



LEAGUE OF
WOMEN VOTERS®
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The League of Women Voters of Metropolitan Tulsa

Positions on Nov. 12, 2013, Ballot Propositions

In addition to providing nonpartisan voter information on issues, the League has a long and distinguished history of research and study leading to membership consensus and a position statement on important public policies. The League's position "Criteria for Good Government" leads it to OPPOSE Proposition 1 on the November 12, 2013, ballot. The League's positions on "Criteria for Bond Issues for Capital Improvements, City of Tulsa" and the position on "Criteria on Revenue for the City of Tulsa and for Budgeting" warrant its SUPPORT for Propositions 2 and 3, known collectively as the "Improve Our Tulsa" propositions.

Note: The full versions of the League's positions are available on <http://www.lwvtulsa.org/local-positions>.

Proposition 1

City Charter Amendment Councilors' Salaries

Shall the City Charter of the City of Tulsa be amended to set the salary for members of the City Council at twenty-four thousand dollars (\$24,000.00) per year; and repealing the Council's power to change its salary by its own vote?

**For the Proposition - Yes
Against the Proposition – No**

This proposition deals with both city councilors' salaries and the process by which their salaries are raised. The League opposes this resolution because it poses two separate and distinct questions that cannot effectively be answered with one vote. Therefore, two answers should be permitted. In other words, the way the current question is posed a voter cannot express support for one question and opposition to the other.

If passed, the constitutionality of the current question is open to challenge because the League believes it is in violation of Section 8 (Procedures on ordinances and resolutions) of the City Charter which reads:

All ordinances or resolutions, except those adopting budgets, making appropriations, or adopting a code of ordinances, shall be confined to one subject, which shall be clearly expressed in the title.

Though the City may argue that the "one subject" is councilor salaries, the League disagrees. The first question in the proposition deals with the amount of salary paid to the councilors, but the second question is about limiting the powers of the councilors.

Additionally, should it be challenged, the City of Tulsa would incur expenses to defend the new charter amendment that would have been avoidable had the proposition been properly formed.

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Improve Our Tulsa Propositions

Proposition 2

**“Improve Our Tulsa” - Sales Tax
1.1% until \$563,700,000.00 collected (7 years max.)**

Do you approve ordinances extending a one and one-tenth percent (1.1%) sales tax levy from the current City of Tulsa one and one-sixth percent (1.167%) sales tax which is due to expire on June 30, 2014, and continuing to collect one and one-tenth percent (1.1%) sales tax until the full amount of five hundred sixty-three million, seven hundred thousand dollars and no cents (\$563,700,000.00) is so collected, but in no event longer than seven (7) years, that is June 30, 2021, as provided in Ordinance No. 22921, at which time the said sales tax shall expire, unless renewed by a vote of the people; and devoting the revenues from said sales tax to capital improvement projects, as provided in Ordinance No. 22922?

**For the Proposition - Yes
Against the Proposition - No**

Proposition 3

“Improve Our Tulsa” - Bond, Street and Bridge Construction and Repair Bonds

Shall the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma incur an indebtedness by issuing its bonds in the sum of Three Hundred Fifty-Five Million Dollars and No Cents (\$355,000,000.00) to provide funds (either with or without state or federal aid) for the purpose of constructing, reconstructing, improving and repairing streets and bridges, as authorized by Section 27, Article X of the Constitution and laws of the State of Oklahoma, and levy and collect an annual tax, in addition to all other taxes, upon all taxable property in said City, sufficient to pay the interest on said bonds as it falls due, and also to constitute a sinking fund for the payment of principal of said bonds when due, said bonds to bear interests of not more than the maximum rate permitted by law at the time the bonds are issued, payable semiannually and to become due serially within twenty-five (25) years from their date?

**For the Proposition - Yes
Against the Proposition - No**

The League recognizes that all cities need to raise money to fund capital projects that benefit its citizens. Cities cannot function without maintaining, improving, replacing and building new infrastructure and assets. To not do so is a disservice to its citizens. Such assets provide essential services to citizens and can provide in some cases, revenue to the city. Funding sources for such projects available to The City of Tulsa are sales taxes and General Obligation (GO) bonds.

The League’s positions *Criteria on Revenue for the City of Tulsa and for Budgeting* and the *Criteria for Bond Issues for Capital Improvements* are very specific on the development process and use of such funds. Included are the following criteria:

- Continuous citizen participation from the initial stages
- Proposals for projects that satisfy a need which has been fully documented by facts and figures whose validity has been established
- Evaluation and accountability of programs based on established goals and objectives
- A comprehensive long range planning process
- Priority setting that include not only infrastructure needs, but also provide for the amenities of life, e.g., libraries, museums and parks

In our opinion, the City of Tulsa has satisfied these criteria in its consideration of not only the intended projects but on potential sources of funding. City officials held many public meetings requesting input from its citizens and we know that input was considered as the details of the packages took shape.

The League further recognizes that voters will not be voting on the list of intended projects, but on the sales tax renewal and incurring the debt inherent in the issuance of bonds. Voters are urged to cast their votes based on the questions being asked rather than on support or opposition to any specific project.

Accountability and transparency in the entire seven year commitment of these funds is vital to the ultimate success of Improve Our Tulsa. The League strongly urges city leaders to involve citizens in the ongoing process of updating projects as needs change and also in reviewing, assessing and reporting progress as projects are implemented.