

# Berkeley Citizens Action

## October 2014 Newsletter

## Endorsements for the Nov. 2014 Election

These Endorsements were selected by BCA membership at the Election Forum held on September 21st. The Rent Board slate that is selected at the Summer Berkeley Tenants Union Convention is endorsed by BCA

### Berkeley Measures

#### **D-Berkeley Versus Big Soda**

**YES**

Imposes a general tax on distributors of sugar-sweetened beverages. Soda and other sugary drinks hurt our community and our kids: 40% of Berkeley 9th graders are overweight. While funds raised go into the general fund, this measure also establishes a panel of health & education experts to recommend programs aimed at reducing the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages in Berkeley while promoting healthy habits. Dr. Vicki Alexander, Berkeley's retired city health director, leads this effort which is widely supported by the NAACP, city council members, Ecology Center, Latinos Unidos, Berkeley Federation of Teachers, Michael Pollan, Alice Waters, the Heart Association, and many more. Vigorously opposed by the beverage industry, which has amassed a huge war chest. Needs majority to pass.  
[www.BerkeleyvsBigSoda.com](http://www.BerkeleyvsBigSoda.com)

#### **F - Fix the Parks Tax**

**YES**

A repair plan for our 52 parks, 30 park buildings, 100 pathways, and 35,000 street trees. Parks staffing has been cut 25% and maintenance scaled back, but the parks department continues to run a deficit. Placed on ballot by council, this measure increases existing tax. Supporters say that without increased funding, more staff will be cut, facilities will continue to deteriorate and parks could be closed. Council decided to limit this tax to maintaining existing facilities because polls showed low support for new projects or fixing Willard Pool. Supported by Sierra Club, all City Council members and all candidates, except Jacquelyn McCormick, who cautions this measure "isn't big enough." Needs 66.67% to pass."

#### **O - Recall Provisions**

**YES**

Clean up amendment to Recall Provisions in Article IV of Berkeley City Charter, would modernize recall procedures bringing these in conformance with recent changes in law, reducing need for special elections. Placed on ballot by unanimous council vote. Needs majority to pass.

### Support these Candidates

**Congress, CD 13:** Barbara Lee

**State Assembly, AD 15:** Tony Thurmond

**City Candidates Auditor:** Ann Marie Hogan

**City Council District 1:** Alejandro Soto-Vigil

**City Council District 4:** Jesse Arreguin

**City Council District 7:** Kriss Worthington

**City Council District 8:** Jacquelyn McCormick

**Rent Board:** Jesse Townley, Kathy Harr, John Selawsky, Paola Laverde-Levine, James Chang

**School Board:** Karen Hemphill, Ty Alper, Josh Daniels

#### **P - End Corporate Personhood**

**YES**

This measure would call to amend the US Constitution to abolish the legal concept that corporations are persons entitled to constitutional rights, and the ridiculous doctrine that money can be treated as speech. No opposing argument filed. Requested by California Public Interest Research Group, placed on ballot by unanimous council vote. Vote YES on P: tell our representatives that corporate personhood must be abolished, free speech is only for humans, and Citizens United must be overturned. Needs majority to pass.

#### **Q - Flexible Work Schedules**

**YES**

Advisory measure calls on city, state and federal governments to make it easier to allow flexible working arrangements like part-time work, compressed working week, and telecommuting. Employers could refuse a worker's request, small business exempt. Also requests city to urge state and federal legislators to adopt laws and policies giving government employees the right to request more flexible work and urge legislators to pass a law like the "Working Families Flexibility Act." No argument filed against. Supported by local author Charles Siegel, Joan Blades and Sophie Hahn. Needs majority to pass.

**R - Green Downtown****YES**

Save Our Post Office & Civic Center, ensure actual community benefits for the downtown. Proponents say the measure provides provisions for implementing Berkeley's Green Downtown Vision & preserving our Civic Center as a Public Commons while getting downtown developers to provide the community benefits promised but not delivered after the passage of 2010's Measure R - affordable housing, local jobs, green building. Prevailing wage requirements are broadened, parking requirements are increased and LEED (environmental) requirements are strengthened for buildings over 75 feet. Authored by Jesse Arreguin with Sophie Hahn and others. Opposed by developers and Downtown Business Association. Needs majority to pass. [www.BerkeleyDowntown.com](http://www.BerkeleyDowntown.com)

**S - for Snake - Redistricting****NO**

Would concretize the city council's gerrymandered district lines, dividing the student vote & disrupt organized neighborhoods. This measure is an attempt by conservative members of city council to lock in a district plan that was overturned by last winter's public signature referendum. Recommending a NO vote are councilmembers Worthington, Arreguin and Anderson and candidate McCormick. Needs majority to pass.

