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### Publication Date

1996

A1458  
no. 96-7

#34655397  
/506

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## CALIFORNIA LIBRARY REFERENDA: THE DETERMINANTS OF SUCCESS AND FAILURE

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In the not-so-distant past, citizens could take it for granted that California communities would provide public libraries for their citizens. Libraries were a universally accepted component in the standard package of local public goods along with the police, fire department, water and lighting, K-12 education and local public transportation. New fiscal circumstances and a generational shift in how California voters view the role of government have drastically changed the situation for California's libraries. Increasingly, libraries must take their case for funding directly to the voters and sometimes in competition with other local services.

As Table 7 shows, the incidence of local library measures in California has risen considerably since 1989: there have been 58 (i.e., 67%) such referenda since 1990 as compared to only 28 (i.e., 33%) in the period 1980-89<sup>1</sup>. There are two fiscal facts that underlie this trend. The first is the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978 which limited the level and growth rate of tax on property in California. This induced many cities to find alternative methods for financing local public services (e.g. special taxes and fees, etc), and forced the counties and special districts to look to the state for financial assistance. The recession that hit the state in 1989 worsened the situation for the counties especially, because the shortage in state revenues forced the legislature to cut back on its fiscal commitments to counties in the state budgets of the early 1990s. Overall, 53.5% of all of the measures passed and the total yes percentage was 60.8%.

In addition to the shifting fiscal picture, there was a generational change in the perspective of California voters that contributed to the upsurge in local spending initiatives of all types. Beginning in 1974,

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<sup>1</sup>Our study ranges from 1978 to the present, but there were no measures until 1980.

there was a detectable growing skepticism among California voters about the trustworthiness of public officials to spend money wisely and efficiently, and a corresponding demand to have greater choice and direct control over the spending level of each service. At both the state and local level, the contemporary California voter expects the opportunity to pick and choose among types of funding measures and levels of services. The days of approving general tax increases and giving elected officials the freedom to choose how to spend them are over -- at least for the foreseeable future. At the state level, spending on schools, prisons and health programs has been constitutionally fixed by statewide initiatives (so-called mandated expenditures and earmarked taxes) and bond measures. At the local level, increases in local sales taxes, the creation of special local taxing districts, bond measures and the like are frequently linked to the local services or capital improvements they will fund. Voters get to decide for themselves how much they want to spend on various local public goods.

This new fiscal world requires libraries to make their case directly to the voters. In theory, a library referendum is an opportunity for libraries to educate the public about the services they provide and to secure a level of funding that more closely matches what the local community wants. However, the reality of local elections is that voters often do not pay attention to local issues, anti-tax groups sometimes have overwhelming advantages in experience and resources, and library supporters are not always knowledgeable about how to run an effective campaign. Some library measures succeed and others do not. The purpose of this study is to contribute to our understanding of why this is so. Are some communities or types of voters more easily persuaded to fund library capital and services than others? Are there important differences in the acceptability of certain types of library referenda as opposed to others? What role does the timing and context of elections play in the final outcome? And finally, which campaign strategies and tactics seem to work best in successful campaigns?

There is a small, but growing, body of literature on these questions in recent years (see reference list). A goal of this project is to test some of the hypotheses that have been raised by previous studies and to introduce some new ones. The data for this study consists of all California city and county library measures

that have appeared on the ballot since 1980. It is the only comprehensive listing of such measures in existence. In addition, it has been supplemented with demographic data about the relevant local communities from the federal census and political registration data from the California Secretary of State's office. Information about the strategy and tactics of specific campaigns was collected from a retrospective survey of library directors and campaign consultants conducted in October 1995. We were able to get a high response rate (88%) from our original population of measures.<sup>2</sup> Results from this survey were coded and added to data set.

In the sections of the paper that follow we will begin by exploring a framework for thinking about the success or failure of library referenda. As we indicated earlier, some of this discussion draws from the earlier work of Richard Hall, Kenneth Dowlin, James Swan and others who have studied the phenomena of library referenda. From this discussion, we will generate some expectations about the determinants of success and failure in referenda which we will then test with our data. Lastly, we will speculate on the meaning and implication of our findings.

## THE ELEMENTS OF A REFERENDUM CAMPAIGN

Before we look at the patterns in the data, it is valuable to define the basic elements of referendum campaigns and consider how those elements might be related to the ultimate success or failure of a particular effort. There are four elements that are at least partly shaped by campaign activities and choices. Those elements are: (1) the characteristics and preferences of voters in the relevant constituency; (2) the characteristics of the specific library ballot measure; (3) the electoral context; and (4) the strategy and tactics pursued by the campaign. The distinction between what is and is not controllable by the campaign is important to bear in mind: campaigns can be lost because of mistakes (i.e. strategic or tactical errors that cost the campaign votes), but they can also fail due to circumstances beyond anyone's control (e.g. a bad economy,

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This figure includes one survey which stated that the campaign, since the measure affected more than just the library, was not managed by them.

bad weather that produces a low turnout, etc.). The presence of uncontrolled circumstances and underlying trends means that some elections will lose despite a superbly run campaign, and that some will be won despite an inept or even nonexistent campaign effort. In political science, conventional wisdom ascribes little importance to the campaign and much to the underlying nature of electoral preferences and characteristics. In the practical world of the electoral consultant, it seems as if every choice might potentially determine the final result. Our data could potentially give us some insight not only into what determines success or failure, but also whether campaigns matter in local library referenda. If they do not matter much, then the key issue for library supporters is to determine as best as one can whether the electoral climate and conditions are conducive to victory at a particular time and place. If campaign strategies do matter significantly, then library supporters must correctly choose their strategy and tactics if they plan to prevail in the end.

The second element in a library campaign is the referendum itself. Certain types of measures may be harder to get approval for than others. In particular, measures that are costly to California voters should receive more critical scrutiny than those that are less so. This means that local referenda that propose to raise taxes or to create bonds should be harder to pass than measures that have little or no fiscal impact. This generalization no doubt holds true throughout the U.S., but it is especially important in California, a state which has been in an almost constant tax revolt since 1978. Indeed, one of the reasons that so many tax measures and bonds have appeared on the ballot in recent years is that California local and state officials have learned that unpopular tax increases are a sure ticket to electoral defeat -- better to let the voters decide such potentially contentious issues than to vote for them and be held accountable at the subsequent election.

