SPUR

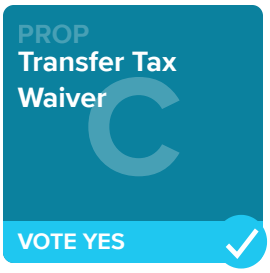
a member-supported nonprofit organization

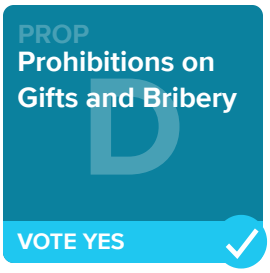
March 2024 Voter Guide

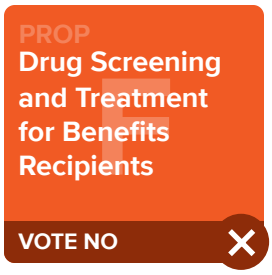
For the March 2024 election, SPUR analyzed local and state measures related to our policy areas on the California and San Francisco ballots. Our analysis includes the background behind the measures, equity impacts, pros and cons, and a recommendation on how to vote. (Note: There were no regional or San José measures related to SPUR policy areas on this ballot. SPUR did not analyze Oakland Measure D because it qualified for the ballot after SPUR completed its analysis process.)

San Francisco (SF)









California (CA)



SF Prop A

Affordable Housing Bonds

BOND

Affordable Housing Bonds

Authorizes the city to issue $300 million in general obligation bonds to fund the construction, development, acquisition, rehabilitation, and preservation of affordable housing for extremely-low-, low-, and middle-income households.

Vote YES

SPUR's Recommendation

Housing affordability and homelessness remain among the most urgent challenges of our time. San Francisco faces high construction costs and land prices, labor shortages, process and structural challenges, and a persistent funding gap, all of which delay or confound efforts to deliver housing to San Franciscans across the income spectrum. Prop. A is a significant step toward addressing the problem of subsidy for affordable housing, and it ensures that affordable housing development can continue — even when for-profit housing development has slowed.

Read our complete analysis at spurvoterguide.org

SF Prop C

Transfer Tax Waiver

ORDINANCE

Real Estate Transfer Tax Exemption and Office Space Allocation

Exempts office-to-residential conversion projects from the city's real estate transfer tax for one transaction after the conversion is completed and allows the square footage of office space that was converted to be returned to the Office Allocation Program, which sets an annual limit for new office development.

Vote YES

SPUR's Recommendation

San Francisco's office vacancy rate is at a historic high and is likely to remain that way for years. Redeveloping San Francisco's obsolete office buildings into housing delivers economic, social, environmental, and fiscal benefits to the city. In addition to creating more housing for workers in an area with high-quality transit, converting a portion of obsolete office buildings into housing will increase foot traffic and support for small businesses, artists, and cultural organizations. Redeveloping low-value space will increase the value of remaining office building stock and increase property and sales tax revenues for the city. Office-to-residential conversions in other North American cities have helped transform central business districts into mixed-use, 24/7 social hubs with housing, restaurants, retail, entertainment, and culture. However, in all of these cases, the revitalization was only possible with incentives from the local government. The unfolding economic crisis in downtown San Francisco requires a new approach from the city to reduce barriers to redevelopment. Waiving the real estate transfer tax for a limited time will help encourage office-to-residential conversion projects, which will deliver positive fiscal and economic benefits for the city in the long term. Allowing the real estate transfer tax to be changed legislatively in the future will also make it easier for the city to adjust the taxes in the future.

Read our complete analysis at spurvoterguide.org

SF Prop D

Prohibitions on Gifts and Bribery

ORDINANCE

Changes to Local Ethics Laws

Expands rules prohibiting gifts and bribery, imposes personal liability on city officials who fail to disclose certain relationships, brings greater consistency to local ethics laws, and expands ethics training requirements for city officials.

Vote YES

SPUR's Recommendation

Recent corruption in San Francisco government lays out a case for much-needed internal reform. Election officials, department heads, and commissioners should not be accepting gifts or performing activities that could compromise the integrity of city decisions and the contracts process. SPUR applauds the Ethics Commission's Policy Unit for its efforts to prevent further abuse of gift rules and incompatible activities and the Municipal Executives Association for speaking up and demanding that the Ethics Commission refine the measure so that good-faith, high-integrity city employees can fulfill their legitimate job responsibilities.

