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**San Diego County Taxpayers Association Takes  
Positions on Five Local School Bond Ballot Measures**

*\*\* Cajon Valley, Escondido and Poway School Districts Receive Support;  
Chula Vista Elementary and Lakeside School Districts Fail to Meet  
SDCTA's Bond Support Criteria \*\**

**SAN DIEGO – December 10, 2019** – With the March 2020 election just around the corner, the [San Diego Taxpayers Association \(SDCTA\)](#), “San Diego’s Taxpayer Watchdog Group” has released its official position on five local school bond measures coming to vote.

“The San Diego County Taxpayers Association takes school bonds very seriously as we recognize education is vital to our community and long-term economic growth as a region,” said Haney Hong, president and CEO, San Diego County Taxpayers Association. Our positions on school bond ballot measures are in direct alignment with our long-standing mission to provide thoughtful, data-driven perspective on policy so San Diego voters can make informed decisions at the polls.”

SDCTA thoroughly reviewed each of the following school bonds up for consideration for the March 3, 2020 election, and has taken the following positions:

**SUPPORT**

- Cajon Valley School Union District – \$220 Million Bond Measure
  - Cajon Valley Union School District’s proposed bond measure meets key provisions of [SDCTA’s Bond Support Criteria](#). The district proposed to maintain the current tax rate with the new bond. They were able to adequately address concerns over soft cost percentages.
- Escondido Union School District - \$205 Million Bond Measure
  - Escondido Union School District’s proposed bond measure meets key provisions of SDCTA’s Bond Support Criteria. Additionally, the district was diligent in submitting materials to SDCTA in a timely manner and provided a comprehensive plan.

- Concerns with declining enrollments were adequately addressed and the district is looking toward potential consolidation if needed in the future.
- Money from previous bond spending well documented, needs are well supported and contingencies for declining enrollment were established thoroughly.
- Poway Unified School District – \$448 Million Bond Measure
  - Poway Unified School District submitted the most thorough facilities condition assessment of all the districts this election cycle. Their proposal met most of the key provisions of SDCTA’s Bond Support Criteria.
  - SDCTA is supporting with trepidation. There was strong hesitation for support after the Capital Appreciation Bond that was passed in 2011 that is now going to cost the taxpayers close to \$1 billion over the next several years. The aggregate amount of burden is fairly high on Poway Unified residents including that bond.
  - Additionally, the project list submitted for the new bond spending wasn’t as specific as other bond packages.
  - SDCTA is willing to move beyond the bad decisions of the previous administration and give the new administration a chance to move forward.

**DO NOT SUPPORT**

- Chula Vista Elementary School District – \$242 Million Bond Measure
  - Chula Vista Elementary School District put together a plan that was comprehensive.
  - However, the spending of \$65 million for a 100-unit housing project left too many concerns to support the proposal. The amount being spent is significant and data didn’t overwhelmingly show a true need for faculty housing. Costs per unit were not included and questions about long-term maintenance were also not in the proposal.
  - SDCTA feels a revenue bond would be a more appropriate source for the funding of housing.
- Lakeside Union School District - \$33 Million Bond Measure
  - Lakeside Union School District met some of the SDCTA School Bond Support criteria, but there were key items that did not meet standards.
  - Soft cost projections were significantly higher than average. This was concerning since the goal is to have low soft costs to ensure funds are spent on actual construction.
  - Secondly, the purchase of school buses and furniture was included in their application. There were significant concerns about bond funds being spent on items not associated with construction.
  - Lastly, financing of bonds is much longer than the lifespan of a bus.

Voters can turn to SDCTA come January when the organization releases its March 2020 election comprehensive voter guide which will include these ballot positions as well as the Lemon Grove sales tax increase and the City of San Diego's hotel tax hike.

If you would like to set up an interview with SDCTA to discuss their stance on the March 2020 school bond measures, please connect with Arika Daniels at [arika@scatenadaniels.com](mailto:arika@scatenadaniels.com) or 949-338-6672.

### **ABOUT THE SAN DIEGO COUNTY TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION**

San Diego County Taxpayers Association (SDCTA) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization, dedicated to promoting accountable, cost-effective and efficient government and opposing unnecessary new taxes and fees. For the last 74 years, SDCTA has served as "*San Diego's Taxpayer Watchdog Group*" by educating the public and helping save the region's citizens millions of dollars. Public opinion polls consistently rate SDCTA as the most "influential" and "trusted" public policy institution in San Diego. The 150 member-strong organization is led by President & CEO Haney Hong. SDCTA envisions a future where San Diego citizens receive a better return on investment in public assets and services. For more information, please visit [www.sdcta.org](http://www.sdcta.org), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or call 619-234-6423.

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