7 Ballot Measures Threaten California Business Climate

Voters may face as many as seven ballot measures damaging to California’s business and political climate in November. Any one of these measures should motivate millions in opposition spending by affected industries. More than a few are likely to qualify for the ballot.

Conventional wisdom teaches that gubernatorial elections deliver older and more conservative voters to the polls, which normally drives liberal and anti-business initiative entrepreneurs to aim their measures for presidential election years, like 2016 or 2020. But this formerly reliable rule has crumbled in the face of a low qualification threshold, interest group imperatives, and impatient wealthy donors. It’s open season on the deep pockets!

Increase Taxes

In 2016, California voters extended top income tax rates (already the highest in the nation) through 2030, increased tobacco taxes by $2 a pack, and imposed new taxes on marijuana use and production. Elsewhere, voters in hundreds of local jurisdictions raised sales, property and excise taxes for a variety of municipal or school services.

For certain unions and special interest groups, this isn’t enough. Two proposed ballot measures would impose multibillion-dollar tax increases on businesses and upper income earners.

• The United Healthcare Workers union has proposed a 1% income tax surcharge on all income over $1 million, which would raise up to $2.5 billion annually for various health care programs. Wealthy taxpayers would pay a top rate of 14.3%, well above the highest income tax rate of any other state. (CalChamber opposes*)

• A coalition of liberal interest groups is circulating a split roll property tax proposal, requiring that nearly all commercial and industrial properties, except production agriculture, be assessed to full market value, and then reassessed every three years thereafter. Tax bills for business would increase by $10.5 billion a year. (CalChamber opposes*)

---continued on page 4---
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Your El Centro Area Chamber of Commerce recently concluded its winter special events season. This season of events began with the Los Vigilantes Christmas Parade in early December and followed with the Air Show Gala in February. The amount of work that Chamber volunteers and staff put into those events was incredible. All of these events are part of the second half of the mission statement of the Chamber of commerce: “to foster community pride to ensure growth, prosperity and quality of life in El Centro and the surrounding region.”

With these events now behind us the Chamber is able to turn its focus back to the first half of its mission statement: “to be an advocate for business and provide economic leadership.” Business advocacy is the main goal of your Chamber of Commerce. The need for the business community to speak together is great. It amazes me the amount of laws that are proposed and passed in Sacramento that are crushing local business. The Chamber continues to speak out against proposed legislation that hurts our economy and hinders job growth, but we need your support.

Membership in the Chamber is essential in order for the Chamber to continue to carry out its mission—both the business advocate element and the quality of life element of the Chambers mission require a strong membership base in order for the Chamber to be effective. If you are reading this you are probably already a member of the El Centro Area Chamber of Commerce, but if you aren’t, please join. If you are a member, please refer a fellow business owner for membership. We need your support so that we can all support each other better.

It has been my pleasure to welcome a number of new businesses to El Centro with ribbon cuttings over the past few months. It is very uplifting to see these new businesses choose to open in our town. That these businesses have joined the Chamber and understand how the Chamber can help their business grow and develop is rewarding.

Thank-you to all of our members for making the El Centro Area Chamber a vibrant part of life in El Centro. An extra thank-you to all of our members who volunteer to help the Chamber be effective.

Regards,

Jeff Sturdevant
Worsen Housing Crisis

California’s notorious housing shortage contributes to many social ills, including poverty, long commutes, air pollution, and flight of middle class jobs and job seekers.

Tenant advocates, backed by the head of the Los Angeles AIDS Healthcare Foundation, are circulating a proposal that would exacerbate this shortage by repealing long-standing limitations on rent control.

Far from alleviating the housing shortage, this proposal would simply allow local politicians to benefit some existing renters at the expense of future renters and homeowners. (CalChamber opposes*)

Regulate Industries

• A measure purporting to improve consumer control over personal internet privacy promises to be among the hardest fought and most expensive ballot battles.

