

Darien's Guide to the California Ballot Propositions: November 2025 Elections

We have only **one** state-wide prop. this year, though many ballots will include local measures. (This guide *only* addresses state-wide propositions.) Your vote is important (as reflected by the Legislature's decision to put Prop. 50 on the ballot *and* in the **over \$200 million** the opposing sides are spending!). If you don't vote, your voice goes unheard.

When you drop off or mail in your vote, be sure to read and follow the directions carefully; many such votes are discarded for basic errors! In California, we are fortunate to have many designated early ballot drop off locations (find full lists online at your county's elections office). Your mail-in ballot *must be postmarked by Tuesday, Nov. 5*, and received by your county elections office by Nov. 12. On or before Nov. 5 you can drop off your ballot at a designated location.

Also, it's not too late to register to vote, but your only remaining option (since the online and mail deadline was Oct. 20) is in-person Election Day registration (to cast a provisional ballot – which may or may not be counted). See <https://www.sos.ca.gov/elections/voter-registration/same-day-reg> for details.

For those of you who may be impatient, here's **The Short Version: Proposition 50: Yes** *But I hope you'll read the details below!*

Note: With only one prop., on this year's ballot, **abbreviations are NOT used in the 2025 listing of organizational endorsements** (shown at the end of the prop. info). Special Note: This year a number of groups (especially non-partisan ones) specifically have chosen to **take no position** – as distinct from not taking one. For others, if their positions are not listed under endorsements, they have no stated position.

• **Prop. 50 – Desperate Measures for Desperate Times Biased Redistricting – Yes** This measure is fairly straight-forward. We know that California voters like electoral fairness; we have twice supported such fairness, through choosing to have an independent, bipartisan commission draw election boundaries for representtional seats. But now, Californians are part of a country facing a fairness crisis. In order to bridle the President's abuses of procedures, laws, and civil rights – should we respond to the unprecedented mid-decade and gerrymandered redistricting in Texas and other states by suspending our commission approach of mapping districts? Does it come down to preserving our *country's* democracy?

For those who agree that at least *much* of what's happening under the current federal direction is **unfair**, Prop. 50 can represent a difficult **values assessment**. Which is better – striking at the *big* unfairnesses, while doing a local one – or preserving the *principle* of democracy and fairness, while leaving the big transgressions unchallenged?

Also, this crisis of choice goes beyond moral values, because this is **a high-stakes situation** that is not flat or static. Just how serious *is* it? How much worse might it get? How might the decision of CA affect the thinking elsewhere? Some people see little choice, since even a few of Congress seats could really have a big effect.

And, let's be real: This is about our *country*. We must think about *more* than just California. As the [*SF Chronicle* said](#), we shouldn't "in the face of potential autocracy" be "simplistic and ahistorical."

But **how much will it matter?** No one can know the actual *numbers!* What will be the total of *expected* partisan shifts in redrawn districts in TX, in CA, in MO, FL, NC, IN, WI, OH, IL, and more? How many seats will *actually* change parties as a result – in both the "new" seats and the other ones?

Obviously, from my recommendation, I think it all matters. And, while you ponder these moral and strategic questions yourself, I'll dish out some **basic info**, possibly challenging mis-info.. As I said,

CA has voted twice for impartial commissions – to design state legislative (2008) and then congressional (2010) districts. *Those* changes were through propositions, like this one. Prop. 50 would switch out the current commission-drawn districts – *only* the federal, congressional ones – for the newly drafted ones – but just until the 2030 census. (That’s through three federal elections.)

After the census 50 winds down; **Prop. 50 *doesn’t* dismantle the independent, bipartisan commission system.** At the normal post-census time, the normal commission would resume its work to draw up the boundary lines. Proposition changes, (including the *end* of their dictates) *stick* – unless (all democratically, by direct vote) another proposition comes along that voters choose to support. (Those deciding voters would be the general CA electorate, *not* the Legislature.)

It was **the Legislature that – with open hearings and citizen input, drew the Prop. 50 districts.** And, under 50, the explicitly stated intention of those districts is more than bringing together people in a geographic area that reflects some common concerns and interests; the intention is to gain CA seats for the Democratic Party. That’s in support of the broad Prop. 50 goal of giving the Democrats a majority in Congress, in order to curb the excesses of the current President.

Of course, there are the (*big!*) **money questions.** What about all the money spent to have a special election – as it *worth it* for the broad Prop. 50 goal? That’s another moral question, but, regardless of your vote, **that money is spent.** As far as the money for the campaigns, just *how important* many people feel this proposition is shows up in **the campaign contributions: for 50 – \$138,408,662; against 50 – \$80,418,216** – only through Oct. 20: **nearly 220 million dollars all together.**

Curious *who* comes down on each side? See the big donors on the Sec’y of State’s website [here](#)*.

And what do other say? **Here are the endorsements!**

Yes – Sierra Club (CA), Democratic Party (CA), CA Teachers Association, CA Labor Federation CA Nurses Association, CA Church IMPACT

No – Republican Party (CA), Libertarian Party (CA)

And stating “no position” – CA Chamber of Commerce, Friends Comm. on Legislation (CA), League of Women Voters of CA, Peace and Freedom Party, Common Cause

Some Notes about Darien's Ballot Guide

*I provide this guide as a public service for voters who want concise and accurate info, in which my biases are intended to be clear. Leave me a message – **after 10 am Pacific Time** – at 916/739-0860.*

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* FYI, <https://www.sos.ca.gov/campaign-lobbying/helpful-resources/measure-contributions/2025-ballot-measure-contribution-totals/proposition-50-aca-8-rivas-congressional-redistricting-res-ch-156-2025>.