



Position Statement on Proposition 47 – California Public Education Facilities Bond Act

October 8, 2002

Approved by the Jewish Community Relations Council of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin, Sonoma, Alameda and Contra Costa Counties.

November 5, 2002 Ballot

JCRC supports quality public education for all pupils. Our democratic, pluralistic society depends on citizens who are educated and able to fulfill their civic responsibilities. Quality education for *all* and equity in educational opportunities are basic requirements. These goals cannot be fulfilled as long as some children must attend schools that are overcrowded or unsafe.

California has more students enrolled in public schools—nearly 6 million—than any other state. The need for additional classrooms is increased because of state mandated class size reduction. Lack of available facilities has been an obstacle to implementing class-size reduction. Many school districts have simply been unable to build enough classrooms to keep up with increased enrollment and to accommodate the required class size reduction. According to the National Education Association, California has more students per classroom than any other state except Utah. 46,000 new classrooms, or, 1,175 new schools, will be needed in the next five years to relieve overcrowding. According to the Legislative Analyst, about one in three California school children attend an overcrowded school or a school needing modernization. The California Department of Education states that 22% of all K–12 public school students are on year-round class schedules, most for the purpose of creating space in overcrowded school districts. Over 50% of California public schools are more than 30 years old and are in critical need of repair and modernization. Problems include leaky roofs, broken bathrooms, inadequate electrical and fire alarm systems, lack of heaters and air conditioning in hot climate areas, and lack of campus safety equipment.

Proposition 47 will provide significant funding toward solving these problems. It authorizes \$13.05 billion in bond funds to provide new classrooms and make needed repairs to existing classrooms from kindergarten through university levels.

\$11.4 billion will pay for K–12 facilities. Of this, \$1.7 billion is dedicated to provide relief to critically overcrowded schools. Funds will be allocated to districts that have passed local bond measures with which to match the state funding. \$1.65 billion will be allocated to higher education facilities, most at the community college level.

Proposition 39 passed by voters in 2000 contained provisions for accountability in the expenditure of school bond funds, including a requirement for a citizens oversight committee at the local level and an independent performance audit. These requirements should insure that school bond funds are properly spent by school districts.

Because of the urgent need to provide California students with adequate and safe facilities, the Jewish Community Relations Council urges a YES vote on Proposition 47.

Opportunities for Action in Support of Proposition 47

- Contact your synagogue social action committee and ask them to find JCRC's position paper on the website www.JCRC.org and distribute it to their Email list.
- Take copies of JCRC's position paper to your synagogue and other organizations.
- Write personal postcards and send Emails in support of Proposition 47.
- Volunteer for a phone bank being organized by the California Teachers Association.

Alameda County Fremont :510-791-8366; Oakland: 510-763-4020;

San Leandro: 510-895-9710; Union City: 510-441-1601.

Contra Costa County Concord: 925-676-2822; Pinole: 510-222-5112;

Pleasant Hill: 925-6764664.

Marin County San Rafael: 415-479-6616.

Sonoma County Santa Rosa: 707-544-1075.

San Francisco County San Francisco: 415-621-4438

San Mateo County Burlingame: 650-552-9950;

San Mateo: 650-558-9690

Santa Clara County Cupertino: 650-257-2122.

If you have questions, call JCRC Education Specialist Jackie Berman at 650-948-7425