

Below is an explanation for how I will be casting my (ridiculously excessive) 47 votes on November 7. Pursuant to my personal policy, I vote for all of my party's nominees unless I have a compelling reason to do otherwise. Even with my concerns about the war in Iraq, certain other policies in the Republican Party that fall to my right, the corruption that has infected some in the Party, and the tactical failures of some of the nominees' campaigns, I generally remain a conservative and continue to be a member of the Republican Party. As for the particular partisan races in which I will be voting, I see no compelling reason to override my personal policy in any of them, so I will vote for the Republican in all 11 partisan races. My explanation for my 36 other votes is below. For referenda, I also state below the positions of the Democratic and Republican Parties to give some perspective on my own decisions, and the recommendations with which I agree I put in bold.

# of Votes to Cast	Office / Referendum	Jurisdiction	Candidate / Vote	Explanation
1	Governor	State	Arnold Schwarzenegger (R)	See introduction.
1	Lieutenant Governor	State	Tom McClintock (R)	See introduction.
1	Secretary of State	State	Bruce McPherson (R)	See introduction.
1	Controller	State	Tony Strickland (R)	See introduction.
1	Treasurer	State	Claude Parrish (R)	See introduction.
1	Attorney General	State	Chuck Poochigian (R)	See introduction.
1	Insurance Commissioner	State	Steve Poizner (R)	See introduction.
1	Member, State Board of Equalization (District 1)	State	David J. Neighbors (R)	See introduction.
1	United States Senator	Federal	Richard "Dick" Mountjoy (R)	See introduction.
1	United States Representative (District 15)	Federal	Raymond L. Chukwu (R)	See introduction.

1	Member of the State Assembly (District 21)	State	Virginia Chang Kiraly (R)	See introduction.
1	Reconfirmation of Joyce L. Kennard as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court	State	Yes	<p>Of all of the votes that should not be on the ballot, my views are perhaps most strong on judicial reconfirmations. Our federal government gives its judges and justices life tenure so that they will not be biased by the need to make popular decisions to secure reelection. This is a very important principle, but it is one that our state does not follow. As a result, our Supreme Court and Court of Appeal justices are constantly at risk of succumbing to the pressure of making popular rather than textually sound decisions in order to win reelection. However, thankfully, Californians almost always reconfirm justices by wide margins, thereby giving them <i>de facto</i> life tenure and thus decreasing the risk of bias.</p> <p>I will also observe that a voter would almost need to be an attorney to make an informed judgment about a justice's jurisprudence, and I (and most other people) am unqualified to make such a determination. As a result of all this, my policy now is to vote to reconfirm all justices so that they continue to have <i>de facto</i> life tenure. Doing so both functionally moves us closer to our federal system and also prevents me from (fruitlessly) trying to make a substantive evaluation of specific justices' jurisprudences.</p>
1	Reconfirmation of Carol A. Corrigan as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court	State	Yes	See explanation for reconfirmation of Joyce L. Kennard as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court.
1	Reconfirmation of Conrad L. Rushing as Presiding Justice of the Court of Appeal (District 6)	State	Yes	See explanation for reconfirmation of Joyce L. Kennard as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court.
1	Reconfirmation of Nathan D. Mihara as Associate Justice of the Court of Appeal (District 6)	State	Yes	See explanation for reconfirmation of Joyce L. Kennard as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court.

