**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

A How to Guide for Opponents of Prop 15

Letters to the editor provide an opportunity to rebut or comment on articles, op-eds, or editorials written by your local newspaper. The brief guide below includes guidelines for an effective letter to the editor. Your voice matters and can help us defeat Prop 15.

1. **Introduction**
   1. Make sure to list the reporter and the article’s title in the opening sentence – if the newspaper has not written about a subject, it is unlikely that they will publish a letter to the editor about it.
   2. Grab the editor’s attention – why do you support, oppose, agree, disagree with the article?
2. **Support**
   1. Make sure that you concisely explain in as little as a sentence but not more than a paragraph why you take the position that you take.
3. **Conclusion**
   1. Reiterate your position made in the opening – but not using the exact same words.
4. **Signature**
   1. Include a closing phrase “Sincerely,” or “Best regards”
   2. You must list your name, title, and if applicable, your organization
   3. Provide a telephone number, email, and sometimes, your address
5. **Other Items to Keep in Mind**
   1. Adhere to the paper’s guidelines, typically not more than 150 to 200 words. If your letter is too short or too long, it will be rejected.
   2. Keeping the letter short and unique will ensure that newspaper editorial staff will not edit it for brevity and clarity.

**EXAMPLES**

**Example 1**

I am a small business owner who, like many others, is fighting to survive this pandemic. Just when I think things can’t get worse, Prop 15 comes along to raise the cost of doing business.

The author claims that small businesses are exempt, but that’s just not true. Like most small business owners, I don’t own my property. I pay my landlord for rent and cover the cost of utilities, maintenance, and most importantly – I pay property tax.

If Prop 15 passes and raises taxes, those costs will inevitably be passed down to me, and for my business to survive (if it survives), I will be forced to pass those costs onto my customers.

Sincerely,

[Name]

**Example 2**

Proponents of Prop 15 are peddling an outright lie: that agricultural property is exempt from reassessment. The land might be exempt, but property tax isn’t just about land. Prop 15 does NOT exempt “fixtures” and “improvements” on agricultural land. That means costs will go up for eggs, almonds, grapes, cheese, milk, wine, as well as fresh fruit and vegetables.

All Californians are struggling to make ends meet during the pandemic. I can’t afford higher grocery bills right now, and I bet you can’t either.

Best regards,

[Name]

**Example 3**

Don’t be fooled by this article. Prop 15 isn’t about raising funds for schools or communities. And it’s definitely not about recovering from the pandemic. Despite the author falsely claiming that Prop 15 will help with the state’s $54 billion deficit, revenue won’t actually be available to local governments and schools until at least 2024.

We know from experience what Prop 15 is really about: the state’s massive unfunded pension liabilities. Last year, Measure EE and its supporters failed to convince Angelenos that revenues would actually make their way to the classroom. Prop 15 lacks transparency and accountability, just like Measure EE, and ultimately, it will meet the same fate.

Sincerely,

[Name]

**Example 4**

I am proud to call myself progressive. I voted for Bernie Sanders in the primary, will vote for Joe Biden in the general, and I’ll be voting NO on Prop 15. There’s nothing progressive about raising the cost of living for all Californians during the greatest economic crisis since the Great Depression.

Prop. 15 supporters claim that raising property taxes will be a panacea for failing schools, broken local governments, rising budget deficits and racial injustice. But there’s a reason the NAACP opposes Prop 15. It will hurt minority-owned businesses, and the windfall of new revenues won’t reach all communities equally. If you live next to Facebook in Silicon Valley – great! But good luck if you live in a rural county with few commercial or industrial properties. The “progressive” advocates for Prop 15 don’t care about you.

Best,

[Name]