Another aspect of the measure is what it proposes to do for library services in the community. If voters approve of the tax or the bond, what can they expect in return? Voters may think differently about giving more money to maintain a current level of service than they do about money to improve or expand a service or facility. Voters may also be interested in whether the measure affects branch or central services (particularly if branches are extremely popular), or whether it restores a particularly popular service or historic building. In short, voters will focus on what the measure provides as well as what it costs.

Also, in California, the success of a measure will depend upon the vote requirement needed to pass the measure. Certain kinds of local taxes and bonds (e.g. those that use property values) require a two-thirds vote while others (e.g. a sales tax in a small city) can be passed with a simple majority. The higher the vote requirement, the greater the odds of defeat. Many local measures are defeated in California despite getting a majority approval. For instance, Contra Costa County's 1994 measure B received 61% of the vote, but failed because it needed two-thirds approval. By comparison, Placerville's Measure L succeeded in the same year despite receiving only 53% of the vote. Of the 26 measures that we could identify as requiring simple majority approval, 19 of them passed (73%). By comparison, of the 58 measures that required a two-thirds vote, 25 passed (43%). In short, the content of the measure determines the vote requirement, and those that need supermajority approval should have a harder time succeeding than those that need only a simple majority.

The third element in local library referenda campaigns is the electoral context. One sense of electoral context is the timing of the referendum -- i.e. is it on the ballot in a general election, a primary or a special election? Timing matters in California because turnout varies in size and composition with different contexts. The smallest average electorate is usually found in special elections in which the turnout of registered voters can drop below 20% and the turnout of age eligible citizens below 10%. For instance, the turnout for Butte County's Measure L in the 1991 special election was 11.4% of registered voters and 8.3% of the total eligible voters. The turnout in primaries statewide is typically between a quarter and 50% of the registered voters while the turnout in the general elections is typically above 50%. In the jargon of the electoral consultants, the "universe" of voters "diminishes" as we move from general to primary to special election. In addition, the type of voter typically changes as the universe diminishes. Those who are younger, those who are less attentive to politics, those who have weaker ties to the parties, and those who have lower levels of education and income tend to turn out at lower rates in special elections than in generals unless there is an explicit effort to do GOTV (Get Out The Vote) in their communities. When consultants plan their strategies for primaries and special elections, they target the most likely voters who are typically those who have voted in the last



three or four local and state elections. It is more efficient to work with those who are likely to vote than to waste efforts on those who are infrequent participants in the political process. In theory, the compositional variations in different types of elections could affect both the cost of running and the odds of winning a given library referenda.

Another sense of electoral context is the general climate of opinion in a given year. State economic conditions, natural disasters, base and plant closings, scandals and the like can affect the general mood of the voters, making them more or less likely to vote for referenda in a given year. For library referendum supporters, the electoral mood is simply a "given," about which they can do little other than adapt and do the best that one can under the circumstances.

The last component is the strategy and tactics employed in the library referendum campaign. Strategy refers to the targeting goals and themes of the campaign while tactics refers to how the message is delivered to the voters. A campaign with a strategy identifies the voters who are likely to vote for the measure, those who are likely to vote against the measure, and those who are persuadable. It then has to decide whether, and to what degree, they will try to mobilize those who already support the measure as opposed to persuade those who are on the fence. Both mobilization and persuasion require motivation -- that is, the campaign has to provide reasons why voters should show up for and support a particular measure. Tactics refers to the implementation of the strategy and includes such things as whether the campaign does mailings, uses the local media, finds local officials to endorse the campaign and the like.

Much of our information about the strategy and tactics employed in these races comes from our survey of library directors and others who were involved in these campaigns. The overall picture that we get from this data is that there is not yet a uniformly high level of professionalization in California library referenda campaigns. Only a quarter of the campaigns sampled used a professional consultant, and less than half of these reported heavy use of their consultant's services.

In and of itself, this might not be a problem if those who run these campaign formulate well-conceived strategies and can find the resources to implement them. Here again, the survey raises some serious doubt. A

professional campaign conducts an early "baseline" poll to determine the measure's initial and potential levels of support and to identify the supporters and swing voters. If there are enough supporters to secure passage, the goal of the campaign is to make sure they vote (i.e. mobilization). More typically, a campaign needs to win over a certain fraction of the undecided or swing voters. The baseline poll can tell the campaign who those swing voters are, where they are located and what issues can sway them to support the measure. Polling and targeting are therefore absolutely essential ingredients to an appropriately formed strategy. Yet, over half of the library referenda sampled did no polling and close to 40% made no effort to target specific groups at all. At the same time, the vast majority of those sampled claimed that the aim of the campaign was to persuade voters rather than mobilize supporters -- only 11 of the campaigns made any serious effort at GOTV. But if there was no polling and targeting in many cases, this means that a number of these referenda campaigns consisted of generalized appeals aimed indiscriminately at an undifferentiated public -- a technique that is both inefficient and ineffectual.

Among those campaigns who did target, there are some clear patterns. The most heavily targeted groups were senior citizens (because they vote in high numbers), families with children, and homeowners. Women and the well-educated received some targeted attention as well (see Table 12). This pattern fits with themes that were emphasized in the campaigns: the most common message was that libraries were important for their impact upon children (hence the targeting of families with kids) and on the quality of life (hence the targeting of homeowners). The advantages of new technologies in the libraries and the quality of the libraries' past services were also popular themes. Few emphasized the impact of libraries upon literacy or their positive impact upon adolescents (see Table 14).

Tactics are the means for getting the messages to the voters. Typically, the tactics vary with the level of election: statewide races rely heavily upon radio and TV spots while assembly and Congressional races depend upon direct mail, absentee ballot, GOTV and grassroots organizing. Library referenda show a different pattern from both. Their most frequent campaign methods are producing pamphlets/fact sheets, working with grassroots organizations, making presentations to the community, posting signs and mailings

(in that order). Surprisingly, there is only sporadic door-to-door and phone canvassing (see Table 10).

