

## What Would PSD Fund With New Tax?

Pacifica voters received the oversized mailing from the Pacifica School District (PSD) promoting a new school bond. It's legal to promote tax measures with public funds, as long as they don't tell us how to vote. It appears PSD hired a campaign consultant to prepare the mailing, so expect more.

Public agencies seldom set aside money for facilities. Almost everything goes for employee compensation: salaries, health insurance, pensions. Does PSD budget for facilities repairs?

This facilities bond is separate from the parcel tax voters approved to augment regular PSD funding. Parcel taxes are the same amount for all property owners, but bonds are based on property values.

Such voter-approved taxes are not limited by Proposition 13. Bond taxes are based on a property's value, so post-1978 homebuyers pay more. Property taxes for everyone increase by 2% each year, compounded. Landlords often pass on these costs. Our property tax bills show we're still paying a prior PSD bond.

The pending bond (proposed for the June 2018 ballot) would cost the owners of a \$600,000 home about \$180 each year, or \$5,400 over the life of the bond. Because Pacifica lacks robust commercial tax revenue, residents would pay most of the cost. There's no senior/low-income exemption. Congress is limiting the deductibility of local taxes

A new state law, SB 450, requires that full bond costs, including interest, be disclosed. That'd be about \$100 million for a \$55 million bond. The PSD mailer omitted that fact.

For prior bonds, contractors expecting to get the work funded campaign mailers supporting bonds. The mailings featured photos of students with microscopes, but after the bonds passed, money went for some surprising purposes.

Our high school district, for example, installed a chain-link fence around Oceana High School, a wall with a mural and electronic sign, an all-weather track, ice plant ground cover, and who knows what else. The "independent" Citizen's Oversight Committee, handpicked by PSD, evidently had no problem with that, although those projects were not disclosed in advance.

The San Mateo Community College District (SMCCD) also promoted a bond for academic purposes, but spent millions on a posh fitness center at CSM. It features an Olympic-sized pool, built at the only college in the district that already had a pool. Why at CSM? SMCCD staff are based there, and have free use of

the pool as a perk. The center was handed over to a for-profit to manage, which charges the public that funded it \$20 per use. Thanks, suckers!

PSD can hardly be blamed for the faults of those districts. PSD says it needs \$55 million, but so far there's no list of projects. (So how do they know they need \$55 million?) To make an informed decision, taxpayers/voters deserve to see the list, and the total cost.

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