

Black Voter Education Guide



BSBA

BLACK SMALL BUSINESS ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA

BALLOT PROPOSITIONS

2020



Black Voter Education Guide Foreword

The Black Small Business Association (BSBA) of California

is excited to issue its *2020 Black Voter Guide*! This important document provides critical information about the 12 propositions that will be on this year's General Election ballot in California, and an analysis of how each will impact our community.

As Black Californians, we face obstacles that can limit the trajectory of our lives, including systemic racism, hostile work environments, a persistent wealth gap, and housing discrimination. This year, we have the added burden of the coronavirus pandemic, which has disproportionately impacted the Black community, and cost some of us our jobs, our businesses, or, more devastatingly – the lives of our family members. Despite government efforts to provide financial relief from these unprecedented economic hardships, most Black families have not benefited from these federal, state, and local programs.

Things do not have to be this way.

As we have learned time and time again, elections matter. Voting is one of the most important things we can do to hold elected officials accountable for their actions, or inaction. In California, we can also make changes ourselves with voter initiatives that go directly to the ballot. This year, we have 12 important propositions that will be decided by California's voters. These measures include, but are not limited to, changes to laws related to consumer privacy, commercial property taxes, independent contractors in the "gig economy", cashless bail, and voting rights for formerly incarcerated individuals.

We know that change is possible because we've seen it happen before. It happens when we vote, and we make the best decisions as voters when we are informed. The BSBA 2020 Voter Guide was developed to help educate Black voters by providing pertinent information about each proposition and an analysis of the potential impact each will have on our community. We know that the Black Californians are not a monolithic group, but we all face similar struggles and hurdles that limit our ability to live freely and prosper in society. Voting is one of the sharpest tools we have in our fight to build a better future for ourselves, our families, and our community; therefore we must participate in every election.

This year, let BSBA's 2020 Voter Guide help you decide, and remember to vote on November 3rd!



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PROP 14

Borrowing for stem cell research

What it does:

- Allows CA to borrow \$5.7 billion to re-fund stem cell research.

Impact to the Black community:

No immediate foreseeable impact on California Black communities. Would caution against increasing state debt during a time of large budget deficits. The threat of rising sales taxes which disproportionately impact Black Americans grows when state debt rises. So in the medium to long term there would be increased economic risk to Black communities.

PROP 15

Split Roll

What it does:

- Increases property tax on already struggling small businesses
- No education reforms attached to the money that will be generated by this new tax
- Opens the door to change the residential provisions of Prop 13, which could mean skyrocketing property tax increases for all California homeowners

Impact to the Black community:

Many of Black small business owners are already struggling to stay in business due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Any increase in taxes would devastate our businesses and cause more of them to close. Currently over 440,000 Black owned businesses have shut their doors due to COVID-19 according to recent reports. The business and financial risk created would outweigh any expected benefits. Although this proposition will generate billions for local government and schools, there is no education reform plan attached to this money which means local governments could spend how they want to with no accountability.

PROP 16

Repeal Prop 209 Affirmative Action Amendment (2020)

What it does?

- Allows the State of California to consider race and gender with the goal of eliminating discrimination in state contracts, hiring and college admissions.
- Remedies gender bias and racism
- Allows equal opportunity policies in hiring and education

Impact to the Black community:

Levels the playing field in public contracts, education and employment. Creates opportunity for targeted investments in Black communities across California. Gives California a chance to correct decades of economic exclusion targeted against Black California residents.

PROP 17

Grants parolees voting rights

What it does:

- Restores voting rights to nearly 40,000 people who have been released from prison but are still on parole

Impact to the Black community:

This policy has been unnecessarily punitive and disproportionately impacts Black people. Prop 17 expands voting rights to the Parolee population who are disproportionately Black Americans. Gives Black Californians more political power by increasing the number of eligible voters. Restores dignity and citizenship rights to many well deserving Black Americans who have already paid their debt to society.

PROP 18

17-year-old voting age

What it does:

- Allows 17-year-olds to vote in primaries and special elections if they will be 18 by the following election.

Impact to the Black community:

Increases the number of eligible Black American voters. Expands the franchise to younger Black Americans thereby raising their voice in key elections. Opens opportunity for new political education initiatives targeting Black youth.

PROP 19

Home Protection for Seniors, Severely Disabled and Victims of Wildfire and Natural Disasters

What it does:

- Allows seniors over 55, disabled and victims of wildfire to purchase properties and keep the same tax base as their original property. They can take their tax base to any county in CA.
- Closes the loophole that allows gentrifiers and rich people to inherit multiple properties and benefit from the tax base from when the property was purchased, only allowing them to take advantage of the lower tax rate if they reside in the property.
- Generates \$2 billion in revenue providing an economic boost for schools, cities and counties struggling to balance budgets due to coronavirus and provides funding for affordable housing, homeless programs, healthcare and other local services.
- Creates a fire district fund dedicated to historically underfunded areas in rural and urban areas.

