

Skirting Election Laws

In sending an expensive campaign mailing at taxpayer expense and failing to disclose the full cost of the bond measure it promotes, the Pacifica School District appears to be in violation of several state laws.

The California Elections Code, under a law authored by former Senator Quentin Kopp and sponsored by the San Mateo County District Attorney, prohibits local governments from promoting ballot measures, which was the sole purpose of the mailer.

In addition, California Government Code Section 5852.1 requires local agencies to disclose the full cost, including interest, of bonds they put before the voters.

The Pacifica School District says its bond costs \$55 million. Perhaps hoping we wouldn't notice, it omits mention of interest payments, which doubles the cost to Pacifica residents. In other words, banks would get half the \$100 million from our higher property taxes.

These laws also apply to other property tax increases subject to voter approval, including a housing bond for employees of the Jefferson Union High School District and the library bond in Pacifica. In the past, the City of Pacifica has also sent taxpayer-funded campaign mailings to promote tax increases.

The school district actions have been referred to the San Mateo County District Attorney for enforcement.

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