

# Interactive website provides nonpartisan information on statewide initiatives

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(Phys.org)—Propositions 30 through 40 – 11 in all – are on the statewide California ballot this year. And there are countless commercials, mailers, and editorials trying to sway voters' opinions. What's a voter to do? Visit CaliforniaChoices.org for comprehensive nonpartisan information. Do your homework there. Make your choices. Save them. Share them.

CaliforniaChoices.org is presented by the [nonprofit organization](#) Next 10, in partnership with the Institute of Governmental Studies at UC Berkeley and the department of political science at UC San Diego.

UC San Diego's Thad Kousser, associate professor of political science in the Division of Social Sciences, is one of the experts involved in California Choices since its beginnings two years ago.

"CaliforniaChoices.org is designed to help voters make informed decisions," Kousser said. "We can't decide the future of our state based on 30-second commercials. If the initiative process is truly to give power

to the people, then people need in-depth, unbiased information at their fingertips – on their laptops, their tablets and smartphones."

The newly updated website organizes available information on the 11 statewide propositions on the ballot this November into an accessible, one-stop-shop format. It enables users to share on social media and includes a new tool allowing voters to save their choices for future use, all the way to the [ballot box](#).

The most popular feature on the site is the "Endorsements" table, which shows endorsements made by 25 groups of all political stripes. Also on the site: polling data; pro and con arguments for the initiatives; video clips from supporters and opponents; recent press coverage; in-depth background information; and an "Official Voter Guide" from the Secretary of State.

"It is easy to become discouraged when trying to use newspapers, the Internet, television and other resources to research nearly a dozen different ballot initiatives. We put all the information in one place so that voters can access...a wealth of resources through a single porthole," said F. Noel Perry, the founder of Next 10.

The interactive site also allows users to save their votes using the new "My Votes" feature. Voters can then retrieve their voting preferences at any time from another device, including from a smart phone at the polling place.

Users can also share their votes with family and friends via email or Facebook.

"The partners who present this website are dedicated to finding new ways to support Californians in becoming more engaged in the political process," said Jack Citrin, director of the Institute of Governmental

Studies at UC Berkeley. "We use our smart phones and social media to schedule our days, keep up to date on the news of the day, and keep in touch with friends and family – why not also use these resources to create a more robust democracy?"

California Choices was created in June 2010 to educate Californians about government reform. Three of the 11 November ballot measures are reform-related; they address budget reform, campaign contributions, and redistricting.

"The reforms voters have approved recently show that Californians are ready to work together to solve the state's deepest problems," said Kousser. "But the work is not over yet, and the outcome of this election will be a bellwether for how to best move forward."

Provided by University of California - San Diego

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