

September 5, 2023

The Honorable Gail Pellerin  
Chair, Assembly Elections Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 365  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: ACA 13 (Ward) Protect and Retain the Majority Vote Act  
City of Palo Alto – Notice of Support**

Dear Assembly Member Pellerin:

On behalf of the City of Palo Alto, I write to offer our support of ACA 13 (Ward), which requires any constitutional amendment proposed by initiative, which increases a vote requirement for future measures, to be approved by the same proportion of votes cast as the measure would require. The measure would also preserve the right of cities to place advisory questions on the ballot to ask voters their opinions on issues.

Under current law, a simple majority of voters (50% plus 1) may vote to require a super majority (66.66%) voter approval for future action. This framework has given disproportionate power to a small number of voters, with a little more than 1/3 of the voters being able to prevent the enactment of laws that a majority of voters agree upon. This framework has made it unnecessarily difficult to pass revenue measures dedicated to critical services such as homelessness and housing, fire, public safety, and roads. For example, nearly 80% of all two-thirds supermajority measures garnered more than a majority of the vote but fell just short of the 2/3 threshold. It is important to ensure that any constitutional amendment proposed to impact desperately needed services is held to the same threshold as it proposes. ACA 13 is an important step to preserving cities' ability to set appropriate local rates and fees, given that efforts to redefine fees to require supermajority voter approval would similarly impact essential municipal services.

Furthermore, this measure protects a useful tool in determining voter sentiment regarding the use and purpose of tax revenues. A ballot measure qualified for the November 2024 ballot seeks to prohibit the advisory measures from being placed on the same ballot as a local tax initiative. This works to decrease transparency about how the electorate feels funds should be used.

ACA 13 addresses this issue by holding initiatives accountable to pass by the same amount as the proposed voter requirement. ACA 13 is a good government, fair proposal that protects the principles of democracy.

For these reasons, the City of Palo Alto supports ACA 13.

Sincerely,



Lydia Kou  
Mayor, City of Palo Alto