1	Reconfirmation of Richard J. McAdams as Associate Justice of the Court of Appeal (District 6)	State	Yes	See explanation for reconfirmation of Joyce L. Kennard as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court.
1	Reconfirmation of Wendy Clark Duffy as Associate Justice of the Court of Appeal (District 6)	State	Yes	See explanation for reconfirmation of Joyce L. Kennard as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court.
1	Superior Court Judge (Office 13)	State	Tim Pitsker	This is the runoff of a race in which I had already voted for Pitsker. While not a whole lot is or should be known about judicial candidates, it appears from the way that the candidates' endorsements break down that his opponent, McCoy, is more the candidate of the liberal establishment. Also, Pitsker, a deputy county district attorney, seems to have a good resume and has the support of a few Superior Court judges.
2	Governing Board Member (Trustee Area 1)	West-Valley Mission Community College District	Jack Lucas and John Feemster	As is usual with these education races, information about the candidates is sparse, and it is often difficult to understand what the disagreements among the candidates are let alone to develop an independent view of those issues. Having said that, Lucas and Feemster stood out to me somewhat from the four candidates. Feemster is the only candidate that the County Republican Party endorsed. From the information that I was able to gather, he was the only candidate to put forward a detailed critique of the Community College District. He is also running as a fiscal hawk, has a record of community activism, and has experience being on one of the community college oversight committees. Lucas, a former Monte Sereno town councilman, is the only incumbent running. He has public service and teaching experience, which seems to make him well qualified for the position. I should note that the County Democratic Party endorsed Lucas and Montagna. This may be an argument for supporting Feemster and Cordero instead. However, Lucas came across to me as more professional than Cordero.

1	Governing Board Member (Trustee Area 2)	West-Valley Mission Community College District	Buck Polk	Polk, the appointed incumbent, faces nominal opposition from one candidate, Mark Little. Little has already failed to appear at one candidate forum and failed either to submit a ballot statement or create a SmartVoter profile. Thus he apparently is not serious about his campaign. I do note that the County Republican Party has endorsed Little. This is possibly because (as it should do) it has automatically endorsed him because he is the only registered Republican in the race. While I take the County Party's endorsement seriously, in this case I also want a candidate who has a tangible record of competency. I also observe that Chris Constantin, a Republican Board member, has endorsed Polk.
3	Governing Board Member	Campbell Union High School District	Joe Pandit, Philip Reynolds, Jr., and Pamela Parker	<p>This was another difficult vote for which I was under informed and for which there was minimal information available. There are six candidates, and I reviewed them all. All have pros and cons, and none stand out as especially bad.</p> <p>In the end, I decided to go with the two candidates that the County Republican Party endorsed: Reynolds and Parker. Reynolds has a pretty conservative, pro-charter school platform and is neutral on Measure G for similar reasons to why I am voting No on it. He also has had kids go through local public schools. I do note, though, that he has some downsides: he has no teaching experience and may be a bit of a loose canon. However, I think that there is an advantage to having a conservative on the board. Parker, meanwhile, seems more moderate and is an incumbent and thus clearly experienced.</p> <p>As for my third choice, I settled on Pandit. He has experience in elected office as a former director of the Santa Clara Valley Water District. He also seems to have a fairly conservative platform based on sticking to educational basics.</p>
3	Governing Board Member	Union School District	Cindy Goodsell, Sheila Billings, and Eric D. Madison	I could gather almost no information on this race from the internet. Three of the four candidates (Goodsell, Hector, and Billings) are incumbents. Ultimately, I relied heavily on the County Republican Party endorsement of Goodsell and the challenging candidate, Madison. Neither of them raised strong red flags either. For my third choice, I was fairly evenly torn between Billings and Hector. Ultimately, I decided for Billings because (as I understand it) she is the only candidate with grade school classroom experience. Having someone with that direct experience is probably an important asset for the Board.
1	District Attorney	County	Dolores A. Carr	This is a high profile runoff that pits Carr, a Superior Court judge, against Chief Deputy District Attorney Karyn Sinunu. Both candidates have impressive resumes, but local Republicans (including the County Party, State Sen. Abel Maldonado, County Sheriff Laurie Smith, and County Supervisor Don Gage) are supporting Carr.