Almost all of the campaigns worked closely with a Friends of the Library (FOL) or similar such organization, and close to two thirds of them described the FOL participation as "critical." The picture with respect to tactics fits the picture with respect to strategy -- namely, that library referenda campaigns are mostly low budget affairs that rely heavily on existing community networks and low cost communication methods. The problem is that a sophisticated strategy that targets key groups requires the use of more sophisticated tactics as well -- not just community presentations, but targeted mailings to swing voters; not just contact with the FOL but canvassing of all potential supporters, etc.

## **ASSESSING THE DETERMINANTS OF SUCCESS**

The critical question is what determines success and failure in library referenda. We have outlined four main components in a library referenda campaign: the characteristics of the electorate, the features of the ballot measure, the electoral context and the campaign's strategy and tactics. Can we say anything with any statistical certainty about the relative effects of these elements upon the final outcome?

The ultimate goal of this project will be to develop a series of multivariate models that test the various hypotheses with appropriate controls. But for now, we will pursue a more modest statistical tactic of looking for correlates and trends in the data, running only a few multivariate equations (see appendix A). Also, we will confine our tests within each of the four component categories rather than testing across them. Finally, the dependent variables we will use will be the "percent vote yes" and categorical classification "pass/fail." Because vote requirements vary and supermajority votes are more likely to fail, we expect the pass/fail variable to be a less sensitive indicator of electoral support than the vote itself. This also fits with what the sponsor of a library initiative needs to know: namely, which elements increase the vote for a library referendum measure.

## **1. The Impact of Voter Characteristics.**

As we mentioned earlier, the literature suggests that certain types of voters may be more disposed to vote for library measures than others. The following variables may determine some of the obvious candidates:

1. **Education--** Some have suggested that better educated citizens are more likely to appreciate the importance of books, knowledge and education than less well educated citizens. Assuming there is sufficient variation in the education levels of different cities and counties, we can test this by looking at the relation between the percentage of those in a city or county with four or more years of college education and the percent yes vote.

2. **Income--** Lower income voters may desire higher levels of public services. On the other hand, the costs of supporting libraries are easier to bear in wealthier communities. It is difficult to say which tendency should prevail. The proxy we use here is median household income.

3. **Race and Ethnicity--** There may be variations in usage and support for libraries along racial and ethnic lines. In general, African-Americans and Latinos tend to prefer higher levels of government service than whites on average, but that may not hold for libraries. We include terms for the percent white, black and Asian in the city or county under consideration.

4. **Age-** Many of the campaigns targeted families with children and senior citizens. We test for this by including terms for the percent under the age of 18 and over the age of 65 in a city or county.

5. **Gender**-- A few previous studies have suggested that women are more supportive than men of libraries. Unfortunately, there is not much variation across census tracts in gender distribution, and although we include a term for the percent female in a city or county, this is not as good a test as a survey would be.

The results of running these variables against the percent vote yes in bivariate regressions are shown in Table 1. This evidence indicates that there are some socio-demographic variations in the support for libraries, but that these effects are not very strong. Highly educated communities (i.e. those with a high percentage of college educated persons) were more likely to vote for library measures, as were communities with higher median household incomes. There were, also, important variations by race and ethnicity, with black and Asian areas having been more supportive of library measures than white or Latino areas. Age and gender differences across cities and counties did not seem to affect the prospects of library measures. Given differences in the ways that liberals and conservatives view the government's role in providing services to citizens, it is not surprising to find that the partisanship of a community mattered: areas with higher percentages of registered Democrats were more supportive of library measures than those with higher percentages of Republicans and independents (i.e., decline to states). We also tested for differences that the size of communities might make on the prospects of success. There was a suggestion in some of the previous studies that it was easier to win in smaller communities, but our data do not confirm that. There is no simple relationship between size and the passage rate of library measures, but there is some indication that the largest communities (especially counties) had more success than smaller and medium sized ones. With respect to counties, at least, the reason, may have had less to do with size and more to do with the dire fiscal problems that smaller rural counties faced in the post-Prop 13 era (see Table 9).

## **.2. The Features of Library Measures.**

Various features of the measure itself could potentially affect its prospects for success. To begin with, we might suppose that advisory measures would be easier to pass than normal measures since the real effects are seemingly less. Also, advisory measures require only a simple majority of votes, but non-advisory measures often require a supermajority, making them as a rule more difficult to pass. Only eight of the measures could be classified as advisory, and although the average vote yes for the advisory and non-advisory measures was approximately the same, the success rate of advisory measures was also about 20 percentage points higher (see Table 3), for the likely reasons stated above.

Another feature of library ballot measures is whether they propose a tax, bond or something else. We said earlier that we would expect measures that impose real costs on voters to be less popular on average than those that impose little or no costs. By far, the most common source of revenue in the library measures to date has been the introduction of new parcel taxes (i.e., a third of all the measures). Other common types have been the general obligation bond, the sales tax and the creation of benefit assessment districts. As one might expect, measures with no fiscal impact or that request that the state increase its funding for libraries receive the highest levels of support and achieve the highest rates of success (see Table 2a). By contrast, measures that propose local taxes tend to have lower levels of support and success. Less than one-half of measures proposing parcel taxes, sales taxes and general obligation bonds are successful. Sales taxes, in particular, seem to get the lowest levels of support. Benefit assessments have been the most successful, passing at a 2 to 1 rate, but the numbers are as yet too small to indicate with certainty whether the public really regards them more favorably.

Another important aspect of what the ballot measure offers to the voter is the purpose for which the revenue is being raised. Many of the measures do not specifically designate how funds will be spent. Of those that do, there are three broad categories: operations, facilities and materials/programs. Table 2b displays the success rates and average votes for each of the various purpose categories. There does not appear to be any substantial difference in the support across the broad categories of operations, facilities or

materials/programs. Certain subcategories (e.g., modifying facilities for the handicapped) have unusually high support levels, but the numbers are too small to warrant any confidence.

