schools will continue to receive important revenue in the future.

Proposition 4: Authorizes Public Financing of Election Campaigns

Rubicon's stance: Neutral

Proposition 4 would lift the ban on public funding for political candidates' campaigns. Proposition 4 does not create a public campaign finance system for the state or local governments directly. Instead, Proposition 4 would allow state and local governments to create public campaign financing programs in the future, funded by taxpayer money.

This proposition does not seem to be particularly relevant to the work of Rubicon.

Proposition 5: Eliminate State Officer Recall Successor Elections

Rubicon's stance: Neutral

Proposition 5 would change the recall process so that if an election is held to recall a state officer, voters would no longer choose a replacement in the same election; instead, the office would be filled under existing state vacancy rules in a separate election. It would also allow a recalled officer to run again in a later special election.

This proposition does not seem to be particularly relevant to the work of Rubicon.

Proposition 37: Second Mortgage Homebuyer Program & Revenue Bond

Rubicon's stance: Neutral

Proposition 37 would create a homebuying assistance program for eligible middle-income Californians, funded by up to $25 billion in state revenue bonds. The program would offer fixed-rate mortgages for up to 17% of the purchase price of a "qualified new home." The bonds would be repaid by the homebuyers.

This proposition does not seem to be particularly relevant to the work of Rubicon.

Proposition 38: Funds Immunology Research & Cures

Rubicon's stance: Neutral

Proposition 38 would allow California to borrow $8.4 billion to fund immunology and immunotherapy research, including research on cancer, heart disease, and Alzheimer's disease. The state would repay the bonds over time, at an estimated cost of $500-$600 million annually for about 20 years.

This proposition does not seem to be particularly relevant to the work of Rubicon.

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Proposition 39: Prohibits Citizens from Voting Unless They Present Government Issued Identification

Rubicon's stance: No

Proposition 39 would require a registered voter to present a valid government ID when voting in person, or to disclose the last 4 digits of a valid government ID on a mail-in ballot. This proposition would create barriers to voting for people who are eligible to vote but may not have access to an up-to-date government ID.

Rubicon believes that voting is a fundamental right for all citizens and encourages our participants to be civically engaged. Voting is how communities make their voices heard, and the government should not make it more difficult for people to exercise this right.

Proposition 40: Applies One-Time Tax to Billionaires to Fund Healthcare and Education

Rubicon's stance: Neutral

Proposition 40 would create a one-time 5% wealth tax on individuals and certain trusts with more than $1 billion in assets. A wealth tax is different from income and property taxes. It is a tax on net worth, which is the value of everything a person owns minus certain debts. The tax would apply as of January 1, 2026 to people living in California with a net worth above $1 billion. The tax is expected to affect an estimated 200-250 Californians. If passed, it is estimated that this tax would raise tens of billions of dollars over several years. 90% of this tax money would go towards health care programs and 10% would go towards public education. Proposition 40 conflicts with Propositions 41 and 42. If Proposition 40 passes and either Proposition 41 and/or Proposition 42 passes, they cannot both become law. In such an event, the proposition with the most votes would become law, and the other(s) would be nullified.

Many Rubicon staff, participants, and community members have been harmed by the 2025 enactment of H.R.1, which cut funding for essential healthcare and food assistance programs. These funding cuts disproportionately impact families with low incomes, immigrants, and communities of color and worsen racial and economic disparities across California. Although money from this tax would be raised to support vital healthcare and education needs across the state, there was concern about the tax mechanism and unsustainable outcomes of funds raised from a one-time tax, the lack of guidance on the process and oversight for how the money raised would be allocated within the two funds, and the unaddressed root causes of equity issues concerning access to healthcare and education. Rubicon is taking a neutral stance not because this measure isn't relevant to the communities we serve, but because Rubicon's Voter Guide Committee did not reach consensus on a particular stance.

