

PROPOSITION 39

On November 7, 2000, California voters approved Proposition 39, called the “Smaller Classes, Safer Schools and Financial Accountability Act” (the “Smaller Classes Act”) which amends Section 1 of Article XIII A, Section 18 of Article XVI of the California Constitution and Section 47614 of the California Education Code and **allows an alternative means of seeking voter approval for bonded indebtedness by school districts by 55% of the vote**, rather than the two-thirds majority required under Section 18 of Article XVI of the Constitution. The 55% voter requirement applies only if the bond measure submitted to the voters includes, among other items: (1) a restriction that the proceeds of the bonds may be used for “the construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or replacement of school facilities, including the furnishing and equipping of school facilities, or the acquisition or lease of real property for school facilities,” (2) a list of projects to be funded and a certification that the school district board has evaluated “safety, class size reduction, and information technology needs in developing that list” and (3) that annual, independent performance and financial audits will be conducted regarding the expenditure and use of the bond proceeds.

Section 1(b)(3) of Article XIII A has been added to exempt from the 1% *ad valorem* tax limitation under Section 1(a) of Article XIII A of the Constitution levies to pay bonds approved by the 55% of the voters, subject to the restrictions explained above.

The Legislature enacted AB 1908, Chapter 44, which became effective upon passage of Proposition 39 and amends various sections of the Education Code. Under amendments to Section 15268 and 15270 of the Education Code, the following limits on *ad valorem* taxes apply in any single election: (1) for a school district, indebtedness shall not exceed \$30 per \$100,000 of taxable property, (2) for a unified school district, indebtedness shall not exceed \$60 per \$100,000 of taxable property, and (3) for a community college district, indebtedness shall not exceed \$25 per \$100,000 of taxable property. **Finally, AB 1908 requires that a citizens’ oversight committee must be appointed to review the use of the bond funds and inform the public about their proper usage.** These requirements are not part of Proposition 39 and can be changed with a majority vote of both houses of the Legislature and approval by the Governor.