



## SCA 3 – DODD LOCAL LIBRARY BONDS – VOTER THRESHOLD

### Summary

SCA 3 would amend the State Constitution to allow cities, counties, and special districts to issue bonded indebtedness for library related capital outlay, as specified with 55% voter approval.

### Background

There are 1,114 public libraries in California. Libraries provide vital services to the state's educational system and to communities across the state. More than 22 million people use California's public libraries annually.

Students, adults, seniors and those with hearing and visual impairments, among others, rely on public libraries more than ever before. Libraries provide a variety of services including literacy and study instruction, Internet access, and disability services. Professional librarians assist people in finding source material for research, employment training and work opportunities, reading pleasure, and more. Libraries are also an integral part of our public education system, where students receive guidance for effective study habits. This service has become even more important in light of cutbacks in school based libraries over the last 15 years.

The last state library bond was approved by voters in 2000. The bond amount was \$350 million. However, because the statewide need was more than \$2 billion at that time, approximately three fourths of the shovel ready library projects were left unfunded. According to a needs assessment done in 2016, there are 559 California public library "immediate need" projects awaiting \$4.1 billion in funds. Projects

range from seismic retrofits, to addressing ADA compliance issues, to the addition of more space to meet growing demand.

### Existing Law

The California Constitution requires cities, counties, and school districts to obtain voter approval for long term debt. If the debt is secured by an ad valorem tax on property, the debt must have 2/3 voter approval. The Constitution however, allows school districts, community college districts, and county offices of education to issue bonded indebtedness for school facilities with 55% voter approval.

### This Bill

SCA 3 would lower the vote threshold to approve the issuance of bonds by cities, counties, and special districts for the purpose of constructing, reconstructing, rehabilitating, or replacing public libraries, to 55% instead of two thirds of the voters voting in an election.

### Support

California Library Association.

### Opposition

### Contact

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