

Guide to Filing Measure Arguments

FOR COUNTY, CITIES, SCHOOLS, AND SPECIAL DISTRICTS



Photo Credit: Elections Staff

2024 rev.

Contra Costa County Elections
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DISCLAIMER

This informational guide was developed in an effort to provide answers to questions frequently asked concerning the filing of measure arguments. It contains general information only and does not have the force or effect of law, regulation, or rule. In case of a conflict, the laws, regulations, or rules apply. Persons using this guide accept responsibility for all legal standards and duties. For information on City measures, please contact the local City Clerk as guidelines may vary.

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PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended to be a reference to political entities, interested organizations, and individuals on how they may participate in the process.

Cities may implement laws that differ from what is described in this guide. Please consult the local City Clerk regarding arguments and rebuttals for that city's measures.

WHAT IS PUBLISHED IN THE VOTER INFORMATION GUIDE

The following components comprise the information provided to voters in the Voter Information Guide:

Measure Wording

The Measure Wording is a 75-word ballot question that appears on the Official Ballot and in the Voter Information Guide.

Election Code § 9051

Impartial Analysis

The County Counsel or City Attorney prepares an Impartial Analysis of a measure showing the effect of the measure on the existing law and the operation of the measure. The City Attorney prepares an Impartial Analysis of a city measure.

The Impartial Analysis may be up to 500 words.

Election Code §§ 9160, 9280, 9313, 9314, 9500

Tax Rate Statement (if applicable)

A Tax Rate Statement is supplied for each bond measure that creates a lien on a property within the jurisdiction. The Tax Rate Statement is prepared by the jurisdiction proposing the measure.

There is no word limit for Tax Rate Statements.

Election Code §§ 9401, 9402

Fiscal Analysis (if applicable)

The County Auditor-Controller may be requested to prepare a Fiscal Analysis by the Board of Supervisors or City Council.

The Fiscal Analysis Statement may be up to 500 words.

Election Code § 9160

Arguments In Favor and Arguments Against a Measure

Arguments in support of or in opposition to the proposed laws are the opinions of the authors.

Each Argument In Favor or Against may be up to 300 words.

Election Code §§ 9162, 9315

Rebuttal Argument

A Rebuttal Argument is a statement which refutes an Argument In Favor or Argument Against a measure.

Each Rebuttal Argument may be up to 250 words.

Election Code §§ 9167, 9317

Full Text (optional)

The full text of the measure being voted upon may be published to provide voters information in addition to the 75-word measure. The full text is usually a resolution or ordinance that offers additional information regarding the measure.

There is no word limit for the full text.

Order of Appearance

Arguments, Rebuttal Arguments, and analyses are printed in the Voter Information Guide and mailed to all registered voters in the jurisdiction who are eligible to vote for the particular measure.

Election Code § 13109

The information appears in the following order:

1. Measure Wording
2. Impartial Analysis
3. Fiscal Analysis or Tax Rate Statement (if applicable)
4. Argument In Favor
5. Argument Against
6. Rebuttal to Argument In Favor
7. Rebuttal to Argument Against
8. Full Text (optional)

All content is translated into Spanish and Chinese and will appear in English, Spanish, and Chinese in that order.

ARGUMENT SUBMISSION PROCESS

Submit Arguments to: Contra Costa County Elections Division
555 Escobar Street
Martinez, CA 94553

Submissions must include:

Hardcopies of the arguments with wet signatures must be filed in person or by mail to the Elections Division at 555 Escobar Street Martinez, CA 94553. A faxed or electronic PDF of the argument document (including signatures) may be submitted to meet the filing deadline but hardcopies with the wet signatures must be provided within three business days of the faxed or electronic submission.

The argument language must also be submitted electronically as an editable text file to cfile@vote.cccounty.us by the deadline.

Confidentiality:

Arguments, rebuttals, and analyses are not disclosable until 5pm on the date they are due. At that time, the contents become public information.

Withdrawal/Changes:

Arguments, rebuttals, and analyses may be changed or withdrawn up until the submission deadline.

Election Code §§ 9118.5, 9144.5 9163, 9215.5, 9237.2, 9311, 9316, 9341.5, 9601

Public Review:

Following the final deadline for filing documents, arguments and rebuttals are available at the Elections Official Office for a 10-day public review period.

Any challenges of the measure documents may be sought from the Superior Court to require amendments or deletions through a Writ of Mandate or injunction. A Writ of Mandate or an injunction will be issued by the Superior Court upon clear and convincing proof that the material in question is false, misleading, or inconsistent.

Administrative challenges of arguments, rebuttals, and analyses will not be accepted or entertained by the Elections Official.

