

President's Report - October, 2018

As we approach Halloween and the November mid-term election, it is indeed a scary time for taxpayers.

After wading through over 40 measures on the June ballot, we've analyzed two dozen on the November ballot in Contra Costa County.

Our positions are available on our web site www.cocotax.org under November 2018 Election.

Several themes are apparent:

- Many cities and special districts are now trying to come to grips with their massive unfunded public employee pension debt. But, instead of actually dealing with the problem, they're trying to increase revenues by various new tax measures, promising to improve police and fire services, upgrade roads, etc.
- More school bonds are proposed, many of which include projects to catch up on deferred maintenance. Often, routine repairs and maintenance have been deferred in order to create operating budget opportunities to raise compensation and benefits, thus making the unfunded pension and health care challenge even more difficult. It is patently unfair to ask taxpayers to pay long-term interest on bonds for work that should have been covered in annual operating budgets.
- Some school bond measures also propose to include technology upgrades along with new facility construction. Since information technology advances so rapidly these days, it's not appropriate for taxpayers to pay interest over 30 years for technology that is likely to last far less time. We believe these kinds of plans should be funded through other means.

Our "social media" project is progressing well. Reaction to our Facebook, Twitter and upgraded web site are positive, and we will continue to expand our outreach beyond our traditional following. We have launched a series of short videos covering topics high on our priority list, starting with Prop 13, which we completed last week, and which is now posted on YouTube. Next week we will take on the subject of rent control, which really only benefits politicians trying to buy renters' votes.

We continue to be resource-limited in terms of our opportunities to provide public information and to work with those elected officials that are getting the message: taxpayers cannot and will not be able to cover the looming financial crisis facing the state and local governments. The proof is seen in the steady departure of people and businesses from the state, lowering tax revenues and jobs.

Please recruit your friends and neighbors to join CoCoTax as we ramp up our action plans for 2019.

Jack Weir