

Summary of Polly Bove's Visit to FEA Rep Council Meeting

Polly's current thoughts on Measure G:

What we know:

- New data is coming in about who voted or didn't vote, and the breakdown of who were parents, who were seniors, etc. We should get that info around December 8.
- Both Cupertino and Sunnyvale cities voted 60% to approve Measure G.
- There was unprecedentedly low turnout for an election of this kind.
- Polling we had showed about 72% yes. True also in Santa Clara and Palo Alto for taxes. In all 3 cases, the polling proved to be different than the election result. (We were not alone).
- Polly has been getting a lot of feedback from community members.
- 2 other elections and polling was done by the same consulting group for parcel taxes with COLAs and open ended terms.
- 2 mailings (postcards) 2 weeks apart against the parcel tax, funded by Silicon Valley Taxpayer Assn, mostly backed by Jarvis. The postcards did not specify their source on them, were targeted to frequent republican voters. This group has also targeted Palo Alto and warned them to not try to pass an open-ended parcel tax or they would campaign against it. There are a significant number of local districts who have a parcel tax with no end dates.
- Our polling results did not show an issue with the open-endedness or the COLA.
- Many people assumed that Measure G would pass. This keeps voter turnout low. Our failure to pass Measure G has built some sense of urgency.
- We did get a majority, but not the 2/3rds we needed.
- We have not shut down the campaign committee, in order that all board members can meet and have discussions in the same room. There will be an opportunity for teachers to participate in discussions with the board.
- The mail-in date is May 4th. Board would have to decide to put it on the ballot by February 3rd. June election is a runoff for a few of republican candidates, so we are trying to avoid that ballot, due to a lot of republican turnout and a lot of republican opposition to the parcel tax.
- Summary of local parcel tax survey—surprising results: We have done a good job of convincing the public that CA public schools are hurting. However, this is not moving people to vote for more taxes. Although we need to inform of possible cuts, we do not need to threaten. We need also to show the good work our schools/teachers are doing and impress upon voters the importance of keeping these good things going.
- We must continue to remind our community members that our schools are a pivotal factor in their childrens' lives and their property values.
- Some opposition at Monta Vista and Fremont, and bond money concerns.

FEA member thoughts/concerns from small group discussions:

- Concerns over BTSN speech being ineffective because of legal limitations on political campaigning. How can we find a way around this?
- Going after the undecided and 'no' voters. We targeted 'yes' voters, but could we go farther with our campaign?
- Looking at/publishing a comparison of neighboring school districts' parcel taxes.
- Our apathy/community apathy possibly due to thinking the measure was a slam dunk.

- Teachers would like to feel like they are a part of the decision making process, rather than informed of what had already been decided.
 - With the precinct walking, why were teachers even necessary for that process, since no actually interfacing was done with the community (just hanging signs)?.
 - Shouldn't we do more discussions with the community about possible cuts coming in programs/teachers, to tie it more to programs, rather than to teacher pay? Thus far the community has been pretty insulated from cuts thus far.
 - Issues with the bond. There will be pushback from people thinking that money is money, not understanding what specific uses bond money is allocated for. Can we try to come in under-budget on bond spending to prove our financial prudence to community to show good faith? Hard to watch the amazing things being done with the bond money when on the other side teachers/programs are giving up a lot. [Polly: We cannot choose not to take the money, though we can control how it's rolled out].
 - Can we make it really personal, i.e. bragging about the good work of our schools and putting a face on it?
 - Seems like an end date would help since there is so much uncertainty about where things will be in 5 years.
 - Educating people on terminology and targeting no voters.
 - Can we focus publicity earlier, esp to target absentee voters?
 - A lot of public unrest on how we are managing bond money, contributing to distrust and reluctance to pass new taxes.
 - Concern about our putting measure G on a short ballot with no important issues.
 - Was it counter-productive to release positive polling data to us in advance? Perhaps added to our apathy to campaign.
 - Can we reach out to school alumni and register them and encourage them to vote?
 - Can we make very clear to voters what the parcel tax does and doesn't do—avoid the feeling of a hidden agenda?
 - Can we have more information at the phone banks for our callers to help educate voters? For example, a parcel tax can be repealed with a 50% vote, which most don't realize.
 - Concern over election timelines.
 - A less complicated parcel tax measure would be helpful.
 - Is there a way to do rebuttals or negative campaigns or negative letters?
- [Polly: we sent 9 letters in response to a negative letter in the Cupertino & Sunnyvale papers, and none were published].