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Proposition 88 Puts Proposition 13 in Jeopardy

By Jon Coupal

Homeowners are easy targets. Typically, we commit most of our working lives to pay for a home. For many, it is our greatest financial asset, our security, as well as that place on earth where we feel most at ease. We will go to almost any lengths to protect and preserve our family homes.

This is why, for those who are constantly searching for more government revenue, homeowners and others who pay property taxes were juicy targets — until the passage of Proposition 13, that is.

As a result of Proposition 13, for the first time, government could no longer use its coercive power — pay or lose your home — to wring arbitrary and ever greater amounts from property owners. Under Proposition 13, taxes are limited so that everyone knows the extent of their liability, not only today and tomorrow, but years into the future. Making taxes *predictable* — allowing homeowners to budget for taxes — is Proposition 13's greatest gift.

But Proposition 88 on the November ballot puts all of this in jeopardy. This brand new *statewide* property parcel tax is the most potent threat to Proposition 13 since its legality was challenged before the United States Supreme Court in 1992. The justices upheld Proposition 13, and now voters must do the same by rejecting Proposition 88, which would impose a new tax on 10,000,000 parcels of property throughout the state.

Although the tax begins modestly at \$50, proponents are already advocating that it be *doubled* in four years and *increased* every four years after that. And as a parcel tax, it makes *no* allowances for income or ability to pay. Proposition 88 treats all property owners the *same*. The ultra-wealthy backers of Proposition 88 will pay no more on their mansions than a young couple buying a starter home.

This is *bad*.

What is worse is that bureaucrats and special interests are licking their lips as they wait for the outcome of the November ballot. Visions of sugarplums and new tax revenues dance in their heads.

Currently, Proposition 13 mandates a two-thirds vote to approve local property parcel taxes. If Proposition 88 passes, tax raisers will be lined up hundreds deep with proposals for additional *state* property taxes for every program imaginable — all to be passed with a *simple majority* vote.

The stage would be set to charge property owners for programs totally unrelated to property. Everything from enhanced public employee pension benefits to new stadiums for wealthy sports franchise owners could be passed by a *simple majority* vote, with the burden falling exclusively on *property owners*. This would put homeowners back in the same untenable position they faced in 1978, *prior* to the passage of

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Proposition 13, when many, especially those on fixed incomes, were losing their homes to the tax collector.

This must *not* be allowed to happen. Proposition 88 *must be soundly defeated* and a message sent to those whose sole goal is to wring more from taxpayers: **LEAVE OUR HOMES ALONE!**

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