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Proposition 41: Establishes Spending Limits and Audits for New Special Taxes

Rubicon's stance: No

Proposition 41 would establish pre-election audits of ballot initiatives proposing special taxes and would require any new or increased special tax to undergo state audits every four years. It would also make these special taxes subject to state spending limits. A special tax is a tax where the money is collected for a specific purpose, such as education, transportation, public safety, and housing, among others. Proposition 41 conflicts with Proposition 40. If Proposition 41 passes and Proposition 40 passes, they cannot both become law. In such an event, the proposition with the most votes would become law, and the other would be nullified.

Raising money through taxes to respond to community needs is an effective way to increase access to essential services necessary to break the cycle of poverty. This measure would create unnecessary barriers to getting voter-approved special tax initiatives on the ballot and would limit the state's flexibility to use tax dollars for essential services. Unlike Prop 40, which would initiate a specific tax now, Prop 41 is a broad, hypothetical and overreaching measure that seeks to prevent new special taxes from being proposed by voters in the future.

Proposition 42: Limits New State Taxes on Personal Property

Rubicon's stance: No

Proposition 42 would prohibit new state taxes on financial assets and other personal property such as retirement savings, personal assets, investments, and assets used to produce income for retirement. It would also prohibit retroactive taxes. If passed, it would restrict the state government's ability to raise these taxes in the future. Proposition 42 conflicts with Proposition 40. If Proposition 42 passes and Proposition 40 passes, they cannot both become law. In such an event, the proposition with the most votes would become law, and the other would be nullified.

Raising money through taxes to respond to community needs is an effective way to increase access to essential services necessary to break the cycle of poverty. Unlike Prop 40, which would initiate a specific tax now, Prop 42 is a broad, hypothetical and overreaching measure that seeks to restrict the state's ability to tax personal property in the future.

Proposition 43: Raises Voter Threshold for Special Tax Measures

Rubicon's stance: No

Proposition 43 would increase the current threshold required for new, increased or extended voter-sponsored special taxes from a simple majority (50% of voters) to a super majority (67% of voters). A special tax is a tax where the money is collected for a specific purpose, such as education, transportation, public safety, and housing, among others. If passed, this measure could make it harder for communities to pass local taxes, including those that raise money for public services.

Raising money through taxes to respond to community needs is an effective way to increase access to essential services necessary to break the cycle of poverty. This measure would make it harder for most voters to have their voices heard by allowing a smaller minority of voters to prevent proposed tax measures. Unlike Prop 40, which would initiate a specific tax now, Prop 43 is a measure that seeks to make it harder for hypothetical voter-sponsored taxes from being implemented in the future.

Proposition 44: Increases Clinic Spending on Patient Care

Rubicon's stance: Neutral

Proposition 44 would require certain nonprofit community health clinics to spend at least 90% of their revenue on health care and other services that advance their charitable mission, rather than administrative or other expenses. Clinics that do not meet the requirement could face financial penalties, although temporary waivers would be available in exceptional circumstances.

This proposition does not seem to be particularly relevant to the work of Rubicon.

Proposition 45: Speeds Up Environmental Reviews for Certain Housing and Infrastructure Projects

Rubicon's stance: No

Proposition 45 would amend the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to speed up environmental reviews for designated "essential" housing, transportation, water, health, and other infrastructure projects. Proposition 45 would impose a 365-day limit on environmental reviews for these projects and would shorten deadlines for lawsuits challenging these projects by requiring courts to rule within 270 days on lawsuits related to CEQA.

Required CEQA reviews provide opportunities for communities to understand and raise concerns about projects that may affect their neighborhoods, health, safety, housing stability, or quality of life. By accelerating and limiting environmental review for designated projects, Proposition 45 could reduce opportunities for residents, particularly historically marginalized communities, to participate in decisions that impact them. Reducing CEQA review requirements conflicts with Rubicon's commitment to participant voice, civic engagement, and community-led solutions. Rubicon supports additional housing opportunities, but not at the expense of environmental and community impact.

