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Full and Fair Funding Initiative Pulled From 2020 Ballot Consideration

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On Wednesday, December 4, 2019, the Full and Fair Funding Coalition announced that it was pulling its initiative from November 2020 ballot consideration to avoid conflict with the split roll property tax initiative that has already qualified for next year's ballot. Proponents of both initiatives feared that having two large tax measures to support K–14 education on the same ballot would negatively impact both measures next November.

The Full and Fair Funding proposal would raise approximately \$15 billion annually for K–14 education by raising taxes on individuals and corporations making over \$1 million per year. The sponsors of the measure—the California School Boards Association, the Association of California School Administrators, and the Community College League of California—announced that they will instead look to put the initiative on the November 2022 ballot.

This news comes less than two months after the Full and Fair Funding Coalition filed for title and summary with the Attorney General's Office, which is the first step in the process before proponents can begin collecting signatures to qualify the measure for the ballot. Should the coalition move forward with their Full and Fair Funding initiative for the 2022 General Election ballot, the threshold to qualify the initiative would still be nearly one million valid signatures from registered voters.

This announcement means that voters will likely only have two significant education proposals on the statewide ballots to consider during the 2020 election season—the \$15 billion K–16 school construction bond (see ["Governor Newsom Signs \\$15 Billion Statewide School Bond Legislation"](#))

in the October 18, 2019, *Community College Update*) and the split roll initiative (see “[Education Funding Initiative to be Refiled for November 2020 Ballot](#)” in the August 23, 2019, *Community College Update*).

According to the latest Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) polling, support for the bond among likely voters has dropped from 54% in September to 48% in November (see “[Mixed Polling for Education Funding Initiative](#)” in the December 6, 2019, *Community College Update*). However, support is strongest among Democrats (71% approval), whose turnout for the March primary could be historically high if there are still multiple Democratic front-runner presidential candidates on the ballot. Additionally, proponents have not begun to ramp up their support campaign for the measure, which will likely heat up as we get closer to the March 3, 2020 election. There is not expected to be a strong opposition campaign against the bond, meaning if the proponent’s campaign efforts are effective, they should be able to sway enough of the 16% of likely voters that are currently undecided to approve the measure.

On the other hand, the split roll property tax measure that voters will consider in November 2020 is likely to yield a very strong opposition campaign from the business community and the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association. The initiative would amend Proposition 13 (1978) to tax commercial and industrial properties at their current fair market value. This looming opposition campaign, combined with the recent November PPIC polling that shows that the measure is only supported by 46% of likely voters, should concern the initiative’s supporters. Proponents are hoping that the proposal will receive a boost in the next round of polling now that the Full and Fair Funding initiative has been pulled from consideration, but whether that boost will be enough to get a majority of voters to approve the measure is unknown.

Also uncertain is whether Governor Gavin Newsom will officially endorse the split roll initiative and actively campaign to get the measure passed. While the proposal is estimated to bring in an additional \$6 to \$10 billion annually for K–14 schools and local governments, Governor Newsom may be weary to attach his name to an initiative that currently has less than 50% support from likely voters. He may wait to see what another few rounds of polling indicate for the measure before he decides to actively campaign for its passage.