

Prospective Voter Survey Regarding Oakland Public Library Measure Q

As read on the telephone to sampling of prospective voters

Now I would like to ask you about a measure that may appear on an upcoming Oakland City Ballot. This measure may read as follows:

“To improve all Oakland libraries by preventing library closures and cuts in programs for children and teens; increasing libraries’ open days and hours; adding more computers; increasing literacy programs; and acquiring more new books and materials; shall the City of Oakland extend and increase the existing parcel tax for public libraries to 84 dollars for single-family homeowners, and proportionally for all other properties, subject to independent annual audits and review by a citizens oversight committee?”

If there were an election today, do you think you would vote “yes” in favor of this measure or “no” to oppose it? (If yes/no, ask: “Is that definitely or just probably”) (If undecided, ask: “Well, do you lean towards voting yes or no?”)

Next, suppose that the proposed measure increased the parcel tax for libraries to 70 dollars per year for single-family homeowners, instead of to 84 dollars. A 70-dollar parcel tax would prevent library closures and cuts in programs for children and teens, would increase the days and hours libraries are open, and would make it possible to purchase additional books and materials. Having heard this, do you think you would vote “yes” in favor of a 70-dollar library parcel tax, or “no” to oppose it?

Next, suppose that the proposed measure increased the parcel tax for libraries to 56 dollars per year for single-family homeowners, instead of 84 dollars. A 56-dollar parcel tax would prevent library closures and cuts in programs for children and teens, and make it possible to purchase additional books and materials. Having heard this, do you think you would vote “yes” in favor of a 56-dollars library parcel tax or “no” to oppose it?

I am going to read you some specific ways that money for libraries might be spent if this measure passes. Remembering that it may not be possible to do all of the items I am about to read to you, please tell me how important it is to you that each project be undertaken: extremely important, very important, somewhat important, or not important.

- Buying more multilingual materials for our diverse neighborhoods
- Buying books, bestsellers, magazines, videos
- Enhancing the selection of educational videos and cd’s for children and teens
- Expanding library hours
- Providing literacy services for families and adults
- Making more books on tape available
- Replacing library staff who were lost due to budget cuts
- Requiring independent annual audits of all expenditures of money raised by this measure
- Upgrading telecommunications systems in libraries to handle existing and increased access to computers and modern learning technologies

- Preventing the closure of as many as five neighborhood branch libraries
- Making it possible for all branch libraries to be open six days per week
- Providing librarians and staff for four new neighborhood branch libraries
- Requiring that money raised by the measure be used to increase funding for libraries and not replace existing funding
- Increasing joint educational activities between libraries and schools
- Buying more large-print books for the visually impaired
- Increasing reference services and hiring more reference staff
- Preventing cuts in library homework and tutoring centers
- Ensuring that a citizens' oversight committee will monitor spending
- Providing DVDs, e-books and other new information formats

Next, I am going to read you some statements from people who support this library parcel tax measure. After you hear each statement, please tell me if it makes you more inclined to vote for the measure. If the statement has no effect on your thinking or if you don't believe it, you can tell me that too.

- Oakland libraries provide homework centers and tutoring during after-school hours to keep our youth positively engaged in an educational environment. This measure will help the library continue its positive work in this area and prevent cuts in these important after-school services.
- Unless this measure is approved, budget cuts will force the City of Oakland to lay off library staff and cut back on library materials. These cuts could close libraries for additional days each week, make longer waits for assistance and computers, and even completely close as many as five neighborhood branch libraries.
- Oakland public libraries offer free computers and Internet access for all residents. For many low-income residents, public libraries provide their only access to essential technology. This measure will expand access to computers, the Internet, and the latest in information technology at all of Oakland's branch libraries.
- This measure will only increase costs to the average Oakland household about four dollars per month. For the cost of a sandwich each month, we can ensure that Oakland residents will continue to have access to convenient, high-quality neighborhood libraries.