

CALIFORNIA 2018
**INITIATIVE EDITORIAL
SCORECARD**
KLINK **FORWARD**
CAMPAIGNS **OBSERVER**
public affairs • strategic communications

September, 2018 Edition

Two years ago, Forward Observer and Klink Campaigns launched the first edition of the California Initiative Editorial Scorecard.

We tracked editorial endorsements (pro and con) from the top 20 California newspapers by circulation, and gave each of the 17 initiatives a score for the number of “yes” or “no” endorsements received, as well as a weighted score based on the size of the paper’s circulation. By Election Day, the scorecard included 323 editorials.

Here is a quick re-cap of last year’s final results:

- Editorial endorsement was a leading indicator of success at the ballot. Out of the 10 ballot measures with a majority of editorials in favor, only one failed to pass (Prop 62, repeal death penalty) and out of the 7 measures with a majority of editorials against, only 3 passed.
- The San Francisco Chronicle and the San Francisco Examiner most closely matched the will of the voters. They tied with 82% of their endorsements matching the election outcome.

For 2018, we will track editorials on the 11 ballot measures that California voters will decide on Tuesday, November 6. (In July, the California State Supreme Court removed Proposition 9 from the ballot, stating “Significant question have been raised regarding the proposition’s validity.”)

This year's editorial scorecard is based on circulation data from the Alliance for Audited Media:

2018 California Initiative Editorial Endorsement Scorecard		
Rank	Paper	Circulation
1	Los Angeles Times	689,113
2	San Francisco Chronicle	218,941
3	San Diego Union-Tribune	194,550
4	Orange County Register	186,864
5	The Mercury News	162,429
6	Sacramento Bee	157,365
7	The Mercury News East Bay Times	141,879
8	La Opinión	104,000
9	Riverside Press-Enterprise	90,227
10	Fresno Bee	58,217
11	Santa Rosa Press Democrat	54,830
12	Los Angeles Daily News	50,868
13	Ventura County Star	36,855
14	Torrance Daily Breeze	35,709
15	Modesto Bee	34,581
16	Palm Springs Desert Sun	34,283
17	Long Beach Press-Telegram	29,623
18	Bakersfield Californian	27,362
19	San Bernardino Sun	25,313
20	Inland Valley Daily Bulletin	24,933

Our top 20 list includes California based publications that regularly publish editorial content endorsing or opposing state ballot measures. Circulation data provided by the Alliance for Audited Media. Circulation figures represent data reported between Q4 2017 and Q2 2018.

Below is the number of ballot measure editorial endorsements so far:

2018 California Initiative Editorial Endorsement Scorecard		
Proposition	Yes	No
Proposition 1 (Housing Bond)	3	1
Proposition 2 (Tax Revenue for Homeless Prevention)	3	0
Proposition 3 (Water Bond)	1	2
Proposition 4 (Children's Hospitals bond)	2	0
Proposition 5 (Property Tax Transfers)	1	3
Proposition 6 (Gas Tax Repeal)	0	4
Proposition 7 (Repeals Daylight Savings Time)	0	1
Proposition 8 (Kidney Dialysis Clinic Requirements)	0	9
Proposition 10 (Rent Control Regulations)	2	4
Proposition 11 (Ambulance Employees Regulations)	11	1
Proposition 12 (Animal Space Requirements)	2	1

Endorsements from the Top 20 California Papers

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	10	11	12
Los Angeles Times									Yes		
San Francisco Chronicle	Yes		No					No	No	No	
San Diego Union Tribune	No	Yes	No		Yes			No	No		
Orange County Register										Yes	
The Mercury News				Yes	No	No		No	No	Yes	Yes
Sacramento Bee	Yes	Yes			No			No	Yes	Yes	
The Mercury News East Bay Times				Yes	No	No		No	No	Yes	Yes
La Opinión						No		No			
Riverside Press-Enterprise											
Fresno Bee	Yes	Yes	Yes					No		Yes	
Santa Rosa Press Democrat								No		Yes	No
Los Angeles Daily News										Yes	
Ventura County Star											
Torrance Daily Breeze										Yes	
Modesto Bee						No	No	No			
Palm Springs Desert Sun											
Long Beach Press-Telegram										Yes	
Bakersfield Californian											
San Bernardino Sun										Yes	
Inland Valley Daily Bulletin										Yes	

Proposition 1

San Francisco Chronicle – Yes

“It’s going to take more than dollars to solve California’s housing crisis. Regulations need to be streamlined, policies need to be realigned to steer development into areas that can accommodate higher density, and more communities need to be open to accepting growth. But make no mistake: Public investment needs to be part of the equation.” [Link](#)

San Diego Union-Tribune – No

“But ‘affordable housing’ programs help only the relatively few lucky families that win lotteries allowing them to use the units. These programs do more to create an impression of government responding to housing problems than to actually addressing these problems.” [Link](#)

