

*City of*  
**SACRAMENTO**  
Office of the City Clerk



**Guide for Preparation of  
Ballot Arguments & Rebuttals**

## CITY MEASURES – PRIMARY AND REBUTTAL ARGUMENTS

The California Elections Code Division 9, Chapter 3, Article 4 allows for primary arguments and rebuttal arguments for city measures. There are two types of city measures: voter initiative petition measures and city council measures.

For measures placed on the ballot by **voter initiative petition**, a written argument in favor of the measure may be submitted by the person(s) filing the initiative petition. A written argument in opposition to the measure may be submitted by the legislative body (Elections Code section 9282(a)).

For measures placed on the ballot by **city council**, a written argument in favor of or against the measure may be submitted by any of the following: the city council, or any council member(s) authorized by the city council, or any individual voter who is eligible to vote on the measure, or bona fide association of citizens, or any combination of voters and associations (Elections Code section 9282(b)).

### PRIMARY ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF OR AGAINST A MEASURE

For all measures, the primary argument shall not exceed 300 words in length. The use of the standard word count outlined in Elections Code section 9 shall be followed and is included at the end of this guide.

Authors shall use the City's official Argument Form provided by the Office of the City Clerk. This form shall contain the text of the primary argument and be signed by each author who shall provide their name, title, and voter registration address. No primary argument shall exceed five authors on the City's official Argument Form provided by the Office of the City Clerk.

### Selection of Arguments

For city council measures, multiple arguments may be submitted to the City Clerk. If more than one primary argument is received in favor of or against a measure, the City Clerk shall select one argument representing each position pursuant to the priority listed in Elections Code section 9287. Regarding city council measures, the priority for selection is as follows:

- (a) The legislative body, or member or members of the legislative body authorized by that body.
- (b) 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.
- (c) Bona fide associations of citizens. \*
  
- (d) Individual voters who are eligible to vote on the measure.

\* In order to enable the City Clerk to determine whether it qualifies as a bona fide association of citizens, an organization or association submitting a primary argument in favor of or against a city

measure shall submit with its argument a copy of one of the following (pursuant to Senate Bill 665):

- (a) Its articles of incorporation, articles of association, partnership documents, bylaws, or similar documents.
- (b) Letterhead containing the name of the organization and its principal officers.
- (c) If the organization or association is a primarily formed committee established to support or oppose the measure, its statement of organization filed pursuant to Section 84101 of the Government Code.

## **REBUTTALS TO A MEASURE ARGUMENT**

Rebuttals are permissible only when primary arguments in favor of and against a measure are submitted. Only authors of the submitted primary arguments may author the rebuttal arguments. No rebuttal shall exceed 250 words in length. The use of the standard word count outlined in Elections Code section 9 shall be followed and is included at the end of this guide.

Authors shall use the City's official Rebuttal Form provided by the Office of the City Clerk. This form shall contain the text of the rebuttal argument and be signed by each author who shall provide their name, title, and voter registration address. No rebuttal shall exceed five authors.

The author(s) of a primary argument shall remain the author(s) of any applicable rebuttal argument. If an author wishes to relinquish their authorship of a rebuttal argument to another author, a Relinquishment of Author Status form provided by the Office of the City Clerk shall be submitted. Alternate authors are required to meet the same eligibility criteria as required to author the primary argument in favor of or against a measure.

## **SIGNING OF ARGUMENTS (COVID RELIEF)**

Arguments must be signed by the author(s) and those signature(s) filed along with the arguments with the Office of the City Clerk by the designated deadline. (California Election Code 9283). All arguments must be submitted electronically using the City's Official Ballot Argument Form located on the City's Website.

Due to the current Coronavirus pandemic, the Clerk is accepting the electronic signature of the argument author(s), in addition to the standard submittal of wet signature(s).

### **Wet Signatures**

Ballot author(s) may choose to print the electronically submitted form and route it to each author for them to physically sign in person. Once all signature(s) are collected, the form is then physically submitted to the Office of the City Clerk.

