

CALIFORNIA LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

Day In the District 2014

SCA 7-WOLK:

A constitutional amendment to lower the local voter threshold for library construction bonds and special taxes for library operations from 2/3rds to 55%

Sponsor

The California Library Association

Location

During the 2013 Legislative session, SCA 7 passed both the Senate Governance and Finance Committee and the Senate Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee. The bill is currently in the Senate Appropriations Committee, along with other similar 55% vote measures. Because constitutional amendments do not subscribe to the same deadlines as regular legislation, SCA 7 will be eligible to be heard again during the 2014 session.

Bill Summary

SCA 7 asks California voters if they would like to give local communities the opportunity to decrease the voter threshold for the passage of local library construction bonds or special taxes for the purpose of funding library operations, from the current two-thirds vote to a 55% local vote.

SCA 7 includes important protections for taxpayers, by including a requirement for an annual independent audit of the amount of tax proceeds collected and expended and the specified purposes and programs funded. The bill also requires the creation of a citizens' oversight committee to review the expenditures and audits and make their findings known to the governing board and the public.

SCA 7 requires a two-thirds vote of the Senate and Assembly in order for this measure to appear on an upcoming statewide ballot (e.g. November 2014).

Why is SCA 7 important for libraries?

In a special report issued by the California State Library, entitled, "Thirty Years of California Library Ballot Measures – 1980-2009," they note that "library-related measures in California which only required a simple majority were approved 77% of the time, which is very close to the overall national average of 80%. However, library measures which required a supermajority were approved only 45% of the time."

Since 2000, **state** funding for city, county, and special district libraries has been reduced dramatically, making the need for **local** funding initiatives more critical.

The last statewide general obligation bond measure passed by the voters to fund new library construction or renovation was in 2000, and it authorized \$350 million in bonds for this purpose. However, a 2007 State Library Needs Assessment indicated the need is well in excess of \$8 billion.

Ask your legislator to please support SCA 7-Wolk.

Encourage your legislator to contact CLA Lobbyists, Mike Dillon and Christina DiCaro at (916) 448-2196, for more information.