

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.

PRIMARY ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF OR AGAINST A MEASURE

For all measures, the primary argument (in favor or against the measures) 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 electronic Argument Form provided by the Office of the City Clerk. This form shall contain the text of the primary argument and be wet 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 measures placed on the ballot by voter initiative petition, the person(s) filing the initiative petition, along with anyone eligible to vote on the measure, or bona fide association of citizens, or any combination of voters and associations, may file a written argument in favor of the measure. (Sacramento City Code 1.16.070.B)

The city council, or any council member(s) authorized by the city council, or charter officer, or department director, or any individual eligible to vote on the measure, or bona fide association of citizens, or any combination of voters and associations, may submit an argument against the measure. If the city council, or any council member(s) authorized by the city council, submits a written argument against an initiative measure, only one authorized member’s signature is necessary to afford the legislative body priority in argument selection.

If more than one argument is submitted against the measure, the city elections official shall select one of the arguments and give preference and priority to the arguments in the same order established under California Elections Code Section 9287 and Sacramento City Code 1.16.070.B)

Priority for the selection of the argument author against the measure 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 California 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 electronic Rebuttal Form provided by the Office of the City Clerk. This form shall contain the text of the rebuttal argument and be wet signed by each author who shall provide their name, title, and voter registration address. No rebuttal shall exceed five authors.

Signature Relinquishment

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.

SUBMISSION DEADLINES

Primary argument and rebuttal submissions are due to the Office of the City Clerk no later than 4:30 p.m. on the due date. Submission is required both electronically and in person at the Office of the City Clerk located at 915 I Street, New City Hall, 5th Floor, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Scheduling an appointment for submission of argument materials is strongly recommended and can be done by contacting clerk@cityofsacramento.org or (916) 808-7200. Additionally, as checking in with the City Hall Security Desk is a requirement when visiting the Office of the City Clerk, it is recommended that time be allotted for such when submitting argument materials.

PUBLIC ACCESS AND EXAMINATION

Arguments are available for public examination for 10 calendar days following the filing deadline.

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 "!!!!!!")
- Emoji or emoticons
- Indents, all paragraphs will be left justified

The use of any quotations or endorsements in the submitted argument requires 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

(300 words for Initial Arguments / 250 words for Rebuttal Arguments)

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 of Sacramento" 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 and email 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.