### 3. The Context of the Election.

As we said earlier, a library measure is decided in a particular electoral context. The question is whether certain contexts are more favorable to the passage of library measures than others. There are four aspects that we need to consider: whether the election is a primary, general, or special; the presence of other measures on the ballot; over time variations in the public's mood; and city versus county differences.

As was mentioned earlier, previous studies have indicated that the timing of the ballot measure can affect the size and composition of the turnout, and ultimately the chances of the measure's success. In particular, the turnout will tend to be lower in primary and special elections than in general elections, and the voters who turn out will tend to be more attentive to politics, better informed, more highly educated, and have higher incomes. Does this affect their propensity to vote for library measures?

The answer would appear to be no. We can measure this in two ways. First, we can look at the average percent vote yes on library measures considered in the general, primary and special elections respectively. By this standard, there is little difference between the various types of elections. The average yes vote for library referenda in general elections was 61%, primaries was 58% and specials, 61%. We get pretty much the same picture if we look at pass/fail rates. The split in general elections was 27 pass and 26 fail. In primaries, it was 7 pass and 7 fail, and in special elections, it was 11 pass and 7 fail. None of these differences is statistically meaningful (see Table 5).

Another sense of electoral context is the presence or absence of other funding measures on the ballot. Although one might suspect that the presence of other funding measures might decrease support for library measures by contributing to ballot fatigue or diminishing the salience of the measure to the public, or by giving the voters the feeling that there are too many requests for funding, the evidence suggests that this is not the case. The average percent yes vote was 63% when other funding measures were on the ballot and 59%

when they were not, and 62% of the library measures passed when there were other funding measures on the ballot as opposed to 43.5% when there were not. The experience statewide is similar; only when there is a very large number of funding measures do voters seem to revolt. More important is whether the community has a tendency in general to support public services. Communities that were more inclined to be electorally supportive of police and schools tended to be more supportive of libraries. The success rate for library measures in communities that tended to vote for the funding of police services was 54% as compared to 26% in the communities that were not (although the average vote yes is about equal), and the success rate of library measures in communities that tended to financially support schools was 68% as compared to 20% in those that were not (with substantial differences in the average vote yes as well). These results can be found in Table 6.

Thirdly, there are year to year fluctuations in the electoral mood, as we can see in Table 7. Local referenda went down to defeat in large numbers in 1992 at the crest of the recession, but did extremely well in 1994, as the state was pulling out of the recession. But even taking the course of the recession into account, the contrast between the 12% success rate in 1992 and the 84% success rate in 1994 is quite remarkable, particularly if one recalls that 1992 was a good year for Democrats and 1994 was a banner year for Republicans. Part of the answer, as we shall discuss in greater detail in a moment, may be tactical. There was a big difference in the general level of professionalization between 1992 and 1994. In 1992, very few of the library referenda campaigns used professional consultants or ran a campaign that targeted voters heavily. In 1994, a majority of them did.

One last sense of electoral context concerns whether the electoral jurisdiction of the referendum is a city or a county. Conventional wisdom suggests that citizens tend to identify with cities to a greater degree than with their county governments. If so, then we would expect higher levels of support for library referenda in the cities than in the counties. There is, in fact, some evidence for this in Table 8. Two-thirds of the city library referenda passed as opposed to 39% of the county measures with an average yes vote of 63% in the former and 58% for the latter.



#### 4. The Strategy and Tactics of Library Measure Campaigns.

As we saw earlier, there is a wide variance in the level of professionalism and activity in library measure campaigns. Does it matter to the outcome of these races? It would appear that it does. To begin with, we said earlier that only a minority of campaigns used a professional consultant and even fewer relied heavily on the consultant's services. Campaigns that used consultants succeeded 68% of the time versus 48% without, and they obtained an average yes vote of 67% versus 58% for those that did not. Although the average yes vote was 61% for measures with a consultant for the opposition, none of these measures passed due to some measures' supermajority vote requirement. When there was no consultant to the opposition, there was a 57% success rate and an average vote of 57%. In addition, campaigns that heavily involved their consultants did much better than those that did not (see Table 11). In short, professionalism does seem to make a difference.

The second important message is that a well-run campaign needs to have a targeting strategy. Campaigns that did little or no targeting of key groups did not do nearly as well as those that did a lot: targeted campaigns succeeded at a 74% rate versus 33% for those without targeting, and the average yes vote with targeting was 65% and without was 56%. Much the same can be said about polling. The average with polling was 68% and without was 56%, and with 67% of the measures passing and 40% failing, there was a 27 point gap in pass/fail rates of the percentage. This is probably an underestimate of the true impact of good targeting because we have no information about the quality of the targeting that was used in these campaigns. It also does not reflect the efficiency savings of a targeted campaign--i.e. resources are not wasted when they are directed towards voters who are likely to vote and need to be persuaded, or who are persuaded but need to be mobilized to vote. On the latter point, campaigns that did GOTV had an average yes vote of 67% versus 56% for those that did little or none.

Indeed, a corollary tactical point is that active campaigns do better than inactive ones -- an obvious point, but an important one nonetheless (see Table 16). Do campaigns matter -- the answer is yes, they do increase votes on the margin. Almost every form of campaign activity increases the percent yes vote by a

statistically meaningful margin. This includes community presentations, door to door and phone canvassing, pamphlets, mailings, signs, using grassroots organizations, and media spots.

It also appears that targeting almost any of the usual specific groups -- i.e., seniors, families, homeowners, the better educated -- produces better results than not targeting. Targeting families with children stands out somewhat from the rest, but the numbers are too small to support any conclusion about this with confidence (see Table 13). Similarly, many of the common themes did well. With the exception of arguing the benefits of libraries for adolescents and for economic development, all of the other themes produced positive pass/fail rates and higher average votes than campaigns that ignored those themes (see Table 15). Earlier, we saw that communities that tend to support schools also support libraries, and as further corroboration, the data in Table 15 show that the themes that libraries have a positive impact on children and literacy seem to be associated with library referenda success. But almost equally, themes concerning the library's contribution to the quality of life, technology and the strength of the library past performance, as demonstrated by the 65% of the measures that passed when this point was emphasized, helps illustrate that these issues for the community seem to be well received.

