

The Rise of Local Ballot Measures on Public Employee Compensation

In recent elections there have been an unprecedented number of measures concerning public employee benefits and pay. Nearly all of the measures have sought to reduce or restrict compensation and benefits and nearly all of those have been successful.

There have been three local measures concerning binding interest arbitration in recent years. Sacramento County voters approved the expansion of binding arbitration to cover probation and law enforcement management units. But voters in Vallejo repealed binding arbitration provisions from that city's charter and San Jose voters sharply restricted the use of binding arbitration.

Binding Arbitration				
Election		Proposal	YES%	
5/19/2009	Sacramento County Measure A	Amends Sacramento County Charter to extend mandatory binding arbitration labor practices to include county employees employed by the Probation Non-Supervisory Unit and the Law Enforcement Management Unit.	52.8%	PASS
6/8/2010	City of Vallejo (Solano County) Measure A	Shall Section 809 of the Charter of the City of Vallejo be repealed to remove the mediation/arbitration process, commonly referred to as binding interest arbitration, that permits an arbitrator, without City Council approval, to make the final decision to resolve disputes between the City and its recognized employee organizations on all matters relating to wages, hours and working conditions and instead to use the method of resolving such disputes set forth in state law?	51.9%	PASS
11/2/2010	City of San Jose (Santa Clara County) Measure V	To provide fiscal stability, control costs and maintain City services to residents, shall the Charter be amended to permit binding arbitration only if outside arbitrators are (1) required to base awards to employees primarily on the City's ability to pay; and (2) prohibited from; creating any unfunded liability for the City, increasing police and firefighter compensation more than the rate of increase in General Fund revenues, or granting retroactive benefits?	66.7%	PASS

In recent years, there have been thirteen local measures to limit public employee compensation and benefits, including eleven on the November 2010 ballot. (There were other measures limited the compensation of city council members). All but one, a measure in the City of San Francisco, passed.

Employee Benefit Changes and Limits				
Election		Proposal	YES%	
6/8/2010	San Francisco Measure D	see www.californiacityfinance.com/SFmeasureD_100608.pdf	77.9%	PASS
3/8/2011	City of Los Angeles (Los Angeles County) Measure G	Shall the Charter be amended: (1) to provide sworn Fire, Police, and Harbor Department employees, who are hired on or after July 1, 2011, with the pension benefits provided in the Fire and Police Pension Plan-Tier 6; and (2) to modify provisions of the Fire and Police Pension Plan in order to facilitate compliance with state and federal laws, to authorize the Council to establish an Excess Benefit Plan, to allow flexibility in establishing amortization policies, and to make technical changes?	74.5%	PASS
11/2/2010	City of Bakersfield (Kern County) Measure D	Shall the City of Bakersfield adopt the following law: Effective January 1, 2011, new City of Bakersfield sworn public safety employees will pay 100% of their employee pension contribution and be eligible for a maximum retirement allowance with the Board of Administration of the Public Employees' Retirement System (PERS) at a 2% at age 50 formula based on their average salary calculated over 36 highest paid consecutive months.	55.0%	PASS

Employee Benefit Changes and Limits (continued)			YES%	
Election		Proposal		
11/2/2010	City of Pacific Grove (Monterey County) Measure R	Shall the Pacific Grove City Charter be amended to conform to the "Voter Initiative Limiting the Ability of the City of Pacific Grove to Approve or Modify Agreements That Provide Retirement Benefits to City Employees," provide City officers/employees do not hold rights to future employment or future employment benefits, and amend the Pacific Grove Municipal Code to clarify that voter-approved limits relating to long-term City debt or financial liabilities apply only to retirement plans or agreements?	74.3%	PASS
11/2/2010	City of Murrieta (Riverside County) Measure E	Shall the ordinance prohibiting chief City administrative officials, including the City Manager and their direct reports (but excluding fire, police and other emergency public safety personnel), from having either annual salaries with benefits or a combined hourly rate with overtime and benefits (including, but not limited to, car, gas, life insurance, health/medical insurance, and other personal usage benefits) that exceeds 2.5 times the median family/household income in the City be adopted?	66.7%	PASS
11/2/2010	Riverside County Measure L	Shall the proposed Ordinance, requiring voter approval for increases or decreases in public safety employee retirement or pre-retirement death benefits and requiring that the County of Riverside continue the current CALPERS (California Public Employee Retirement System) retirement formula, be adopted?	52.3%	PASS
11/2/2010	Riverside County Measure M	Shall Ordinance No. 899, requiring voter approval for increases in public safety employee retirement benefits or decreases in job related pre-retirement death benefits, and allowing decreases in retirement benefits, be adopted?	61.1%	PASS
11/2/2010	City of Carlsbad (San Diego County) Prop G	Shall the Charter of Carlsbad, California be amended to add Section 502 Retention of Benefits limiting increases in safety retirement benefits without an amendment to this section?	64.3%	PASS
11/2/2010	San Francisco Measure B	Shall the City increase employee contributions to the Retirement System for retirement benefits; decrease employer contributions to the Health Service System for health benefits for employees, retirees and their dependents; and change rules for arbitration proceedings about City collective bargaining agreements?	42.4%	FAIL
11/2/2010	City of Menlo Park (San Mateo County) Measure L	Shall the ordinance entitled "Measure to limit retirement benefits for new City of Menlo Park employees (Except Sworn Police Officers) and to restrict City Council from increasing benefits in the future without voter approval", be adopted?	72.2%	PASS
11/2/2010	City of San Jose (Santa Clara County) Measure W	To provide fiscal stability, control costs and maintain City Services to residents, shall the Charter be amended to allow the Council, by ordinance and subject to the requirements of applicable law, to exclude any officer or employee hired on or after the ordinance's effective date from any retirement plan or benefit of any plan then in existence and to require that any new or different plan shall be actuarially sound?	72.4%	PASS
11/2/2010	City of Redding (Shasta County) Measure A	Shall an Ordinance be adopted making a labor negotiations policy providing that City employees and City officials pay the full employee contribution of CalPERS pension benefits to be phased in over a period not to exceed four years?	64.4%	PASS
11/2/2010	City of Redding (Shasta County) Measure B	Shall an Ordinance be adopted making a labor negotiations policy that City contributions to retiree health care plan premiums be changed from no time requirement to a formula based on years of service with a minimum five-year vesting requirement?	69.6%	PASS

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Source: County elections offices.