A San Francisco investor proposes requiring businesses to provide to consumers upon request a copy of any personal information it has accumulated and allows consumers to opt out of any or all collection of their personal information—even if not personally identifiable. This measure undermines widespread business models in the industry and likely will reduce many services now available to internet users. (CalChamber opposes*)

• United Healthcare Workers is also soliciting signatures for a measure to establish price controls for privately operated kidney dialysis treatment. Intended to create leverage on dialysis clinics to increase unionized staff, passage of the measure would increase overall costs by shifting dialysis treatments from clinics to more expensive venues like emergency rooms or hospitals. (CalChamber opposes*)

Stall Economic Development

For more than two decades, excise taxes on California gasoline and diesel remained flat, contributing to the erosion of purchasing power of those tax revenues and creating a backlog of maintenance and operational improvements for roads and highways. In 2017, the Legislature and Governor agreed on a $5 billion annual boost in transportation revenues to repair roads and bridges and add capacity in some of the most congested corridors.

A San Diego politician has proposed repealing the excise tax increases and subjecting future increases to statewide voter approval, which would freeze in place hundreds of planned transportation improvements throughout California, without a plausible replacement revenue stream.

Disrupt State Governance

A Silicon Valley millionaire is again attempting to qualify a measure to break apart California, this time into three separate states, centered on the Bay Area, Greater Los Angeles and San Diego/Orange County, with the rural area divided among the new states.

The new states would obviously create new and unpredictable winners and losers—economically, socially and politically. Rather than working to knit the fabric of our state more tightly together, this proposal would tear it apart.

Initiative proponents will begin submitting petitions to counties in May for signature verification. It is not too soon to begin educating affected business and industry leaders about the consequences of these proposals.■
You’re Invited!

Please join us to Celebrate the GROUNDBREAKING of the Central Union High School STEM Building

Tuesday, March 27, 2018
9:00 A.M.
1001 Brighton Avenue – El Centro, CA

RSVP to Lucy Hendry
lhendry@cuhsd.net
760 336-4516

The red carpet was laid at the entrance of St. Mary’s Catholic Church Parish Hall on Saturday, February 7th and ready for the fabulous guests of the El Centro Chamber of Commerce’s 12th Annual Air Show Gala to enjoy a night “Under the Big Top” presented by Imperial Valley Auto and Rabobank.

Guests were greeted with a photo booth (provided by Elite Photo Lounge) and entered the ‘big top’ to find carnival games and tables adorned with carnival themed décor. While mingling and enjoying a cocktail, guest had the opportunity to bid on various silent auctions items donated by our amazingly generous El Centro Chamber members – some of which included a few once in a lifetime experiences. Fitting with the theme, guests tested their luck at some carnival style games for their chance to win some awesome prizes. The program for the evening concluded with the ‘El Centro Chamber Service Award’ (presented by Williams & Singh LLP), to Petty Officer Emily Flores and Petty Officer Malik Brannan by Captain Brent Alfonzo USN, Chamber President Jeff Sturdevant and President-Elect Terri Rogers.

After enjoying their delicious dinner (catered by Junior’s Café), guests got down on the dance floor and danced the night away to the sounds of Desert Prosound Entertainment.

This event would not be possible without the amazing support of our sponsors, donors and guests! Thank you to our Presenting Sponsors: Imperial Valley Auto and Rabobank. FA18 Hornet Sponsors: Ametza LLC, El Centro Chamber Foundation, Hutchinson & Bloodgood LLP, Konica Minolta Business Solutions and Rogers & Rogers Auto Group. A4 Sky Hawk Sponsors: Actitud M Magazine, Imperial Printers/Rocket Copy, Imperial Regional Detention Facility, Imperial Valley Press, International Farm Services LLC, Paradise/Quechan Casinos and The Desert Review. F4 Phantom Sponsors: City of El Centro, Community Valley Bank, El Centro Rotary Club, Days Inn, Town Center Courtyard LLC, Walmart Supercenter, Williams & Singh LLP. Award Sponsor: Williams & Singh LLP.

On behalf of the Air Show Gala Committee, Board of Directors and Staff of the El Centro Chamber of Commerce we would like to thank everyone who attended, sponsored or donated to the 12th Annual Air Show Gala. Because of your continued support to this event, the El Centro Chamber of Commerce is proudly able to sponsor NAF El Centro’s Annual Air Show.

If you’d like more information on attending the Air Show Gala, or if you’re interested in sponsoring or donating to this one of a kind event next year (2019), please contact Anthony Moreno, Membership/Program Director for the El Centro Chamber at 760-352-3681 or via email at anthony@elcentrochamber.com

www.elcentrochamber.com
Thank you to all that have renewed their membership in January, February and March!

