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From: California Taxpayers' Association

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CAL-TAX BALLOT POSITIONS: SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL BONDS; AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Including endorsements of statewide school construction bonds and more funding for after-school programs, the California Taxpayers' Association has taken the following positions on November 2002 ballot propositions:

Proposition 46. The Board of Directors of Cal-Tax voted to make no recommendation on this \$2.1 billion general obligation bond measure that is called the Housing and Emergency Shelter Trust Fund Bond Act of 2002 (SB 1227, Burton). The board was divided and, following lengthy discussion, voted overwhelmingly for “no recommendation,” which is essentially that of neutrality.

Proposition 47. The \$13.05 billion bond authorized by this proposition will build badly needed classrooms, make safety repairs and upgrade California's elementary, middle and high schools, as well as its community colleges and universities. Cal-Tax President Larry McCarthy signed ballot arguments in favor of this measure because it will deliver thousands of overdue school construction and repair projects without raising taxes.

McCarthy said, “We support Proposition 47 because it holds districts responsible for the proper expenditure of funds. This money cannot be spent on bureaucracy or wasteful overhead. It can only be used for school construction. In addition, projects will have to comply with strict accountability requirements, including mandatory audits, to safeguard against waste and mismanagement.”

Proposition 48. This court consolidation measure was considered outside the purview of Cal-Tax, which makes no recommendation.

Proposition 49. Cal-Tax directors have endorsed the After School Education and Safety Program Act of 2002, an initiative sponsored by Paul Miner and Arnold Schwarzenegger. The measure would revamp existing programs and increase funding to up to \$550 million, beginning in June 2004, or later when funding is available.

This proposition has provable cost effectiveness. According to a study, Californians will save \$8 to \$12 for each dollar invested in after-school programs under Proposition 49. Children in high-risk circumstances do better academically and have fewer encounters with law enforcement when engaged in after-school programs. This measure does not raise taxes and would be funded based on revenue growth in the state beyond \$1.5 billion up to a capped amount.

Proposition 50. Cal-Tax directors voted to oppose this \$3.44 billion "water bond," which was placed on the ballot through the initiative process. The bond proceeds are not used to address California's water storage needs.

The initiative was drafted by private interests at the exclusion of public input through the legislative process. It lacks oversight and accountability.

Proposition 51. Cal-Tax directors oppose this initiative to reallocate 30 percent of sales tax revenues collected on sale or lease of motor vehicles for a new Traffic Congestion Relief and Safe Schools Bus Trust Fund.

This proposal locks in spending permanently on various projects and into a number of ongoing environmental and transit programs without the possibility of modifying them. Many of the projects are not statewide priority issues for taxpayers, and some should not warrant state spending at all. For example: \$2 million for a golf cart path along El Toro Road to Leisure World, a gated retirement village in Orange County; \$12 million for boats, fueling stations and docks for Lake Tahoe; \$1 million a year to fund expansion of the California Railroad Museum, and \$40 million to San Francisco to fund expansion and operations of a music concourse. While some projects may be needed infrastructure improvements worthy of statewide taxpayer investment, they are bound to a measure which permanently allocates millions of dollars to non-priority needs and ongoing programs with little real oversight and no possibility for modification.

Proposition 52. This initiative to allow voter registration on election days received no recommendation as it is outside the purview of Cal-Tax.

(Note: Cal-Tax's analyses of the November General Election ballot propositions are available at Cal-Tax Online:

<http://www.caltax.org/member/digest/sep2002/9.2002.Staff-2002CaliforniaBallotPropositions.02.htm>.)