Election Code §§ 9190, 9295, 9380, 9509

Rebuttal Arguments:

Rebuttal Arguments In Favor or Against a measure are filed with the Elections Division. The Elections Official establishes the deadlines for the arguments for all elections in which multiple jurisdictions participate. Cities establish deadlines only when the election is not consolidated or combined with other entities. Arguments are not disclosable until the deadline.

Rebuttal Arguments are shared with those submitting Primary Arguments for purposes of drafting Rebuttal Arguments at the deadline.

Arguments In Favor and Arguments Against measures are sent immediately after the submission deadline to those arguing the opposite position for the purpose of preparing a Rebuttal Argument.

Rebuttal Arguments must be signed by the same authors of the original arguments in favor or against unless the original signers of the arguments authorize, in writing, others to sign the Rebuttal Arguments. A Release for Rebuttal Argument should be filed with the Rebuttal Arguments.

Election Code §§ 9167, 9285, 9317, 9504

WHO CAN SUBMIT AN ARGUMENT

The governing board (Board of Supervisors, School Board, or Special District Board), any individual voter who is eligible to vote on the measure, a bona fide association of citizens, or any combination of these voters and associations may file a written Argument In Favor or Argument Against any county, school, or district measure placed on the ballot by the governing body or by initiative.

Election Code §§ 9120, 9162, 9501

What is a Bona Fide Association of Citizens?

A bona fide association of citizens is a recognized group of citizens bound together by a common interest or cause such as:

- A group or organization primarily formed as a committee to support or oppose a ballot measure.
- An organization that meets on a regular basis.

The individuals signing an argument on behalf of a bona fide association do not have to be eligible voters in the jurisdiction. A Bona Fide Association of Citizens Filer Data Sheet will be filed with the arguments.

If More Than One Argument in Favor or Argument Against Is Filed

Only one Argument in Favor and one Argument Against any measure will be printed in the Voter Information Guide. If multiple arguments are submitted for or against a measure within the designated timeframe, the Elections Official will choose one argument in favor and one against to be printed and distributed to voters. The Elections Official will prioritize arguments in the following order:

1. The board of supervisors or a member or members of the board.
2. The individual voter, or bona fide association of citizens, or combination of voters and associations, who are the bona fide sponsors or proponents of the measure.
3. Bona fide associations of citizens.
4. Individual voters who are eligible to vote on the measure.

If multiple arguments are submitted, and none of them have priority over the others, the argument to be printed will be determined by filing date.

In order for the Elections Official to determine if an organization or association is a bona fide association of citizens, they must include a copy of one of the following when submitting an argument for or against a county measure:

1. Its articles of incorporation, articles of association, partnership documents, bylaws, or similar documents.
2. Letterhead containing the name of the organization and its principal officers.

3. If the organization or association is a primarily formed committee established to support or oppose the measure, its statement of organization filed according to Section 84101 of the Government Code.

Election Code §§ 9166, 9503

ARGUMENT & REBUTTAL FORMAT

- Submissions will be labeled with the type of argument being submitted in the heading title (ex. Argument in Favor of Measure A). Words used in the title shall not be counted when determining the length of any measure.

Election Code § 9167

- The heading for all arguments is standardized. Subheadings and deviations from the standardized heading will not be accepted.
- Arguments and rebuttal arguments, including the names and titles of the signers, must be typed.
- Documents will be printed as submitted. Spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors will not be corrected by the Elections Division.
- An argument or rebuttal argument must be titled to address only one measure appearing on the ballot.

Election Code §§ 9501(b), 9504(b)

- No more than five names/titles will appear with any argument in the Voter Information Guide. If more than five signers are submitted, only the first five will be printed.

Election Code § 9164

- All arguments and rebuttals must include an original signature of each signer. If not all signers sign on the same document, separate copies bearing wet signatures can be filed.
- No profanity or other objectionable language may appear in an argument.

Election Code §§ 9164, 9501

- The Voter Information Guide is formatted as closely as possible to match the hard copy submitted and allows for lists, bold, bullet points, paragraphs, underlines, and indentations.
- Italics, words in all capital letters (except for acronyms or abbreviations), or other special characters that cannot be directly or accurately translated into the Federally required languages under Section 203 of the Voting Rights Act are not allowed in measure text, arguments, or rebuttals.

ARGUMENT & REBUTTAL SAMPLE

Argument Sample

**ARGUMENT IN FAVOR
OF MEASURE _____**

***ARGUMENT
TEXT***

The undersigned Proponent(s) or Author(s) hereby state that such argument is true and correct to the best of their knowledge and belief.