3	Member, Town Council	Town	<p>Dennis Byron, Joe Pirzynski, and Mike Wasserman</p>	<p>This year three council seats are up, and there are five candidates running: the three incumbents (Pirzynski, McNutt, and Wasserman) and two challengers (Byron and Novillo). Having been away at college for most of their last term, I am not at all fully qualified to make a decision in this race. However, here is my judgment as best as I can make it. My first decision was easy: Novillo should be rejected. He is running a largely nominal campaign and entered the race because he was mad that the Town Council did not side with him in a dispute over his neighbor's swimming pool. Second, I definitely support Wasserman, who seems competent, seems to hold some fairly conservative values, and is the only candidate with the County Republican Party's endorsement.</p> <p>My decision in picking two of the other three candidates was a close call. Both Pirzynski and McNutt seem competent and capable although both seem to have some left-wing leanings (which may or may not actually impact their Town Council votes) and are the only two candidates with the County Democratic Party's endorsement. The <i>Los Gatos Weekly Times</i> endorsed all three incumbents on the grounds that the status quo is serving Los Gatos well. I am sympathetic to such a position. However, Byron, a former director of the California Association of Realtors, would come to the table with fresh ideas and has expressed a desire to streamline the town's zoning-related processes. I also appreciated his commitment to work in a collegial way. I ultimately felt that bringing a new perspective to the Council for the next two years was worthwhile. This unfortunately means ousting an incumbent, and I chose McNutt. From what I could read, I found Pirzynski to be the more philosophical and statesmanlike of the two. Again, this is not a criticism of McNutt. There were just too many qualified candidates for too few seats.</p>
1	Santa Clara Valley Water District Director (District 1)	County	<p>Ram Singh</p>	<p>This race is for our representative to the county body that handles water management issues. Incumbent Rosemary Kamei is in a runoff with challenger Ram Singh. From what I can gather about this race (which is not much), the Water District is facing some financial problems and has been seeing water fees increase. These problems have fueled opposition to Kamei (after she was reelected without opposition in 2002). Because of these problems, I am not inclined to vote for Kamei, whom I believe is a Democrat. I had supported Singh in the first round of voting, and I will do so again now. He has put forward detailed critiques of the Water District, seems to have some expertise (he is a long-standing professor at SJSU and has served on government water boards), and is running as a strong fiscal hawk. He also has the County Republican Party endorsement.</p>

1	Proposition 1A	State	Yes	<p>This is the first of Gov. Schwarzenegger and the Democratic Legislature's major five-part compromise for a comprehensive budget plan (the other four parts being 1B-1E). Like I discuss for 1B, when such a major compromise occurs, my default is to defer to it, so I begin from that perspective.</p> <p>Proposition 1A changes part of the budget formula further to lock down funding for transportation. While I do not like the idea of tying the Legislature's hands by forcing them to live within budgetary formulae, the Legislature itself put this on the ballot and thus is willingly going along. Because of this, I will stick with my default position of supporting the compromise.</p> <p>Democratic Party: Yes Republican Party: Yes</p>
1	Proposition 1B	State	No	<p>I decided on Propositions 1B-1E as a group. This was a difficult decision, and I quickly came to the conclusion that both a Yes and a No vote would have significant downsides. Along with Proposition 1A, these proposals are the five-part package that Gov. Schwarzenegger, legislative Democrats, and some Republicans have put forward as a major, comprehensive plan for California's future. Generally speaking, I want to defer to and support these big compromises once they are hammered out in Sacramento. These four propositions also fund very important programs: transportation (1B), low-income housing (1C), education (1D), and flood-prevention infrastructure (1E).</p> <p>However, this spending is all financed through huge bonds. The Attorney General's analysis says that the interest payments will almost exactly double the cost (about \$36 billion in interest payments over the next 30 years). I am not especially knowledgeable of economics, but until I understand better why we should be funding this through bonds (and thus incurring all of these interest payments) instead of just having a straight tax increase, I do not feel comfortable supporting this compromise. This is unfortunate, because I am happy that Sacramento was able to put forward a comprehensive and fairly bipartisan proposal.</p> <p>Democratic Party: Yes Republican Party: Yes</p>
1	Proposition 1C	State	No	<p>See explanation for Proposition 1B.</p> <p>Democratic Party: Yes Republican Party: No</p>