**Alameda County Measures****Alameda County Measure BB****YES**

30 year transportation funding. Tired of rising bus fares and route cuts? Vote YES to authorize an additional 1/2 cent and continues the existing sales tax. (County sales tax will be 9 1/2 cents if passed.) This is a reprise of Measure B1 from 2012, which proposed an identical tax rate and spending bill. That measure was narrowly defeated, needing only 721 more votes out of the total 527,403 which were cast. This time the Board of Supervisors proposed a time limited tax instead of a permanent one. Measure BB will expand BART, bus, and rail services within Alameda County, keep transit fares affordable for youth, seniors, and people with disabilities, provide traffic relief on city streets and highways using new technology, improve air quality, and create good quality, local jobs. The measure has massive support, but needs 66.67 % to pass. Get on the bus!

**State Propositions****1 - Water Bond****No Endorsement**

Put forward by legislature after postponements in 2010 & 2012, this is a \$6 Billion bond for "Water Quality, Supply, and Infrastructure Improvement", though the *San Jose Mercury* reported that with bond service fees and interest, the total is \$51-67 billion. Jerry Brown says it's "no-frills, no-pork." Supported by California water agencies, Western Growers and building trades; opposed by groups promoting fishing, hunting, and watershed protections. Per the League of Women Voters, supporters say this ensures a comprehensive state water plan, provides reliable water supply for farms, businesses, and communities, especially during droughts and is fiscally responsible. Opponents say no amount of dam building will produce more rain and snow, that the proposition does little for drought relief, doesn't adequately promote regional water self-sufficiency or reduce reliance on an already water-deprived Delta ecosystem. Rising support shown by recent poll. Requires 66.67% to pass.

**2 - Rainy Day Fund****No Endorsement**

State Budget Rainy Day Fund, codifies the deal brokered by Brown last year, increasing savings in the state's 'rainy day' fund from 5% to 10% of the General Fund, unless bad times come again and the state doesn't have the money to put aside. Supported by Democrats.

**45 - Health Care Insurance Regulation****YES**

Health insurance rates soared as ObamaCare was enacted. This measure, which had broad voter support according to early polls, would allow State regulation of health insurance costs, as is done with auto and homeowners insurance. Opponents, hospitals, insurers and the California Chamber of Commerce, have raised a war chest more than \$37.5 million versus \$2.5 million raised by supporters. Public support is slipping since attack ads started running. Needs majority to pass.

**46 - Drug Testing of Doctors****NO**

Opponents say this measure combines three issues to gain approval at the polls: First, raising the cap on pain and suffering for malpractice suits, from the level set in 1975, to the \$1 million needed today. Secondly, requiring drug testing for doctors (but not other medical professions) practicing in hospitals, and thirdly requiring health care providers to consult a statewide database of prescription-drug history before prescribing

painkillers, to keep patients from stockpiling drugs. Supported by Consumer Watchdog and consumer attorneys, opposed by doctors, insurers, hospitals (who have raised more than \$56 million), and the ACLU. A recent poll shows support plummeting. Needs majority to pass.

#### **47 - Reduced Penalties for Some Crimes YES**

Reduces penalties for non-serious, non-violent crimes, like petty theft & drug possession, unless the defendant has prior convictions for violent or serious crimes. Allows resentencing for such crimes. Combined savings for state and county governments could reach hundreds of millions of dollars, which could be diverted to reduce school truancy and dropout, mental health and substance abuse treatment, and victim services. Annual county savings could reach several hundred million dollars. Opposition from Police Chiefs' and Correctional Supervisors Associations, and some but not all district attorneys. Most recent poll shows rising support. Needs majority to pass.

#### **48 Indian Gaming Referendum No Endorsement**

Passing this proposition will ratify contested gaming compacts between California and the North Fork Rancheria of Mono Indians and the Wiyot Tribe. It also allows this casino, other projects and intergovernmental agreements to bypass the California Environmental Quality Act! Supporters claim the casinos will create jobs, revenues, and protect scenic wildlife." Opponents say Prop 48 opens the floodgates to urban casinos. This measure is a veto referendum: a 'yes' vote is a vote to uphold the contested legislation enacted by the legislature while a 'no' vote is a vote to overturn. Needs a majority to pass.