## CONCLUSION

Our evidence suggests that there are a number of factors that seem to be related to library measure success. Certain kinds of communities are more prone to pass these measures -- especially higher educated, Democratic voting, higher income, and minority communities. Measures that propose real costs face a tougher battle, especially if they require a supermajority vote. The context of the election, surprisingly, matters less than we initially thought, with few differences in the timing of the election, and the presence of other measures. The electorate does seem to be subject to mood swings with respect to taxes and bonds, and these can affect the outcome at the local level. But most importantly, we discovered that campaigns matter,

and that those that hire a consultant, formulate a targeting strategy and have a high level of activity do better than those that do not do these things.

# APPENDIX A

## Tables

The total number of cases in this study is 86, but, due to missing data, some tables have only 84 or 85 cases.

Table 1: Socioeconomic and Political Correlates

Socioeconomic Variable	Sign of estimated relation indicates that areas with more:	Is the Correlation Significant at 95% Confidence Level?
Percent College Graduates	College graduates are more supportive of library measures	Yes
Percent Over 65 years of age	Older populations are less supportive of library measures	No
Percent Under 18 years of age	Younger populations are less supportive of library measures	No
Median Household Income	Wealthier populations are more supportive of library measures	Yes
Percent Female	Women are more supportive of library measures	No
Percent Black	African Americans are more supportive of library measures	Yes
Percent Latino	Latinos are more supportive of library measures	No
Percent Asians	Asian-Americans are more supportive of library measures	Yes
Percent Democrat	Democrats are more supportive of library measures	Yes
Percent Republican	Republicans are less supportive of library measures	Yes
Percent Decline to State	No relation	No

Table 2a: Types of Library Measures by Source of Money

	Benefit Assessment	Parcel Tax		Sales Tax		Appropriations Limit	Excise Tax	General Obligation Bond	State Funding Request	Non-Fiscal	Other
		new	in-crease	new	in-crease						
% of all library measures	11 (9)	34 (42)	2 (2)	14 (11)	1 (1)	6 (5)	1 (1)	14 (11)	1 (1)	6 (5)	2 (2)
% passed	67 (6)	47 (16)	100 (2)	45 (5)	100 (1)	40 (2)	0 (0)	45 (5)	100 (1)	80 (4)	100 (2)
% failed	33 (3)	53 (18)	0 (0)	55 (6)	0 (0)	60 (3)	100 (1)	55 (6)	0 (0)	20 (1)	0 (0)
Average % vote yes	60	62	71	50	57	64	52	62	87	62	78

Note: Numbers in parentheses are raw numbers.

Table 2b: Purpose of Measure (Part 1)

	Maintain Collections	Purchase more Materials	Create new programs	Purchase new Technology	Maintain Library Operations	Expand Library Operations	Create new Library Operations	Restore and Maintain Operations
% Passed	50 (7)	57 (4)	50 (2)	100 (1)	40 (8)	100 (3)	33 (1)	64 (7)
% Failed	50 (7)	43 (3)	50 (2)	0 (0)	60 (12)	0 (0)	67 (2)	36 (4)
Average Vote Yes	66	67	66	73	61	79	50	62
N	14	7	4	1	20	3	3	11

Note: Numbers in parentheses are raw numbers.

Table 2b: Purpose of Measure (Part 2)

	Replace State/County Funding	Maintain Facilities	Expand Existing Facilities	Modify for Handicapped	Renovate old Facilities	Build a new Facility	General Not Specific	Library Board Membership	Library Commission Structure
% Passed	100 (1)	30 (3)	56 (5)	100 (2)	73 (3)	29 (2)	54.5 (12)	100 (2)	0 (0)
% Failed	0 (0)	70 (7)	44 (4)	0 (0)	25 (1)	71 (5)	45.5 (10)	0 (0)	1 (100)
Average Vote Yes	76	58	63	73	62	62	59	64	41
N	1	10	9	2	4	7	22	2	1

Note : Numbers in parentheses are raw numbers.



Table 3: Success of Advisory versus Non-Advisory Measures

	Advisory Measure	Non-Advisory Measure
% Library Measures Passed	78 (7)	51 (38)
% Library Measures Failed	22 (2)	49 (37)
Average Yes Vote	61	60

Note: Numbers in parentheses are raw numbers.

Table 4: Rules Matter

	Majority	Super-Majority
% Library measure passed	73 (19)	43 (25)
% Library measure failed	27 (7)	57 (33)
Average % yes vote	58	62

Note: Numbers in parentheses are raw numbers.

Table 5: Election Type and Success

	General Election	Primary Election	Special Election
% Measures Passed	51 (27)	50 (7)	61 (11)
% Measures Failed	49 (26)	50 (7)	39 (7)
Average % Yes	61	58	61

Note: Numbers in parentheses are raw numbers.

Table 6: General Ballot Information

	Community Generally:				Other Funding Measures on the Ballot	No Other Funding Measures on the Ballot
	Supports School Measures	Doesn't Support School Measures	Supports Fire/Police Measures	Doesn't Support Fire/Police Measures		
% Measures Passed	68 (25)	20 (4)	54 (21)	26 (5)	62 (23)	43.5 (10)
% Measures Failed	32 (12)	80 (16)	46 (18)	74 (14)	38 (14)	56.5 (13)
Average % Yes	65	51	59	57	63	59

Note: Numbers in parentheses are raw numbers.

Table 7: Trends Over Time

	1980	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
% of total	1.2 (1)	1.2 (1)	1.2 (1)	3.6 (3)	4.7 (4)	4.7 (4)	3.5 (3)	10.6 (9)	2.4 (2)	12.9 (11)	2.4 (2)	20.2 (17)	8.2 (7)	22.4 (19)	2.4 (2)
% passed	100 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	75 (3)	25 (1)	33 (1)	56 (5)	50 (1)	73 (8)	50 (1)	12 (2)	71 (5)	84 (16)	100 (2)
% failed	0 (0)	100 (1)	100 (1)	100 (3)	25 (1)	75 (3)	67 (2)	44 (4)	50 (1)	27 (3)	50 (1)	88 (15)	29 (2)	16 (3)	0 (0)
# campaigns that targeted heavily	0	0	0	0	4	2	0	4	1	11	0	8	7	17	3
# campaigns that used consultant	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2	0	2	2	9	2
Average % Yes Vote	69	29	42	52	57	63	61	57	71	65	60	56	63	66	68

Note: Numbers in parentheses are raw numbers.