Sacramento Bee and Fresno Bee – Yes

“Millions more dollars would go toward grants for infrastructure to support more infill, high-density, affordable housing; forgivable loans for mortgage assistance; housing for farm workers; and matching grants for pilot programs to demonstrate “cost-saving approaches to creating or preserving affordable housing.” [Link](#)

Proposition 2

San Diego Union-Tribune – Yes

“The measure recognizes that mental illness is a key part of the homeless problem in California and creates a path to constructing 20,000 permanent supportive housing units. It imposes no new taxes and doesn’t require any additional dollars going forward from the general fund.” [Link](#)

Sacramento Bee and Fresno Bee – Yes

“For voters, approving this measure should be a no-brainer. Treatment for mental illness and addiction can only help so much when people are forced to return to the trauma of living on the streets. Far more effective are programs that include stable housing, and yet cities and counties across California don’t have the money to provide that.” [Link](#)

Proposition 3

San Francisco Chronicle – No

“This scheme was devised as an initiative that is being funded, in part, by individuals and entities that are going to be receiving a share of the bond money. The pay-to-play aspect in itself should give voters ample reason to reject Prop. 3.” [Link](#)

Fresno Bee – Yes

“The Bee strongly recommends approval because of how Proposition 3 would directly benefit the Valley. Fixing the Friant-Kern Canal, improving Sierra watersheds and getting clean water to Valley communities in a broad sweep, as this measure would do, is a once-in-a-lifetime chance.” [Link](#)

San Diego Union-Tribune – No

“Passing a third water bond in just four years feels like throwing money at a problem. Given the poor condition of water infrastructure in California, it might be justifiable. But that only holds for a bond that was crafted in an impartial way by lawmakers or citizen committees — not by groups that would benefit from it.” [Link](#)

Proposition 4

San Jose Mercury News and East Bay Times – Yes

“Donations and revenues from services don’t come close to meeting that need. Proposition 4 on the November ballot helps fill the gap. The \$1.5 billion state bond measure would provide grants over a 15-year period for construction, expansion, renovation and equipment for California’s children’s hospitals, which include Palo Alto’s Lucile Packard Children’s Hospital and Oakland’s UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital.” [Link](#)

Proposition 5

San Jose Mercury News and East Bay Times – No

“California voters should reject Proposition 5, a regressive measure that would provide additional property tax breaks to long-term homeowners — especially those with pricier houses — who already pay significantly lower tax bills.” [Link](#)

San Diego Union Tribune – Yes

“Proposition 13 has especially been a boon to retirees on fixed incomes. Yet it has also effectively trapped them in their homes. Proposition 5 would change that.” [Link](#)

Sacramento Bee – No

“It should be a telltale sign to voters that many housing advocacy groups are not backing Proposition 5. Opponents argue convincingly that the measure isn’t going to help the vast majority of Californians who are being squeezed by the affordable housing crisis, including the working poor struggling with rising rents.” [Link](#)

Proposition 6

San Jose Mercury News and East Bay Times – No

“But when they cast their ballots, they should side with Brown. They should uphold the increases by voting no on Prop. 6. Note that we said vote no. A yes vote would overturn the transportation plan; a no vote leaves it in place. The plan, approved by the Legislature at Brown’s urging last year, will raise \$5.1 billion annually by 2020 to help fix our deteriorating freeways and local streets and refurbish our commuter trains and buses.” [Link](#)

La Opinión – No

“La Proposición 6 causará un serio perjuicio a California. Le quitará fondos vitales para poner al día la deteriorada infraestructura vial de nuestro estado.” (“Proposition 6 will cause serious harm to California. It will take vital funds to update the deteriorated road infrastructure of our state.”) [Link](#)

Modesto Bee – No

“If this cynical political ploy passes, it’s unlikely the ACE train will ever be pulling into Modesto or Merced. Forget about that new parkway from Highway 99 to the UC Merced campus. And the matching money your city was counting on to help patch the potholes on your street? There won’t be nearly enough to go around.” [Link](#)

Proposition 7

Modesto Bee – No

“Messing with the clocks also is bound to insert new headaches into everyone’s workday. In states that don’t have daylight saving time, coordinating deadlines and conference calls is a pain, especially for corporations with operations in multiple states. Every day, Californians would have to remind people across the country what time it is, as other states continue to fall back and spring forward but we don’t.” [Link](#)

Proposition 8

San Francisco Chronicle – No

“Proposition 8, which would limit the profits of kidney dialysis clinics, is an example of a special interest trying to obtain from the ballot box what it could not achieve through other processes.... That should be the first red flag for voters: The initiative process is not the place to tilt the scales in a labor dispute.” [Link](#)

San Jose Mercury News and East Bay Times – No

“California has a long history of propositions gone awry. Proposition 8 provides a classic example of a ballot measure that has no business being decided by California voters. The complex initiative designed to regulate the dialysis industry is better suited for the Legislature, where the wording of new laws can be thoroughly vetted and easily altered if problems arise.” [Link](#)