1	Proposition 1D	State	No	<p>See explanation for Proposition 1B.</p> <p>Democratic Party: Yes Republican Party: Neutral</p>
1	Proposition 1E	State	No	<p>See explanation for Proposition 1B.</p> <p>Democratic Party: Yes Republican Party: Yes</p>
1	Proposition 83	State	No	<p>Under today's law, there are restrictions placed on convicted child molesters once they are released from prison. This proposal tightens those restrictions and also increases the punishment for types of child molestation. While one's gut reaction may be to support such a proposal, it is important to look at the details.</p> <p>Currently, some sex offenders are not allowed to live within a 1320 foot radius of a school. Perhaps this proposal's most problematic requirement is that it expands this radius to 2000 feet of a school or park. How many residences are not within 2000 feet of a school or park? Not many in our urban areas. Thus some experts think that this will result in convicted sex offenders migrating to rural communities. But what is beneficial about that? The fact of the matter is that such people have served their time in prison, and while we might want them simply to disappear, they do have to live somewhere. Thus this aspect of the proposal seems more based on wishful thinking than careful analysis.</p> <p>Another part of the proposition requires certain convicted sex offenders always to wear a GPS device upon release from prison. While this is an interesting idea, I have also heard some persuasive arguments that doing so may not be effective. Ultimately, I join several newspaper editorial boards in opposing this proposition. While the principles behind it may be good, it needs to be more carefully developed.</p> <p>Democratic Party: Yes Republican Party: Yes</p>

1	Proposition 84	State	No	<p>This is another bond, in this case funding public lands and water infrastructure. For the reasons that I gave for Proposition 1B, I will vote No on this one too. I also have another reason for doing so. Unlike 1A-1E, which were put on the ballot by vote of the Legislature, all of the other propositions (83-90) were put on through a signature gathering process. Special interests often finance both the signature collection and then the Yes campaign for these types of propositions. This is fine, but when such a proposition dictates that the state spend money, those interests may stand to make financial gain. Because of this, as a rule I dislike voting for initiative-triggered propositions that have budgetary implications (although I make an exception for Proposition 89 this time). I also think that such a huge budgetary decision (essentially a \$5.4 billion, 30-year loan) should be approved by the Legislature.</p> <p>Democratic Party: Yes Republican Party: No</p>
1	Proposition 85	State	Yes	<p>This is a repeat of last year's proposal to require abortion clinics to give parents 48 hours notice before they perform an abortion on a minor (with an exception if the minor goes to a judge and the judge approves a waiver). This is an easy vote, and it is amazing that there is a school of thought in America that wants to extend abortion on demand to this extent.</p> <p>Democratic Party: No Republican Party: Yes</p>

1	Proposition 86	State	No	<p>This would raise taxes on cigarettes by a remarkable \$0.13 per cigarette. Humorously, this tax would be added prior to the computation of the sales tax, so cigarette buyers would literally be taxed for being taxed. The proceeds would then go to various medical-oriented programs (including cancer research). As no fan of smoking myself, it is with regret that I have decided to oppose this proposal. I do so for two reasons.</p> <p>First, as I discussed for Proposition 84, this proposal also was put on the ballot by private parties through a signature gathering process and mandates state expenditures. Some experts have raised concern that hospitals are supporting this proposal because they have slipped in some antitrust exemptions for themselves. I am possibly incapable of determining whether this is actually the case, but the mere fact that this is an initiative statute runs that risk. It is better to leave this to the Legislature.</p> <p>Second, forcibly raising prices on a commodity increases the chance of creating a black market for it. Black markets lead to violence and, in our case, possibly to significant smuggling of cigarettes from Mexico. As a result, I (often kicking and screaming) tend to take a libertarian view on reducing a product's accessibility: it is best to let people buy and own items that they want rather than force people to buy them anyways through a black market.</p> <p>Democratic Party: Yes Republican Party: No</p>
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1	Proposition 87	State	No	<p>This proposal taxes oil companies per barrel on their production in California and uses it for a variety of efforts to pursue alternative energy. Like Proposition 86, this was put on the ballot by an initiative process, meaning that interest groups that would financially benefit from the new spending may have created the proposal.</p> <p>However, another major reason that I am voting No is that the official Attorney General's summary and analysis (which I have always found to be very professionally written, neutral, and helpful) stated that it could not understand the text's meaning on a couple of key points. This to me was a major red flag that this is a poorly written proposal. Also, the proposal strangely requires that oil companies not pass the cost of the tax along to consumers. Short of a price fixing procedure (which this proposal does not create), there is no way for this provision to be enforced, and (which also speaks volumes) the Attorney General's analysis explicitly says so. It would be better for the Legislature to put forward its own energy alternative plan than to rely on this privately proposed one.</p> <p>Democratic Party: Yes Republican Party: No</p>
1	Proposition 88	State	No	<p>This proposal was created by a few wealthy liberals to increase property taxes slightly and spend the money on education. However, it was put forward without broader budgetary coordination or educational planning. This has resulted in both parties and many newspapers opposing it. I will too.</p> <p>Democratic Party: No Republican Party: No</p>

