

By Congressman Tom McClintock

Proposition 51 - Add \$1,400 To Your Credit Card Balance: NO. When Jerry Brown calls a measure fiscally irresponsible, well, my God! This \$9 billion bond measure will cost \$17.6 billion (\$1,400 per household) to repay over the life of the loan. The bond is for local schools, and a big chunk of it is for routine maintenance. This violates basic principles of sound borrowing. First, statewide bonds should be for statewide purposes; local schools should be paid for with local bonds. Otherwise, we end up robbing Piedmont to pay Pasadena. Second, bonds should be for capital projects with a lifespan at least equal to the debt. If our children are to pay off these bonds, they should benefit from them. Their generation will have their own painting and weed-pulling to do, without having to pay for our generation as well.

Proposition 52 – Tax Extension for Medi-Cal: NO. Medi-Cal is the government’s failing poverty program to provide health services for the poor. It is done with a federal match: states put in half the amount and the feds do the same. In 2009, the legislature imposed a tax on hospitals in order to pay its share off the books. That tax is due to expire on January 1, 2018. Prop 52 makes the tax permanent and makes it harder to repeal in the future. Hospitals support it because they pass along the tax to patients and get twice the matching funds back. Politicians like it because it lets them shift their Medi-Cal budget to other stuff. In my view, if we’re going to fund Medi-Cal, it should be spread across the entire tax base and not concentrated as a permanent tax on sick people.

Proposition 53 – Public Vote for Revenue Bonds: YES. General obligation bonds are repaid from the state’s general fund; revenue bonds are repaid by users of a project (e.g. tolls to repay a bridge bond). Since taxpayers are on the hook for GO bonds, voter approval is required, but not for revenue bonds. That’s as is should be – projects that benefit a specific class of users should be paid by the users. The problem is that this common-sense funding mechanism has been so badly abused that many of today’s revenue bonds come directly from taxpayers. My favorite example is the Pete Wilson fiction that prisons can be paid for by revenue bonds because prisons generate money – from taxpayers! Now this ploy is being used by Jerry Brown for boondoggles ranging from his train-to-nowhere and his jaw-droppingly expensive tunnels project. This measure requires revenue bonds over \$2 billion to be approved by voters, and is backed by taxpayer groups across the state.

Proposition 54 – Read the Damn Bills: YES. This forbids the legislature from voting on a bill until it has been in print for 72 hours and available to both legislators and the public to read. It stops the dangerous practice of having to pass a bill so we know what’s in it.

Proposition 55 – Eat the Rich: NO. In 2012, Californians made a mistake in approving the highest personal income tax rate anywhere in the country on the “very wealthy people” who make over \$250,000 a year. It is due to be phased out in 2018. This proposition would make it permanent. What’s wrong with soaking the rich? For openers, a lot of these “very wealthy people” aren’t wealthy and they aren’t even people. They’re struggling small businesses filing under subchapter S. The really rich folks just re-arrange their schedules so they’re not legal residents and don’t pay the tax. As Arthur Laffer has often said, “There’s nothing in the world more portable than money and rich people.”

Proposition 56 – Another Tobacco Tax: NO. This adds another \$2.00 per pack tax on cigarettes, making California one of the heaviest taxed states for tobacco (like everything else). It discourages smoking and provides new revenues for health care – what’s not to like? For openers, that means permanent spending programs are being funded with a declining revenue – and eventually taxpayers will end up paying the difference. Excessive taxation increases the incentives for black markets, and ultimately produces tragedies like the killing of Eric Garner in 2014, who was choked to death by New York City cops for the heinous crime of selling cigarettes to folks who couldn’t afford the tax.

Proposition 57 – This Proposition Could Kill You: NO. This is Jerry Brown’s latest measure purporting to release only non-violent felons from prison. But as the law works, this would include rapists, child molesters, gang-bangers, arsonists and human traffickers to name a few – and not to mention violent criminals who plea-bargained to lesser crimes. Ironically, while Jerry Brown and the Democrats are busy letting criminals out of prison, they are working overtime to disarm law-abiding citizens from protecting themselves. Violent crime in California is up 10 percent last year because of a similar ballot measure – this widens the prison exit door, right into our neighborhoods.