San Diego Union-Tribune – No

“Help dialysis patients? It could lead to the closure of an unknown number of dialysis clinics, especially in rural areas, which would up-end the lives of many of the nearly 70,000 Californians who depend on dialysis.” [Link](#)

Sacramento Bee and Fresno Bee – No

“But because this measure is so complex – as is healthcare financing in general – it’s also possible that the measure could backfire and lead to less care. The independent Legislative Analyst’s Office warns that depending how the state Department of Public Health implements Proposition 8 – including which costs are counted to set the revenue cap – and how dialysis companies respond, some clinics may close and fewer new ones would open.” [Link](#)

Modesto Bee – No

“Proposition 8 is one union’s attempt to force two specific companies in a single industry segment – kidney dialysis – to hire more workers. It is unnecessarily elaborate, uses scare tactics and is unlikely to deliver what it promises. In fact, it’s more likely Proposition 8 will make matters worse in areas where specialized care can be difficult to obtain.” [Link](#)

Santa Rosa Press Democrat – No

“Proposition 8 is nothing short of an abuse of California’s initiative process, which allows anyone with enough money to put a proposed law on the ballot. This initiative is designed to punish dialysis clinic operators who have resisted union efforts to organize their employees. Voters shouldn’t play along.” [Link](#)

La Opinión – No

“La posibilidad del cierre de una sola clínica es inaceptable.” (“The possibility of closing a single clinic is unacceptable.”) [Link](#)

Proposition 10

San Jose Mercury News and East Bay Times – No

“It’s politically easy to demonize developers. But that won’t make them build more housing – and they certainly won’t if we cap future rents and, in turn, devalue the units they’re considering building. The solution is not to impose price controls, which is exactly what rent control is. The solution is to encourage development so that supply can meet demand.” [Link](#)

San Francisco Chronicle – No

“Its benefits accrue to those renters who happen to occupy the controlled units, who become a devoted lobby for the policy, at the expense not only of property owners but also of other tenants. Most alarmingly for a state with a crushing housing deficit, rent control tends to reduce the quality and quantity of rental housing, the construction and maintenance of which is discouraged by price caps.” [Link](#)

San Diego Union Tribune – No

“The severity of California’s housing crisis is difficult to exaggerate...The problem for advocates is that rent control has a long history that shows not only that it doesn’t work, but also that it makes housing problems worse.” [Link](#)

Los Angeles Times – Yes

“In the middle of a housing crisis, California voters are being asked to consider a ballot measure that would, depending on whom you talk to, either keep struggling renters from being kicked to the curb or cause rents to climb even higher.” [Link](#)

Sacramento Bee – Yes

“Proposition 10, which would repeal the Costa-Hawkins Rental Housing Act, has become the latest proxy for this ever more polarized debate. But neither is the right way to look at the Nov. 6 statewide ballot measure.” [Link](#)

Proposition 11

San Jose Mercury News and East Bay Times – Yes

“In a better world, the Legislature would have negotiated a solution, but talks between labor and ambulance providers over legislation broke down earlier this year. Proposition 11 on the Nov. 6 ballot offers the necessary remedy, making it state law that ambulance employees can remain on call during work breaks. Voters should back the measure.” [Link](#)

San Francisco Chronicle – No

“Here is what you need to know: The union representing 4,000 ambulance workers agrees with the need for a fix... Those workers should not be denied their day in court. This issue should be resolved in the Legislature, with all parties at the table to negotiate and compromise. Vote no on Prop. 11.” [Link](#)

Orange County Register, Los Angeles Daily News, Long Beach Press-Telegram, Torrance Daily Breeze, Inland Valley Daily Bulletin, San Bernardino Sun, Riverside Press-Enterprise – Yes

“It is simply good sense to state that labor law entitling hourly employees to take meal and rest breaks without being on-call does not apply to private-sector emergency ambulance employees.” [Link](#)

Sacramento Bee and Fresno Bee – Yes

“Proposition 11 would allow the companies to continue their longstanding practice of requiring their paramedics and EMTs to stay on duty during meal and rest breaks in case of 911 calls.” [Link](#)

Santa Rosa Press Democrat – Yes

“Proposition 11 would reaffirm the decades-long practice of keeping ambulance crews on call during meals and rest breaks, just as other first responders remain on call during their breaks.” [Link](#)

Proposition 12

San Jose Mercury News and East Bay Times – Yes

“Because California hens lay 5 billion eggs a year for human consumption, the state has a moral obligation to encourage the most humane conditions possible.” [Link](#)

Santa Rosa Press Democrat – No

“California voters took the lead in protecting egg-laying hens a decade ago. Farmers responded by investing in new cages to comply with the new law, and they are responding to consumer preferences and demands of their clients in the food service industry by increasing production of cage-free eggs. There’s no need for another new set of rules, or to have one deadline for retailers and an accelerated one for farmers.” [Link](#)