1	Proposition 89	State	Yes	<p>The proposition allows state candidates to receive full and pretty generous public funding for their campaigns if they receive small contributions from a specified number of people to demonstrate the strength of their campaigns. The logic of public funding is that if candidates are simply handed their campaign funding they will not be beholden to and biased by special interest contributions. This is not a perfect plan. For instance, it may limit certain groups more than others from contributing to proposition campaigns and it is funded through a corporate income tax increase. It is also opposed by the Republican Party and many newspapers, and the Democratic Party is neutral. Thus my position does not fall within a broad consensus, which I always find disconcerting.</p> <p>However, this is, overall, a bold and innovative effort to tackle campaign finance reform, an important problem that continues to evade a solution. This proposal moves campaigns away from appealing to special interests and towards appealing to the grass roots. Passage of this proposal may also spark a national conversation on public campaign funding since other states often look closely at innovative laws passed in California.</p> <p>Democratic Party: Neutral Republican Party: No</p>
1	Proposition 90	State	No	<p>This proposal is a response to <i>Kelo v. New London</i>, the major 2005 U.S. Supreme Court opinion that found that the government could exercise its eminent domain right not just to take land for public use but also to give it to other private entities. Through this proposal, California would limit its own ability to do so. I am sympathetic to that.</p> <p>However, it also requires that the government compensate property owners whenever (with some exceptions) the government does anything that results in a significant loss of property value even if the property is not seized. It also makes it easier for property owners to file lawsuits against the government to collect compensation. This could result in lots of litigation from people who claim (whether merited or not) that the government has taken action resulting in reduced property values. Not only that, but the proposal is quite vague. For instance, would this law require us to compensate everyone who owns property that is zoned not to maximize its value? The proposition does not go into much detail about such issues, leaving it to the courts to determine who is getting their property value reduced and who is not.</p> <p>Democratic Party: No Republican Party: Yes</p>

1	Measure A	County	No	This proposal limits development of currently undeveloped areas by doing such things as requiring a minimum property size and a maximum percentage of the land on which building could occur. This basically sounds like a laudable effort, but it contains a lot of details. These details (which I have not even tried to master for myself) have cost it the support of some key Republicans including County Sheriff Laurie Smith, County Supervisor Don Gage, and the County Party itself. In addition, Democratic County Supervisor Pete McHugh opposes it, and Democratic San Jose City Councilman and mayoral candidate Chuck Reed is neutral. On such a major plan, I would rather there be a broader consensus (especially including people with whom I tend to agree) before I sign on to it myself.
1	Measure G	Campbell Union High School District	No	This is a \$90 million bond to be paid through a property tax increase. As I said for Proposition 1B, I do not understand why we cannot do this simply through a regular property tax increase. Until I understand this better, I do not feel comfortable voting for this bond.

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