

Cal Cities Board votes to support two ballot measures

Dec 6, 2023

Last week, the League of California Cities Board of Directors voted overwhelmingly in favor of the [ACA 13 \(Ward, 2023\)](#) ballot measure and [Proposition 1 \(2024\)](#).

ACA 13 — which does not yet have a ballot number — would require ballot measures that increase voter-approval thresholds to pass by the same threshold. The measure will appear on the November 2024 ballot.

Proposition 1, which the proponents call "[Treatment Not Tents](#)," would modernize California's behavioral health system to expand access to services and housing. The ballot measure will appear on the March 2024 ballot and is Gov. Gavin Newsom's top priority at the ballot box this spring.

[What's good for the goose is good for the gander](#)

ACA 13 is one of several efforts to stop the deceptively named "[Taxpayer Protection and Government Accountability Act](#)" [initiative](#). The initiative — sponsored by some of the state's wealthiest corporations — would expand the definition of a tax and raise the voter approval threshold for some local taxes. The initiative would also limit certain fees to the least amount necessary to provide the service. A broad group of organizations oppose the initiative, including labor unions, local government associations, lawmakers, and the Governor. In September, the Legislature and the Governor [filed an emergency petition](#) with the California Supreme Court to remove the initiative from the November 2024 ballot.

"This ballot measure is an anti-democratic power grab by greedy corporations and puts a radical minority in charge of the democratic process," said San Diego Council President Sean Elo-Rivera [at a press conference last month](#). "It also jeopardizes a range of critical city services and infrastructure that our residents have come to rely on

and expect. We need more accountability for wealthy corporations, not less."

ACA 13 would also preserve the right of local governments to place advisory questions on the ballot asking voters their opinions on issues.

Funding and reform for behavioral health care

Proposition 1 would modernize the Mental Health Services Act for the first time in nearly two decades. The ballot measure also includes a \$6.38 billion bond for over 11,000 new treatment beds and housing units for people with the most acute behavioral health needs who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

This year, Cal Cities actively engaged with the legislative vehicles comprising Proposition 1: [AB 531 \(Irwin\)](#) and [SB 326 \(Eggman\)](#). These efforts helped secure amendments to provide \$1.5 billion for cities and counties to fund thousands more behavioral health beds. Cal Cities maintained a support position on both measures for most of the year. However, last-minute changes to AB 531 taken just one week before the end of the legislative session generated concerns among cities. As a result, Cal Cities withdrew its support.

These amendments allow for by-right approvals of unlocked and locked behavioral health facilities, sober living homes, and recovery housing. While existing law generally requires by-right approval of these facilities in residential areas, Proposition 1 would also apply this approval process to office, retail, and parking zones.

The Cal Cities Board directed staff to engage in the regulatory process and pursue legislation to address these concerns while also supporting Proposition 1. Cal Cities will focus on correcting the overconcentration of these facilities in residential areas and implementing reasonable oversight of unlicensed recovery housing and sober living homes to ensure the safety and success of those receiving services and support.