Table 8: City versus County Success

	Cities	Counties
% Measures Passed	67 (30)	39 (16)
% Measures Failed	33 (15)	61 (25)
Average Yes Vote	63	58

Note: Numbers in parentheses are raw numbers.

Table 9: Population Size and Success

	<=30,000	30-99,999	100,000-249,999	>=250,000
% Library Measure Passed	50 (11)	44 (8)	53 (9)	63 (17)
% Library Measure Failed	50 (11)	56 (10)	47 (8)	37 (10)
Average Vote Yes	60	56	60	66
% Measure Requiring Majority Rule	23 (5)	39 (7)	25 (4)	39 (10)
% Measure Requiring 2/3	77 (17)	61 (11)	75 (12)	62 (16)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are raw numbers.

Table 10: Campaign Tactics

	Not Used at All	Used Some	Used Heavily	Don't Know
Polls	51.4 (38)	21.2 (18)	20 (17)	1.2 (1)
Grassroots Organizations	13.5 (10)	27 (20)	58 (43)	1.2 (1)
Signs	21.6 (16)	44.6 (33)	32.4 (24)	1.2 (1)
Media Spots	36.5 (27)	39.2 (29)	23 (17)	1.2 (1)
Mailings	21.6 (16)	43.2 (32)	33.8 (25)	1.2 (1)
Get Out The Vote	51.4 (38)	27 (20)	20 (15)	1.2 (1)
Presentations in the Community	18.9 (14)	43.2 (32)	36.5 (27)	1.2 (1)
Door-to-Door Canvassing	45.9 (34)	29.7 (22)	23 (17)	1.2 (1)
Telephone Canvassing	48.6 (36)	18.9 (14)	31.1 (23)	1.2 (1)
Pamphlets/Fact Sheets	12.2 (9)	27 (20)	59.5 (44)	1.2 (1)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are raw numbers.



Table 11: Consultants and Professionalization

	Campaign		Consultant Involvement			Opposition	
	Consultant	No consultant	High	Medium	Low	Consultant	No consultant
% Library measures passed	68 (13)	48 (26)	70 (7)	50 (2)	50 (1)	0 (0)	57 (8)
% Library measures failed	32 (6)	52 (28)	30 (3)	50 (2)	50 (1)	100 (2)	43 (6)
Average % yes vote	67	58	72	62	60	61	57

Note: Numbers in parentheses are raw numbers.

Table 12: Targeted Groups

	Senior Voters	Families with children	Homeowners	Women Voters	People with High Levels of Education	Other Voters
Not targeted	11 (8)	12.3 (9)	27.4 (20)	37 (27)	30.1 (22)	23.3 (17)
Targeted some	19.2 (14)	19.2 (14)	5.5 (4)	8.2 (6)	13.7 (10)	6.8 (5)
Heavily targeted	19.2 (14)	17.8 (13)	15.1 (11)	1.4 (1)	2.7 (2)	20.5 (15)
Not applicable / don't know	50.7 (37)	50.7 (37)	52.1 (38)	53.4 (39)	53.4 (39)	49.3 (36)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are raw numbers.

Table 13: Specific Targets and Success

	Senior Voters Targeted	Families Targeted	Homeowners Targeted	Women Targeted	Higher Education Targeted	Other
% Library Measures Passed	67 (10)	85 (11)	64 (7)	100 (1)	100 (2)	69 (11)
% Library Measures Failed	33 (5)	15 (2)	36 (4)	0 (0)	0 (0)	14 (5)
Average % Vote Yes	65	68	63	65	59	68

Note: Targeted means the group was targeted heavily. Numbers in parentheses are raw numbers.

Table 14: Strategic Themes

	Children	Adolescents	Literacy	New Technologies	Economic Development	Quality of Life	Library Record	Other
Not targeted at all	11.3 (8)	53.5 (38)	71.8 (51)	43.7 (31)	57.7 (41)	14.3 (10)	36.6 (26)	69 (49)
Targeted Some	31 (22)	33.8 (24)	12.7 (9)	33.8 (24)	33.8 (24)	27.1 (19)	29.6 (21)	5.6 (4)
Heavily Targeted	54.9 (39)	9.9 (7)	12.7 (9)	19.7 (14)	5.6 (4)	55.7 (39)	31 (22)	21.1 (15)
Don't Know	2.8 (2)	2.8 (2)	2.8 (2)	2.8 (2)	2.8 (2)	2.9 (2)	2.8 (2)	4.2 (3)

Note: Numbers in parentheses are raw numbers.  
Valid cases = 71

Table 15: Campaign Themes and Success

Did the Campaign Heavily Emphasize the Positive Impact of Library on:

	Adolescents		Children		Literacy		New Technology		Economic Development		Quality of Life		Library Performance	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
% Library measures passed	43 (3)	51 (19)	55 (22)	37 (3)	60 (6)	46 (23)	57 (8)	36 (11)	43 (3)	49 (19)	53 (21)	40 (4)	65 (15)	42 (11)
% Library measures failed	57 (4)	49 (18)	45 (18)	62 (5)	40 (4)	54 (27)	43 (6)	64 (20)	57 (4)	51 (18)	47 (19)	60 (6)	35 (8)	58 (15)
Average % yes vote	56	59	63	55	64	59	64	56	60	60	62	61	64	58

Note: Yes indicates that theme was heavily used by campaign.  
 No indicates that theme was not used at all.

Note: Numbers in parentheses are raw numbers.