LOCAL MEASURES: Regional

County Regional Transit Measure (RTM): Increases Sales Tax to Fund Local Transit

Rubicon's stance: Yes

This Regional Transit Measure would raise the sales tax in Contra Costa, Alameda, San Mateo, and Santa Clara counties by 0.5%, and San Francisco County by 1% in order to raise $1 billion annually to fund local transit such as BART, Muni, Caltrain, and AC Transit. These agencies are in a budget crisis because of reduced ridership. Without increased funding, public transportation in the Bay Area will likely face significant service cuts.

Participants, staff, and community members rely on public transportation to dependably and affordably move them across the Bay Area. Without accessible public transportation, opportunities for employment, education, and other activities are greatly reduced.

Concord Measure O: Updates Concord Business License Tax

Rubicon's stance: Neutral

Concord Measure O would update the existing Concord Business License Tax to a progressive gross-receipt based structure, where larger businesses would have higher rates, and smaller businesses would have lower rates. If passed, this tax is estimated to raise $3 million annually for the city's general fund to support city services such as road and pothole repairs, emergency response, parks and playgrounds, and traffic improvements, among others.

This proposition does not seem to be particularly relevant to the work of Rubicon.

Richmond Measure Q: Repairs Fire Stations and Other Emergency Services

Rubicon's stance: Yes

Richmond Measure Q would approve a $120 million bond measure to raise funds for improvements to Richmond fire stations and equipment. The bond measure would be paid for by an increased property tax. The funds would also allow for the hiring of paramedics with additional training in addition to existing EMTs.

Rubicon has two program sites in Richmond, and many of our participants live there. This community should have access to reliable and effective emergency services. Richmond is the only city in the Bay Area that only has EMTs, not paramedics. This inequity could be solved by Measure Q.

Hayward Measure CC: Updates Hayward Business License Tax

Rubicon's stance: Neutral

Hayward Measure CC would update the existing Hayward Business License Tax to a progressive gross-receipt based structure, where larger businesses would have higher rates, and smaller businesses would have lower rates. If passed, this tax is estimated to raise $12 million annually for the city's general fund to support city services like policing, firefighting, 911 response, libraries and infrastructure, among others.

This measure does not seem to be particularly relevant to the work of Rubicon.

Oakland Measure EE: Reorganizes Oakland's Executive Branch to Strengthen the Authority of the Mayor

Rubicon's stance: Neutral

Oakland Measure EE would restructure city government to give the mayor more authority and control over city administration. It would make the mayor the chief executive with the power to hire and fire city officials, run city operations, propose budgets, and veto legislation and budget decisions made by city councils. City council would be required to work full time and would be responsible for proposing new local laws, reviewing and modifying the mayor's budget proposals, and acting as a check on the power of the mayor.

This proposition does not seem to be particularly relevant to the work of Rubicon.

Oakland Measure FF: Updates the Oakland Real Property Transfer Tax to Narrow Foreclosure Exception

Rubicon's stance: Neutral

Oakland Measure FF would amend Oakland's Real Property Transfer Tax Ordinance to eliminate the foreclosure exemption for certain property transfers. If passed, this expanded tax is estimated to raise between $4-$13 million annually for the city's general fund to support city services like policing, firefighting, 911 response, libraries and infrastructure, among others.

This proposition does not seem to be particularly relevant to the work of Rubicon.

Additional Resources

Read the full text of statewide and local initiatives at the links below:

- ☑ California Propositions: https://tinyurl.com/CAprops22
- ☑ Alameda County Measures: https://tinyurl.com/ACvote22
- ☑ Contra Costa County Measures: https://tinyurl.com/CCCvote22

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Connect with Rubicon Programs

- ☑ If you are a low-income resident of Alameda or Contra Costa County, Rubicon has resources that can help you grow your assets, income, wellness, and community connections.
- ☑ If you are an underemployed or unemployed resident of Alameda or Contra Costa County, Rubicon provides workforce development and training resources.
- ☑ Specific supportive programs and services are available for justice-impacted community members.
- ☑ We operate several locations in Richmond, Concord, Antioch, Oakland, and Hayward, with services available in person and remotely.

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