Read our complete analysis at spurvoterguide.org

SF Prop F

Drug Screening and Treatment for Benefits Recipients

ORDINANCE

Substance Abuse Screening, Evaluation, and Treatment Requirements for CAAP Assistance

Requires County Adult Assistance Program recipients suspected of using illegal drugs to submit to drug testing and substance abuse treatment in order to receive program benefits.

Vote NO

SPUR's Recommendation

While SPUR understands the immense personal and public toll of this public health crisis, we do not think that this ordinance would achieve its intended goals. Compulsory drug testing for public benefits has not had a measurable impact on substance use or substance use disorders. Requiring recipients of public benefits to submit to drug testing and substance use disorder treatment could increase poverty and exacerbate harms to the city's most vulnerable populations. Research has shown that any barrier to public benefits can discourage enrollment, reducing access to much-needed benefits, and that drug testing is no different. It can have the unintended consequence of stigmatizing people experiencing poverty, rather than helping people who are experiencing addiction. Medical experts, public health experts, mental health experts, and direct service providers all oppose drug testing and treatment requirements as a condition of receiving public benefits. Drug testing and treatment are also expensive and would likely cost the county much more than the existing program, as many states found when they tried requiring public benefits recipients to undergo drug testing.

Read our complete analysis at spurvoterguide.org

CA Prop 1

Treatment Not Tents

BOND

Behavioral Health Services Act and Behavioral Health Infrastructure Bond Act Bond

Authorizes the state to issue $6.38 billion in general obligation bonds to build behavioral-health housing and treatment facilities for homeless people and veterans. Expands the Mental Health Services Act and requires counties to spend part of the state's existing "millionaire's tax" on housing and services for people suffering from severe mental illnesses and substance use disorders as well as early-intervention services for children and youth.

Vote YES

SPUR's Recommendation

Prop. 1 would fortify recent efforts by all levels of government to reduce homelessness by modernizing the Mental Health Services Act and focusing funding on much-needed housing solutions, particularly over the next eight years, while expanding medical interventions to include treatment for substance use disorders.

The legislature and administration estimate that the bond will build 11,500 new treatment beds and supportive housing units and 26,700 outpatient treatment slots, which are critically needed for those who choose to seek treatment. According to a recent Rand study, California needs 4,767 beds for both acute and subacute conditions and an additional 2,963 community residential beds for those with chronic conditions.

Prop. 1 is needed to update our state's mental health system and to provide people experiencing homelessness with the permanent housing and behavioral health services they need. We also consider the inclusion of treatment for substance abuse disorders to be a positive move.

Read our complete analysis at spurvoterguide.org

Purpose and Process

The goal of the SPUR Voter Guide is to offer objective analysis and advise voters on which measures will deliver real solutions.

For the March election, SPUR analyzed San Francisco city and county measures and California state measures related to our policy areas. (Note: There were no regional or San José measures related to SPUR policy areas on this ballot. SPUR did not analyze Oakland Measure D because it qualified for the ballot after SPUR completed its analysis process.)

For San Francisco measures, a subcommittee of the SPUR board served on a ballot analysis committee to hear arguments on both sides, debate the merits of each, and provide recommendations to the SPUR San Francisco Board of Directors, which voted to accept or reject the committee's recommendation. For state measures, the SPUR Executive Board served as both the ballot analysis committee and the adopting body. Each board must reach a 60 percent vote to determine the final SPUR recommendation on a given ballot measure. The boards voted to adopt a position on the relevant measures on the following dates:

SPUR Executive Board: December 5, 2023

San Francisco Board of Directors: November 28, 2023, and December 15, 2023

Acknowledgments

SPUR Executive Board: Lydia Tan (chair), Kristina Raspe (vice chair), Bob Gamble (secretary), Cynthia Wong (treasurer), Jaye Bailey, Lindsay Baker, Daniel Cedeño, Donald Falk, Jean Fraser, David Friedman, Hao Ko, Camille Llanes-Fontanilla, Manan Shah, Leah Toeniskoetter, Shin-pei Tsay

San Francisco Ballot Analysis Committee: Shin-pei Tsay (chair), Don Falk, Robert Gamble, Edward Harrington, Dawn Kamalanathan, Guillermo Rodriguez, Lydia Tan

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