Table 16 (part 1): Tactics and Success

	Targeting		Polling		Grassroots		Signs		Media Spots		Mail	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
% Library measures passed	74 (26)	33 (11)	67 (12)	40 (15)	58 (25)	30 (3)	62 (15)	33 (5)	71 (12)	48 (13)	72 (18)	74 (7)
% Library measures failed	26 (9)	67 (22)	33 (6)	60 (22)	42 (18)	70 (7)	37 (9)	67 (10)	29 (5)	52 (14)	28 (7)	56 (9)
Average % yes vote	65	56	68	56	63	48	65	55	66	60	68	54

Note: Numbers in parentheses are raw numbers

Table 16 (part 2): Tactics and Success

	GOTV		Community Presentations		Phoning		Pamphlets		Door-to-Door Canvassing	
	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no	yes	no
% Library measures passed	80 (12)	38 (14)	64 (18)	50 (7)	78 (18)	44 (18)	64 (29)	37 (3)	82 (14)	50 (17)
% Library measures failed	20 (3)	62 (23)	36 (10)	50 (7)	22 (5)	56 (20)	36 (16)	67 (5)	18 (3)	50 (17)
Average % yes vote	67	56	66	54	68	56	64	47	68	59

Note: Numbers in parentheses are raw numbers.

Table 17: Endorsements and Success

	Local Political Endorsements		Group Political Endorsements	
	yes	no	yes	no
% Library measures passed	58 (29)	38.1 (8)	61.7 (29)	36 (9)
% Library measures failed	42 (21)	61.9 (13)	38.3 (18)	64 (16)
Average % yes vote	64	53.7	63.2	56.1

Numbers in parentheses are raw numbers.



Table 18 (part 1)

Month	Day	Year	County	City	Yes vote	% Yes	No vote	% No	% to Pass	Pass/Fail	Measure Title
6	3	80	Alameda	Berkeley	30,352	69.3%	13,463	30.7%	2/3	1	Library Relief Act of 1980
11	6	84	Alameda	Fremont	21,074	41.7%	29,523	58.3%	2/3	0	Main Library Construction
11	8	88	Alameda	Berkeley	33,211	67.4%	16,099	32.6%	2/3	1	Library Relief Act of 1988
11	6	90	Alameda	Oakland	4,776	61.6%	1,077	16.4%	2/3	1	Rockridge Library Tax
11	3	92	Alameda	Berkeley	45,010	87.0%	6,712	13.0%	2/3	1	Amend. to Library Relief 1980
11	3	92	Alameda	Oakland	79,755	66.0%	41,132	34.0%	2/3	0	Library Services Retention 1992
11	8	94	Alameda	Albany	68,101	55.2%	55,381	44.8%	2/3	0	Tax to Finance Library Services
6	7	94	Alameda	Oakland	3,221	76.6%	986	23.4%	2/3	1	Library Services Act of 1994
6	7	94	Alameda	Oakland	43,328	73.2%	15,891	26.8%	2/3	1	Library Services Retention 1994.
11	6	90	Butte		18,697	42.9%	24,845	57.1%	2/3	0	Special Library Tax
11	5	91	Butte		5,647	50.2%	5,593	49.8%	51%	0	Chico Library
6	7	88	Calaveras		2,080	22.1%	7,330	77.9%	51%	0	Transaction and Use Tax
11	6	90	Calaveras		8,227	62.8%	4,876	37.2%	2/3	0	Tax for Construction of Lib.
11	3	92	Contra Costa		222,441	64.5%	122,230	35.5%	2/3	0	Property Tax*
11	3	92	Contra Costa	Crockett	891	55.3%	721	44.7%	2/3	0	Property Tax*
11	3	92	Contra Costa	Kensington	1,986	61.7%	1,232	38.3%	2/3	0	Property Tax*
11	8	94	Contra Costa	Library Service	159,347	61.0%	101,700	39.0%	2/3	0	Property Tax*
6	7	94	El Dorado	Placerville	3,527	53.2%	3,103	46.8%	51%	1	Cameron Pk. Lib.
6	3	86	Fresno		46,302	57.1%	34,787	42.9%	2/3	0	Library Services Tax *
3	2	93	Fresno		45,535	57.6%	33,522	42.4%	51%	1	Metropolitan Proj. Auth. *
6	8	82	Inyo		1,457	29.2%	3,528	70.8%	2/3	0	Lib. Financing Ord. *
11	4	86	Lake		13,351	67.3%	1,947	12.7%	51%	1	Advisory Measure
11	3	92	Lassen		5,701	56.5%	4,389	43.5%	2/3	0	Appropriations Limit
11	3	92	Lassen		5,941	57.9%	4,320	42.1%	2/3	0	Library tax to prevent
11	8	94	Lassen		1,884	71.7%	745	28.3%	51%	1	Library District Formation
11	4	86	Los Angeles	El Segundo	3,028	56.5%	2,329	43.5%	2/3	0	General Obligation Bond *
11	8	88	Los Angeles	Santa Monica	27,226	69.8%	11,782	30.2%	2/3	1	General obligation bond in the
6	4	91	Los Angeles	Palos Verdes	4,607	70.1%	1,963	29.9%	2/3	1	Bond, health measures *
6	22	93	Los Angeles	Pasadena	14,370	79.8%	3,642	20.2%	2/3	1	Library Special Tax
6	7	94	Los Angeles	S. Pasadena	3,921	66.6%	1,794	31.4%	2/3	1	5 yr. tax to maintain current lib.*
6	7	94	Los Angeles	Altadena	8,171	85.5%	1,381	14.5%	2/3	1	5 yr tax to replace funding due *
6	5	84	Marin		21,830	59.4%	14,927	40.6%	2/3	0	Library Tax *
6	5	84	Marin	Corte Madera	1,570	54.9%	1,291	45.1%	2/3	0	Library Tax *

Table I8 (part 2)