School Board Candidates, and BCA members at the September 21<sup>st</sup> BCA/BTU Election Forum. Photos by Paola Laverde Levine



### **Overturn Citizens United**

*By Phoebe Anne Sorgen*

Vote "YES" on P to further the key solution to the root problem of our era, stopping corporate greed from trumping human need. Supreme Court rulings, such as Citizens United, gave corporations rights intended for "We the People." Amending the Constitution is the citizens' way to overrule the Supreme Court.

Mega corporations make decisions affecting our daily lives: who gets elected, what laws are passed, energy and transportation choices and whether those choices contribute to climate chaos, healthcare options; whether our air quality, water, and food are healthy. They control our government and media.

The Constitution was written to protect humans, not corporations which have unlimited life spans and limited liability. Corporations don't vote, get heart disease, nor fall in love. Confining constitutional rights to people will not harm legitimate business activities. Governments will still be able to charter corporations, labor unions, etc., which can sign and enforce contracts, hold property, and be protected by the rights of their shareholders and members.

A 28th amendment would end the fiction of corporate personhood in its entirety, and money being equated with free speech. Citizens United and other democracy destroying SCOTUS opinions will be overturned.

Limiting campaign spending will increase free speech because the 1% and corporations have ample means to drown out people's voices. But corporate personhood's destructiveness extends beyond money and politics. Corporations use personhood to avoid inspections, hide health & safety threats, avoid disclosing product origins, prevent us from knowing what's in our food, void ordinances that protect local businesses from chains, and avoid providing health care to employees.

Vote "yes" on P to instruct our representatives that corporate personhood must be abolished, free speech is only for humans, and Citizens United must be overturned. A 28th Amendment to the constitution (House Joint Resolution 29 introduced by Rep. Nolan) is crucial to transform this corporate controlled plutocracy into a democracy. Since Californians were deprived from voting for Prop 49, Berkeleyans will send a strong message by approving Measure P.

**Berkeley Citizens Action**  
**A multi-partisan Political Action Club**  
**P.O. Box 9932**  
**Berkeley, CA 94709**

## **Address Correction Requested**

**Please keep your BCA Membership current**  
**If you have paid in 2014, thank you!**  
**The last time your membership dues were paid:**

We are Berkeley Citizens Action: For the past 40 years, BCA has stood with the people of Berkeley in fighting for a free and humanist community. Unfortunately, many city council representatives seem to stand with developers, landlords and big money. With your help we can keep Berkeley a proud, progressive and liberal community. Join us. Participate. Democracy is not a spectator sport.

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### **Vote by mail ballots have arrived!**

Please distribute this Election Guide to fellow progressive voters in Berkeley.

### **We will be printing BCA doorhangers**

Come join us to distribute them just before Election Day to reach 50% of voters who vote at the polls. Your donations to the campaign account help pay for printing.

Email us at [BerkeleyCitizensAction@gmail.com](mailto:BerkeleyCitizensAction@gmail.com)

### **Important Dates**

- Last day to register to vote: Monday, October 20
- Last day to get a "Vote by mail" ballot: Tuesday, Oct. 28
- Election Day: Tues. Nov. 4

### **Find your polling place:**

<http://www.acgov.org/rov/profile.htm>

### **Vote for Tom Torlakson for Superintendent of Public Instruction**

*by Mary Elieisar*

Teachers' unions, like the Berkeley Federation of Teachers, (AFL-CIO), overwhelmingly support incumbent Tom Torlakson for State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Torlakson, an experienced teacher, declares that "teachers are not the problem in our schools, they are the solution." Teachers deserve seniority rights. His opponent, who has no experience in the classroom and no education degree, thinks education unions "have too much influence over education policy." Torlakson believes students test scores should have only a limited use in teacher evaluations. He advocates for increased education funding, unlike his opponent. Vote for Tom Torlakson on November 4<sup>th</sup>.

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### **Yes! I'll help BCA maintain a committed, progressive presence in Berkeley!**

Please save trees by sending us your working email address. If possible, please give more to support mailing costs!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Annual Membership \$35

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Low-Income Membership \$10

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

One Time Contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Monthly sustaining pledge:

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\$25 \_\_\_\_\_ \$10 \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to participate in the following:

☐ Steering Committee    ☐ Organize Education forums    ☐ Maintain Web Page and Newsletter    ☐ Outreach

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Send to your membership form & money to BCA, P.O. Box 9932, Berkeley, CA 94709 • Call: (510) 982-6528

Web: [www.BerkeleyCitizensAction.org](http://www.BerkeleyCitizensAction.org) • Email: [BerkeleyCitizensAction@gmail.com](mailto:BerkeleyCitizensAction@gmail.com) • Like us on Facebook

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