

# March 3rd: New Taxpayer Rebellion Day

Election results are still coming in as counties and Secretary of State finish counting up ballots. April 10th is the drop-dead date to finish up and log in final results. We are seeing some surprising results, at least, surprising for me.

The baaad! Prop 13, as I call it differentiating from Howard Jarvis' property protection good Prop 13, was another school bond at \$15 billion and carrying an additional \$11 billion of interest debt for the State. We, the taxpayers have put our foot down and said, "NO!" We've had enough and don't need this ... not even for our kids. We need better organization and money management in education.

As of Sunday, the count on that proposition stands at 53.7% voting 'no' and 46.3% voted in the affirmative. There had been a hard push to change the voting requirement from 2/3 approval for passage of tax measures to 55% and it appears someone had a pretty good handle on how the public was feeling about more taxes and how this vote was going to go. The requirement didn't change, this measure didn't get a 2/3 vote approval so this let's-create-more-debt-for-California deal failed.

Los Angeles County Fire Department started making the rounds sometime before Thanksgiving telling their contract cities and any others that would listen, they were in "crisis" and needed a tax measure passed to fill the \$1 billion shortfall to replace aged and worn out equipment. According to those I listened to about this equipment problem, it had been occurring over the last 20 to 25 years. The equipment "fix" became a 6-cent-per-square-foot parcel tax that would go up 2% a year, every year, until taxpayers repealed it.

First of all, us taxpayers have just gone through a county parcel tax to deal with stormwater and now we are told they need another parcel tax to deal with paramedic and fire responses. Jeffrey Prang, County Assessor,



## Shade's Perspective

Lois M. Shade

Former Mayor of Glendora

said L.A. County's tax roll grew by \$94.4 billion in 2019. That's a billion dollars more than the year before and they still need another parcel tax?

As of Sunday, the vote count is 52.36% voting 'yes' for the parcel tax and 47.64% voting 'no' on the parcel tax. This tax needs a 2/3 'yes' vote to pass also and this measure didn't get that 2/3 vote. The taxpayers said "NO" again! We need better organization and money management in Los Angeles County Fire Department starting off with a Capital Improvement Plan so equipment is updated more often than every 20 to 25 years. Perhaps this "crisis" could be fixed with some of the \$1 billion increase from 2019.

The most amazing and loudest voice of all this March 3rd came out of the City of West Covina on the proposed 0.75 cent sales tax increase. The same tax other cities have passed that remains with the city. This tax was being proposed by West Covina Police and Fire Departments, and not by the city's Mayor and Council Members. The citizens became outraged, not over the sales tax increase, but over the revision to the Audit Committee to have two Council Members, one representative each from the police and fire departments sitting on that proposed new audit committee.

Someone correct me if I am wrong, but if two council members sit on an audit committee, participate in a vote on a recommendation to the city council can

they then go back to a regularly scheduled council meeting and vote once again on the same issue after hearing public testimony to the Council on the audit committee recommendation? The West Covina voters had a problem with that also and 79.9%, or 80%, of the city voters rejected the sales tax increase because of the doubling down on the audit committee by the union leadership.

It seems better organization at the top in West Covina is sorely needed and money management will be critical unless, and until, the Council steps up, as other city councils in other cities have, and comes forth with a \$0.75 tax increase acceptable to 15,735 voters.

West Covina City Council, after receiving this loud "NO" blast from almost 16,000 voters, should recognize there is an army of unhappy people out there. The message I see is one that says lack of confidence in the Mayor, Council and city manager. We'll see what the new state audit shows, but even that may not take this Council out of the political woods.

The BKK / Singpoli debacle is not the sitting councils' or city manager's doing, but it is there and is what it is. Many of us around back in the early 80's know the history there. The constant spills with the haz-mat unit first-responders suited up with gas masks, the ugly smells, the evacuations, the failed efforts early on to close the dump. The West Covina City Council needs to ask itself ... will 16,000 voters be happy to allow this council to continue serving if it decides to move forward with developing the BKK site into residential quarters of any kind? Has this Council accurately assessed the financial gain, or the risk and city liability if that facility's encapsulation seal is broken for proposed development? If 16,000 voters aren't a loud enough voice, the State of California will be with a hand delivered notice of liability.

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**EXAMINER**