11	3	92	Marin			34,024	52.2%	31,194	47.8%	2/3	0	Library Tax *
11	3	92	Marin	Corte Madera		2,459	52.3%	2,242	47.7%	2/3	0	Special Tax
11	2	93	Marin	Zone 1		5,328	71.4%	2,138	28.6%	2/3	1	Library Special Tax *
4	12	94	Marin	Zone 2		13,819	67.5%	6,663	32.5%	2/3	1	Library Special Tax *
4	12	94	Marin	Corte Madera		1,496	74.7%	508	25.3%	2/3	1	Special tax - Library Services
6	6	95	Marin	San Anselmo		2,239	67.9%	1,060	32.1%	2/3	1	Library Tax *
6	7	88	Mendocino			12,343	53.6%	10,705	46.4%	2/3	0	Library Tax *
6	2	92	Mendocino			15,087	57.6%	11,021	42.2%	2/3	0	Library Tax *
11	8	88	Modoc			2,726	67.9%	1,287	32.1%	2/3	1	Mella Roos
11	7	89	Monterey	Marina		1,347	64.2%	750	35.8%	2/3	0	General Obligation Bond
11	3	92	Monterey	Pacific Grove		4,256	49.4%	4,352	50.6%	2/3	0	General Obligation Bond
11	3	92	Monterey	Pacific Grove		3,768	47.0%	4,246	53.0%	2/3	0	
11	3	87	Nevada			8,366	64.8%	4,550	35.2%	2/3	0	Constructing a new lib. *
11	3	92	Orange	Mission Viejo		18,681	56.5%	14,406	43.5%	51%	1	Library Construction
4	12	88	Riverside	Corona		2,486	70.8%	1,026	29.2%	2/3	1	Bond for library construction
11	3	92	Riverside	Hemet		9,925	55.4%	7,977	44.6%	2/3	0	Bonds for library construction
4	13	93	San Benito			2,026	36.6%	3,510	63.4%	51%	0	Advisory
11	3	87	San Diego	San Diego		83,427	50.2%	82,901	49.8%	51%	0	Appropriations limit adjustment
11	6	90	San Diego	Chula Vista		20,636	74.7%	6,991	25.3%	51%	1	Prohibit dual membership
11	6	90	San Diego	Chula Vista		15,060	54.3%	12,658	45.7%	51%	1	# of members on Trustee Board
11	6	90	San Diego	San Diego		149,546	60.7%	96,803	39.3%	51%	1	Advisory--Upgrade Lib. System
1	28	92	San Diego	Del Mar		566	39.0%	886	61.0%	51%	0	Advisory - Bonds for new lib.
11	8	83	San Francisco			62,002	41.6%	87,080	58.4%	51%	0	Blind and Disabled
11	8	88	San Francisco			186,336	76.2%	58,048	23.8%	2/3	1	Bond Act
6	7	94	San Francisco			82,860	69.8%	35,800	30.2%	51%	1	Library funding
6	5	90	Santa Barbara			12,085	82.0%	2,646	18.0%	2/3	1	Special Tax Measure
11	3	92	Santa Barbara			10,346	54.6%	8,593	45.4%	2/3	0	Special tax and approp. limit
6	4	85	Santa Clara			6,097	69.7%	2,646	30.3%	2/3	1	Library Special Services Tax
11	6	90	Santa Clara			12,204	74.2%	4,241	25.8%		1	Library Special Services Tax
11	2	93	Santa Clara			185,558	78.0%	52,355	22.0%	51%	1	Advisory - tax allocation
11	8	94	Santa Clara			78,440	68.7%	35,736	31.3%	51%	1	Advisory - Librantes restoration*
11	8	94	Santa Clara	San Jose		114,178	65.2%	60,927	34.8%	51%	1	Advisory - Lib. books/improve.
11	8	94	Santa Cruz			39,655	48.1%	42,788	51.9%	51%	0	County Library Tax
11	8	94	Santa Cruz	Scotts Valley		2,349	58.6%	1,659	41.4%	51%	1	Sales Tax Share
11	8	94	Santa Cruz	Capitola		2,191	60.0%	1,461	40.0%	51%	1	Sales Tax Share
11	8	94	Santa Cruz	Watsonville		3,108	55.9%	2,452	44.1%	51%	1	Sales Tax Share
11	8	94	Santa Cruz	Santa Cruz		11,365	60.3%	7,470	39.7%	51%	1	Sales Tax Share

Table 18 (part 3)

3	1	88	Shasta		8,916	31.9%	19,063	66.1%	2/3	0	Transaction and Use Tax
		90	Shasta								
3	2	93	Shasta		14,424	48.0%	15,638	52.0%	2/3	0	Library Commission Tax
11	3	92	Siskiyou		7,810	39.9%	11,769	60.1%	2/3	0	County Library Funding
11	3	87	Solano	Dixon	1,250	66.9%	619	33.1%	2/3	1	5 year tax
11	8	88	Solano	Vacaville	9,900	52.4%	8,995	47.6%	2/3	0	Tax for municipal improvements
8	18	86	Stanislaus		14,226	51.9%	13,175	48.1%	2/3	0	Special Tax
3	7	95	Stanislaus		28,205	68.2%	13,131	31.8%	2/3	1	Sales Tax
11	5	85	Tehama		2,538	30.2%	5,869	69.8%	2/3	0	Property Tax for library services*
11	5	85	Ventura	Santa Paula	2,018	73.7%	720	26.3%	2/3	1	Special Tax
11	6	90	Ventura	Santa Paula	3,373	57.4%	2,501	42.6%	2/3	0	Temporary Tax
11	6	90	Ventura	Santa Paula	3,548	60.3%	2,332	39.7%	51%	1	Appropriations Limit
6	2	93	Ventura	Santa Paula	2,906	69.7%	1,266	30.3%	2/3	1	Library Tax*
11	7	94	Ventura	Santa Paula	2,866	83.7%	560	16.3%	51%	1	Temp. increase, approp. limit*
11	5	85	Yolo	Woodland	1,922	52.9%	1,708	47.1%	51%	1	Advisory, Lib. restoration
11	7	89	Yolo		7,131	78.1%	2,002	21.9%	2/3	1	Special tax \$ bond, Davis Br.

**APPENDIX B**  
Multivariate Model of Campaign Effects

	1	2
Constant	.20 (.102)	.22 (.07)
Used Polls	.02 (.018)	.006 (.01)
Used Targeting	.06 (.029)	.07 (.03)
Hired Consultant	.05 (.03)	.04 (.03)
% College Educated	.15 (.13)	-
Median Income	2.20 (E-06) (1.60 (E-06))	-
% Democratic Registration	.37 (.17)	-
Proposition 85 Vote		.56 (.12)
R	.34	.36
SE	.11	(.11)

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