1) Print Name _____
Title _____
Signature _____

4) Print Name _____
Title _____
Signature _____

2) Print Name _____
Title _____
Signature _____

5) Print Name _____
Title _____
Signature _____

3) Print Name _____
Title _____
Signature _____

Rebuttal Argument Sample

**REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT AGAINST
MEASURE _____**

***ARGUMENT
TEXT***

The undersigned Proponent(s) or Author(s) hereby state that such argument is true and correct to the best of their knowledge and belief.

1) Print Name _____
Title _____
Signature _____

4) Print Name _____
Title _____
Signature _____

2) Print Name _____
Title _____
Signature _____

5) Print Name _____
Title _____
Signature _____

3) Print Name _____
Title _____
Signature _____

LETTER ASSIGNMENTS

Each measure to appear on the ballot is assigned a letter for identification and reporting purposes.

Timeline for Assigning Measure Letters

The Elections Official assigns measure letters the Monday (E-85) following the deadline to submit a measure (E-88).

Assignment of Letters

The Elections Official will assign a letter to each local ballot measure. Local measures will commence with the letter “A” and continue in alphabetical order. At the first election of each even-numbered year, the alphabetic lettering will reset. If all letters from “A” to “Z” have been assigned before the lettering resets, lettering continues with “AA,” “BB,” etc.

Election Code § 13116

The Elections Official does not accept requests for specific letters for a measure.

Order Letters are Assigned:

Local measure letter designations are assigned in alphabetical order in the following order:

- (a) County Measure(s)
- (b) City Measure(s)
- (c) School Measure(s):
 - i. County Board of Education
 - ii. College Districts
 - iii. Unified School Districts
 - iv. High School Districts
 - v. Elementary School Districts
- (d) District Measure(s)

When a Jurisdiction Covers Two or More Counties

Letter order may be affected when a multi-county district has a measure on the ballot. The Elections Official of those counties may mutually agree to use a specific letter designation that may create gaps in letter assignment.

Election Code § 13116(c)

Withdrawal of a Measure

A legislative body may amend or withdraw its measure by filing a resolution stating the specifics concerning the amendment or withdrawal not later than 83 days before an election. An initiative or referendum measures may be withdrawn by filing a Notice of Withdrawal signed by all proponents.

Election Code §§ 9604, 9605

ATTACHMENT A - 2024 MEASURE KEY DATES

November 5, 2024 General Election

Filing Period	
August 9 <i>E-88</i>	Last day to place a measure on the ballot
August 12 <i>E-85</i>	Local measure letter assigned
August 21 <i>E-76</i>	Deadline for Primary Arguments For/Against
August 26 <i>E-71</i>	Deadline for Rebuttal Arguments
September 26 <i>E-40</i>	Estimated Voter Information Guide mailing

**Date falls on a weekend or holiday; it moves forward to the next business day.*

ATTACHMENT B - WORD COUNT GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are for computing the word count for arguments. The authors' titles and names are not counted in the word count, only the text of the argument. The Elections Official will make final determination of the word count.

Election Code § 9

Measure Label Examples: Measure A Measure BB	one word one word
Acronyms Examples: UCLA, PTA, U.S.M.C.	one word
Geographical Names Examples: Contra Costa County Walnut Creek City of Pittsburg Bay Area	one word
Districts with an Elected Board Examples: Contra Costa Community College District Antioch Unified School District East Bay Regional Park District San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District	one word
Numbers/Numerical Combinations Digits (1, 10, or 100, etc.) 4 th or 9 th /10 th 1990-1991, 100%, etc. Spelled out (one, ten, or one hundred)	one word one word one word one for each word
Dates All digits (11/5/96) Word and digits (June 2, 1998)	one word one word
Hyphenated Words Hyphenated words that appear in any generally available standard reference dictionary, as determined by the Elections Official, shall be counted as one word.	one word
Punctuation	not counted
Telephone Numbers	one word
Email / Website Addresses	one word

ATTACHMENT C - CONTACT INFORMATION

Contra Costa County Registrar of Voters

555 Escobar Street
Martinez, CA 94553

Monday - Friday
8am – 5pm

Main: (925) 335-7800

Toll Free: (877) 335-7802

Candidate Services Fax: (925) 335-7842

Email: candidate.services@vote.cccounty.us

Website: www.contracostavote.gov

2024

January						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

February						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29		

March						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
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17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

April						
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
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28	29	30				

May						
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26	27	28	29	30	31	

June						
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

July						
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14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

August						
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September						
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October						
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November						
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2025

January						
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23	24	25	26	27	28	

March						
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16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

April						
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27	28	29	30			

May						
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June						
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29	30					

July						
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August						
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31						

September						
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28	29	30				

October						
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November						
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December						
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21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			