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March 23
Ag Expo Dinner - Imperial Valley Fair Grounds, Casa Building - Join us on the eve of the Imperial Valley Ag Expo! Help us celebrate & honor agriculture of the Imperial Valley. Our scholarship and grant recipients will be announced at this distinctive event. Cost for Dinner is $65 per person or $100 per couple. Questions: 760-354-2064.

March 24
Imperial Valley Ag Expo - Imperial Valley Ag Expo Presented by RDO Equipment. Connect your business with the Ag industry at this two day event dedicated to all things agriculture. Featuring: Ag Vendor Booths, Ag Support Booths & Vendor Booths, Implements Display, Workshops, Kids Ag Play Land, Ladies Zone, Free Give-Aways, Prizes, Food Vendors, Beer and Live Music and More! Taking place at Imperial Valley Fairgrounds, 200 E 2nd St., Imperial, from 11:00 am-7:00 pm. Admission is FREE, Parking: $5.00. For more information call (760) 354-2064.

March 31
Sunbeam 10K - A 10K race by runners for runners. The course will traverse around our unique landscape here in the Imperial Valley to include dirt roads and trails. The course is new and has never been done before so it is something different with some good views. The course will have two aid stations and walkers are welcome. Registration 7:00am/Race starts 8:00am. Cost to participate is $20. For more information email racecode@yahoo.com.

April 6
5th Annual Taste of the Valley - 2018 SDSU-IV Scholarship Fundraiser - 5th Annual Taste of the Valley is SDSU-IV signature scholarship fundraising event. SDSU-IV helps local students eliminate some of the financial burden of achieving educational success. For more information contact Diana Moreno 760-768-5569 or E-mail: diana.moreno@sdssu.edu

April 7
Children’s Foundation of the Imperial Valley 3rd Annual 5K Family Fun Run or Walk Event for Autism - Children’s Foundation of the Imperial Valley proudly announces the 3rd Annual 5K Fun Run or Walk for Autism. Please join us at Sunbeam Lake Park in Seeley, California for an event that is for the whole family. We have plenty of delicious food items, games, interactive activities and so much more! This year, we are featuring a superhero theme and encourage all to dress up in their favorite superhero costume. Prizes will be awarded for the best costume! All registered participants receive food, special event shirt, tote bag and race medal. Funds raised will be given to families of Autistic children in our Imperial Valley who cannot otherwise afford the critical tools needed for intensive therapy. For more information contact John Dalle 760-275-7927 or Katalina Penland 760-554-3032.

April 14-15
American Cancer Society Relay For Life of Imperial County

April 19
Spring Mega Mixer 2018 - The El Centro Chamber Spring MEGA Mixer will be held on Thursday, April 19, 2018 from 5-7 p.m. at Ryerson Hall. Vendor space for this event is focused towards members who have joined within the previous twelve (12) months. This event provides an opportunity for chamber members who do not have the adequate space to host a mixer, to exhibit their business and display their products and services. Festivities include appetizers, refreshments, business card & prize drawings, networking, and much more. For booth space or more information, contact Anthony Moreno at (760) 352-3681 or anthony@elcentrochamber.com. Vendor Fee is $150 per space and FREE to members who have joined in the previous twelve (12) months.

April 21
Holtville Derby Days - Join us for an exciting evening at the races! Choose your favorite horse and be ready to have fun supporting a wonderful cause. All proceeds benefit the Boys & Girls Clubs of Imperial Valley’s Holtville Site. Dress in derby gear and be eligible to win a prize. Don’t forget to bring cash to participate in the races! Starts @ 6pm. For more information contact the Boys & Girls Clubs of Imperial Valley at 760-344-2040

April 21
Kiwianis Early Riser Neil Jorgenson Memorial Annual Fund-Raising Golf Tournament - Desert trails Golf Course located at 225 Wake Ave., El Centro, CA. Two-Person Scramble Tournament, check in time 7:30am Start time will be 8am Hole Sponsorships are $100 each per hole. Player entry fees are $50 per person; this includes green fees and breakfast burritos. Prize for the "longest drive" on hole 1 and "closest to the pin" on hole 3. Raffle prizes plus 50/50 drawing. You do not have to be present to win the 50/50 drawing. Proceeds from this tournament will be used to support youth projects and events in Imperial Valley. For additional information please call: Gary Andrews 760-540-0731 or Willie Roberts 760-455-2269

April 21
Brawley Market Nights Presents “The Great Taco Showdown” - Join the Brawley Chamber of Commerce as they present THE GREAT TACO SHOWDOWN at their Brawley Market Nights on April 21st from 5-9 p.m. Enjoy farm fresh produce, homade crafts, entertainment, beer garden and much more. For more information contact the Brawley Chamber at (760) 344-3160.