Impact to the Black community:

Through inheritance children or grandchildren can retain that same tax rate if they reside in or rent the property. This is a significant step for building wealth in the Black community. Creates new financial resources focused toward education and helping local governments close budget gaps without taking punitive measures such as raising sales taxes. Prevents the hoarding of wealth by historically advantaged communities.

PROP 20

Stricter sentencing and parole laws

What it does:

- Expand list of violent crimes for which early release is not an option
- Revises the theft threshold by adding a felony for serial theft - when a person is caught stealing for the third time with a value of \$250
- Requires the Board of Parole to consider an inmate's entire criminal history when deciding parole, not just the most recent committed offense; and requires a mandatory hearing to determine whether parole should be revoked for any parolee who violates the terms of his parole for the third time
- Reinstates DNA collection for certain crimes that were reduced to misdemeanors as part of Proposition 47

Impact to the Black community:

This measure increases penalties for low-level offenses and further perpetuates bias against Black people in a system that is set up to lock them up. The result will increase incarceration and enforcement targeting Black Americans in California. The measure would reduce public safety and perpetuate the worst parts of an already failing criminal justice system.

PROP 21

Rent Control

What it does?

- Undermines California's new statewide rent control law
- Allows regulation of single-family homes
- Places bureaucrats in charge of housing with the power to add additional fees
- Adds tens of millions in new costs to local governments

Impact to the Black community:

Since the State already passed a rent cap of 7%, this ballot measure puts important decisions in the hands of boards and commissions giving them unlimited power to add fees on housing, which will ultimately be passed on to tenants in the form of higher rent - especially when COVID-19 emergency orders are lifted.

PROP 22

Protect App Based Drivers & Services Act

What it does:

- Provides Uber, Lyft, Instacart, Postmates and Door Dash with a carve out, permanently exempting them from the provisions of AB 5 and paying into workers compensation, unemployment insurance and payroll insurance
- Prohibits corporations from observing basic labor protections for workers including fair wages and benefits

How this impacts the Black community:

While many people work gig economy jobs due to flexibility, we cannot ignore that these companies make billions of dollars each year and can do better. Many Black small business owners were classified as independent contractors and were impacted negatively by AB 5. The initiative should have included all Independent Contractors instead of the few select gig economy giants who can afford to pay into California's Unemployment Insurance system. The measure creates a loophole for large monopoly companies that underpay their employees many of which are Black Americans. The measure makes work less secure and less profitable, as well as exposing the most vulnerable Black Americans to unnecessary health and economic risk. The measure also solidifies monopoly control over the gig economy thereby locking out startup black-owned businesses from the market.

PROP 23

Kidney dialysis clinic rules revisited

What it does:

- Requires every clinic to have at least one physician present during all operating hours
- Requires the clinic to offer the same level of treatment of care to all patients whether treatment is paid for by private insurance or a government funding program such as Medi-Cal or Medicare
- Would give the California Department of Public Health oversight – agreeing to changes at a clinic or its closure, and requires Clinic administrators to report more information about infections among their dialysis patients

How this impacts the Black community:

Disproportionately hurts low-income African Americans by reducing access to healthcare services during the COVID-19 pandemic.

PROP 24

Consumer Privacy Laws

What it does:

- Changes the new California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA) and creates a barrier to enacting stronger consumer privacy protections in the future
- Establishes a new state agency dedicated to enforcing privacy laws
- Increases financial penalties against violators
- Prop 24 would expand the power of a business to refuse a consumer's request to delete their personal data

How this impacts the Black community: N/A

Consumer privacy laws are important for the Black community because they can help protect us from digital discrimination. When we use the internet, companies collect data about us, ranging from our location, to the things for which we search, buy, read, or click. They then use this information for their own business purposes, or sell it to other companies. Misuse of this data can lead to nefarious practices such as digital redlining, where lenders use consumer data to determine a person's race or racial make-up of a neighborhood as a rationale for refusing to lend to certain residents or charge much higher rates. This measure fails to close the loopholes that perpetuate this process and makes other changes that allows the continuation of institutional and systemic racism, denying Black families equal access to homes, services and opportunities.

PROP 25

Ban Cash Bail

What it does:

- Eliminates cash bail
- Gives judges discretion to determine if someone should be released while awaiting trial based on the potential risk they post to themselves or others

How it impacts the Black community:

The measure would end the practice of keeping Black Americans incarcerated for no other reason than not being able to afford bail. The measure also reduces the profitability of Black incarceration while reducing poverty among Black Americans who struggle to afford bail.