

PROPOSITION **15** **INCREASES FUNDING SOURCES FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS, COMMUNITY COLLEGES, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES BY CHANGING TAX ASSESSMENT OF COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY. INITIATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.**

OFFICIAL TITLE AND SUMMARY

PREPARED BY THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

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The text of this measure can be found on the Secretary of State’s website at voterguide.sos.ca.gov.

- Increases funding sources for K–12 public schools, community colleges, and local governments by requiring commercial and industrial real property be taxed based on current market value, instead of purchase price.
- Exempts from taxation changes: residential properties; agricultural land; and owners of commercial and industrial properties with combined value of \$3 million or less.
- Any additional education funding will supplement existing school funding guarantees.
- Exempts small businesses from personal property tax; for other businesses, provides \$500,000 exemption.

SUMMARY OF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST’S ESTIMATE OF NET STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT FISCAL IMPACT:

- Increased property taxes on commercial properties worth more than \$3 million providing \$6.5 billion to \$11.5 billion in new funding to local governments and schools.

ANALYSIS BY THE LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

BACKGROUND

Local Governments Tax Property. California cities, counties, schools, and special districts (such as a fire protection district) collect property taxes from property owners based on the value of their property. Property taxes raise around \$65 billion each year for these local governments. Overall, about 60 percent of property taxes go to cities, counties, and special districts. The other 40 percent goes to schools and community colleges. These shares are different in different counties.

Property Includes Land, Buildings, Machinery, and Equipment. Property taxes apply to many kinds of property. Land and buildings are taxed. Businesses also pay property taxes on most other things they own. This includes equipment, machinery, computers, and furniture. We call these things “business equipment.”

How Is a Property Tax Bill Calculated? Each property owner’s annual property tax bill is equal to the taxable value of their property multiplied by their property tax rate. The typical property owner’s property tax rate is 1.1 percent.

Taxable Value of Land and Buildings Is Based on Original Purchase Price. In the year a piece of

land or a building is purchased, its taxable value typically is its purchase price. Each year after that, the property’s taxable value is adjusted for inflation by up to 2 percent. When a property is sold again, its taxable value is reset to its new purchase price. The taxable value of most land and buildings is less than what they could be sold for. This is because the price most properties could be sold for grows faster than 2 percent per year.

Taxable Value of Business Equipment Is Based on How Much It Could Be Sold for. Unlike land and buildings, business equipment is taxed based on how much it could be sold for today.

Counties Manage the Property Tax. County assessors determine the taxable value of property. County tax collectors bill property owners. County auditors distribute tax revenue to local governments. Statewide, counties spend about \$800 million each year on these activities.

PROPOSAL

Tax Commercial and Industrial Land and Buildings Based on How Much They Could Be Sold for. The measure requires commercial and industrial (after this referred to simply as “commercial”)