May 21
Last day to register for Iceland’s Magical Northern Lights trip - November 26-December 2, 2018. Rate $3,999pp Double Occupancy; Single $4,499; Triple $3,969. After this date, based on availability and price subject to change. The “land of fire and ice” is a place of many wonders, including the rare opportunity to see the spectacular aurora borealis, or northern lights. This tour will bring you on a search for that once-in-a-lifetime moment.

May 28
Deadline to submit Nominations - Seeking Nominees for the Duflock Business Excellence Award & Citizen of the Year Award - The Duflock Award actively supports and celebrates the El Centro Area Chamber of Commerce’s mission of being an advocate for business, provide economic leadership and foster community pride to ensure growth, prosperity and quality of life in El Centro and the surrounding region. The Duflock Award honors leaders who strive toward the highest levels of personal and professional accomplishment, who excel in their chosen field, devote time and energy to their community in a meaningful way, and serve as a role model for other professionals. We offer this award as an opportunity to reward and recognize the efforts and contributions of Imperial Valley’s deserving and talented professionals. Award will be presented at this this year’s annual dinner to an outstanding business leader. Recipient is also Grand Marshall of our annual Christmas parade. For more information contact the El Centro Chamber at (760) 352-3681.

June 15
Deadline to register for ADVENTURE TO CHINA trip – Have you ever wanted to trek the Great Wall of China? Or visit the mysteries of the Forbidden City? Join the Chamber for this once in a lifetime trip to China October 3 through October 11, 2018. Trip includes transportation to and from LAX, Round trip international airfare, 4 & 5 Star hotel stays, 3 FULL meals per day, English-speaking tour guides and all in-country transportation, all for only $2,099! For an additional $200 attend the side trip to Xi’an ans see the wonders, including the rare opportunity to see the Terra-Gotta Warriors. For more information contact Vicki at the Chamber at (760) 352-3681. (A minimum of 20 people required for this trip, full refund if minimum not met).

June 21
112th Annual Dinner Meeting - Join the El Centro Area Chamber for our 112th Annual Dinner Meeting & Silent Auction on Thursday, June 21, 2018 starting at 6pm. This event is the official ceremony of the “Presidential Passing of the Gavel”. Join us as we celebrate the success of the 2017-18 year under the leadership of President Mr. Jeff Sturdevant, and welcome incoming President, Mrs. Terri Rogers. Evening includes Dinner, Silent Auction, Special Awards & Recognition and the presentation of the William G. Duflock “Business Leader of the Year” Award, Citizen of the Year and the Ambassador of the Year Award. For more information contact Anthony Moreno, Director of Membership/Programs (760) 352-3681 or anthony@elcentrochamber.com

www.elcentrochamber.com
Welcome New Members

**Event Planning/Party Decor & Rentals**
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Jhoselyn Ramirez-Strait
680 Bahia Street
Imperial, CA 92251
(714) 576-2957
http://elitephotoloungephotobooth.com

**Farms - Commercial**
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Chandra Burch
151 W. Main St.
El Centro, CA 92243
(760) 353-7607

**Gas-Propane**
Arco ampm
Dinaz D’Souza
398 Aurora Dr
El Centro, CA 92243
(760) 278-0260

**Health Care Services/Hospitals**
Industrial Family Medical Care
Alex Ochoa
1441 State Street Ste. B
El Centro, CA 92243
(760) 337-1771

**Music Stores**
Music & Arts
Jessica Buchanan
1470 W State St # 2
El Centro, CA 92243
(760) 352-3363
https://stores.musicarts.com/el-centro

**Non Profit Organization - Education**
MANA de Imperial Valley
Martha Singh
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El Centro, CA 92244
http://www.ivmana.org

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