Proposition 58 – Only Spanish Spoken Here: NO. In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 227, which forbade the practice of segregating Spanish-speaking children and teaching them in Spanish-only classes (a practice with the Orwellian title, “bi-lingual education.”) It originated out of Latino communities in Los Angeles who wanted their children to speak English and assimilate into American society. What a difference a generation makes. This measure would stop this vital assimilation program and return classrooms to Spanish-only instruction.

Proposition 59 – Repeal the First Amendment: NO. The Citizens United case protects the right of ANY group of Americans to pool their resources to participate in the public policy debate. Citizens United produced a documentary critical of Hillary Clinton and sought to syndicate it prior to an election. The FEC blocked them under the McCain Feingold campaign finance law. The ACLU sided with Citizens United, as did a majority of the court, ruling that although government may regulate direct contributions to candidates, it may not pick and choose who gets to participate in the larger public policy debate. This proposition calls on elected officials to overturn this decision and in so doing repeal the First Amendment. Most of our elected officials are leftists who are doing so anyway. I’m not and I won

Proposition 60 – Lights, Condoms, Action: NO. This one proves there is no end to the minutiae that occupies the minds of today’s public nannies -- it requires “actors” in pornographic films to wear condoms. Enough said.

Proposition 61 – Price Controls for Drugs: NO. Sounds good on the surface: the state should pay no more for drugs than the Veterans’ Administration does. Why would taxpayer and veterans groups oppose it? Because it will likely increase overall drug costs as the market adapts and create drug shortages along the way. Price controls always sound good in theory – but in practice they always create shortages of whatever commodity is being controlled.

Proposition 62 – Kill the Death Penalty: NO. Here is the sum total of the leftist ballot measures on crime: release dangerous felons from our prisons (Prop. 57), disarm law-abiding citizens (Prop. 63) and provide old-age retirement plans for murderers (Prop 62). Yes, California’s liberals really are out of their minds.

Proposition 63 – Stop or I’ll Throw my Gun at You: NO. Unable to confiscate firearms because of the Heller decision (soon to be repealed if Hillary Clinton gets to pick the next Supreme Court justices), the left is moving to put ammunition out of reach for Californians. This is the first step – requiring a permit (renewable every four years) to purchase ammunition, accompanied by fees and background checks (of people who have already passed background checks to purchase their firearm in the first place).

Proposition 64 – Marijuana Legalization: YES. I abhor the use of marijuana, and believe we should do everything we can through education and persuasion to discourage its use. But our current laws have failed us, and have created a violent and criminal black market that actively and aggressively markets to young people. Legalization takes the criminal profit out of the equation, and allows us to regulate marijuana the same way we currently regulate alcohol. This should make it more difficult for minors to obtain marijuana; it should remove illegal cultivation from our neighborhoods and forests and move it to normal agricultural operations; and it should replace the criminal gangs that traffic marijuana with law-abiding farmers and shopkeepers.

Proposition 65 – Disposable Bag Fees for Wildlife Conservation: NO. The legislature passed a law that bans most disposable bags at grocery stores and charges 10-cents for others. It is being referended as Proposition 67. The law was part of a corrupt bargain that imposes these charges on grocery store customers and lets the grocery stores keep the revenue as extra profit. Prop. 65 would instead expropriate these taxes for “Wildlife Conservation.” If that sounds all warm and fuzzy, beware: these programs invariably become slush funds for environmental groups to push their agenda, which often has very little to do with wildlife conservation and a great deal to do with leftist political activism and environmental extremism. Let’s just vote down Props 65 and 67 and keep our grocery bags.

Proposition 66 – A Death Penalty We Can Live With: YES. This is a pro-death penalty measure sponsored by law enforcement and victims’ organizations that streamlines California’s death penalty and puts it back in play. The overwhelming preponderance of evidence is that a death penalty, consistently applied, suppresses the murder rate and saves innocent lives. And it has a guaranteed ZERO rate of recidivism.

Proposition 67 – Grocery Bag Nannyism: NO. A yes vote means no more disposable plastic bags at the grocery store (with certain exceptions for meat and other perishable items, and paper bags will cost you 10-cents each). A NO vote means much more than just preserving this one little convenience – it means repudiating the nanny state that California has become. Voting this down means saving yourself from the aggravation of cans rolling around in your car. But saying no to the nannies? Priceless.