### **Electronic Signatures**

If the argument author(s) elect to sign electronically, they still must submit the City's official ballot argument form electronically. The argument author(s) must advise the Clerk that they would like the Clerk to forward the submitted form to the email address(es) listed on the argument form the

argument for digital signing. If the proponents prefer to use their own electronic signature application, it must comply with section 22000 et al; of the California Code of Regulations.

Regardless if wet or electronically signed; all argument forms and signatures must be received prior to 5:00 p.m. on the deadline day. There is no provision in the California Election Code for late submittals.

## SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Primary argument and rebuttal submissions are due to the Office of the City Clerk no later than 5:00 p.m. on the due date. Submission is required electronically and in person, if submitting wet signatures at the Office of the City Clerk located at 915 I Street, New City Hall, 5th Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814. Due dates for materials pertaining to measures on the November 3, 2020 Municipal Election ballot are as follows:

Primary Arguments	Saturday, August 15, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.
Rebuttal Arguments	Monday, August 17, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

Confirmation of the completed argument materials with signature(s) will be confirmed by the Office of the City Clerk upon receipt. You may also contact the Clerk by calling (916) 808-7200 or by emailing [clerk@cityofsacramento.org](mailto:clerk@cityofsacramento.org)

## PUBLIC ACCESS AND EXAMINATION

Arguments are available for public examination for 10 calendar days following the filing deadline. The public examination deadlines associated with measure materials on the November 3, 2020 Municipal Election ballot are as follows:

Primary Argument Public Examination Period Deadline:  
Tuesday August 25, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

Rebuttal Argument Public Examination Period Deadline (If needed):  
Thursday August 27, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

## FORMAT OF ARGUMENTS AND REBUTTALS

Primary arguments and rebuttals shall be typewritten in block paragraph style on the City's official Argument Form provided by the Office of the City Clerk. Text shall be of uniform size and darkness, and with uniform spacing. Therefore, authors may not use:

- Underlining (including publication names or titles referenced)
- ALL CAPS
- Any form of emphasis such as *italics*, **bold print**, dashes (-),

- bullets (●) stars (\*), etc.
- Multiple punctuation (e.g. “.....” or “-----“or “!!!!!!”)

The use of any quotations or endorsements in the submitted argument require the submission of associated documentation. If the argument contains the name of an endorsee, written approval from that individual authorizing the use of their name must be submitted with the argument form. If a quote is used, the original document in which the quote was printed, or a signed statement from the person who was quoted in the argument must be submitted.

## STANDARD WORD COUNT

Counting of words, for purposes of this code, shall be as follows:

1. Punctuation is not counted.
2. Each word shall be counted as one word except as specified in this section.
3. All proper nouns, including geographical names, shall be considered as one word; for example, “City and County of San Francisco” shall be counted as one word.
4. Each abbreviation for a word, phrase, or expression shall be counted as one word.
5. Hyphenated words that appear in any generally available standard reference dictionary, published in the United States at any time within the 10 calendar years immediately preceding the election for which the words are counted, shall be considered as one word. Each part of all other hyphenated words shall be counted as a separate word.
6. Dates shall be counted as one word.
7. Any number consisting of a digit or digits shall be considered as one word. Any number which is spelled, such as “one,” shall be considered as a separate word or words. “One” shall be counted as one word whereas “one hundred” shall be counted as two words. “100” shall be counted as one word.
8. Telephone numbers and email addresses shall each be counted as one word.
9. Internet web site addresses shall be counted as one word.

Primary arguments and rebuttals that are not in compliance with the formatting guidelines above shall be reformatted by the City Clerk. Primary arguments and rebuttals that exceed the allotted word count shall be shortened by removing words from the end of the argument text until the word limit is reached.

The City Clerk bears no responsibility for the corrected format of arguments and rebuttals under these circumstances. Additional information regarding measure arguments and rebuttals can be obtained via the [City Clerk's website](#) or by contacting the Office of the City Clerk at (916) 808-7200 or via email at [clerk@cityofsacramento.org](mailto:clerk@cityofsacramento.org).