

Guide to Writing Arguments & Rebuttals for Local Measures



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Yuba County Clerk-Recorder
Registrar of Voters**

This guide was developed in an effort to provide answers to questions frequently asked of the Yuba County Elections Office concerning arguments, rebuttals, and analyses. It is for general information only and does not have the force and effect of law, regulation, or rule. In case of conflict, the law, regulation, or rule will apply. Persons using this guide must bear full responsibility to make their own determinations as to all legal standards and duties.

For information on city measures, please contact the following:

Marysville City Clerk – 526 C Street, Marysville, CA 95901 – (530) 749-3901

Wheatland City Clerk – 111 C Street, Wheatland, CA 95692 – (530) 633-2761

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Purpose of this Guide

This guide is intended to provide interested individuals with information specific to filing arguments for or against local ballot measures. It is important to note errors or omissions may result in missed deadlines that can impact whether an argument is accepted. Required forms can be found at the end of this guide and on the Yuba County Elections website.

Who Can File & Sign an Argument

Filers vs. Signers:

Filer(s): The filer does not have to be a signer of the argument but must meet the criteria below.

Signer(s): Anyone can sign arguments for or against a county, school, or special district measure.

Argument Filers

County Measures: The Board of Supervisors or any member or members of the board, or an individual voter who is eligible to vote on the measure, a bona fide association of citizens, or any combination of these voters and associations may **file** a written argument for or against any county measure. (EC 9162(a))

School Measures: The governing board of the school district or a member or members of the governing board, or an individual voter who is eligible to vote on the measure, or a bona fide association of citizens, or a combination of such voters and associations may **file** a written argument for or against any school measure (EC 9501(a))

District Measures: The person(s) filing a district initiative petition may **file** a written argument in favor of the proposed ordinance. The district board may submit an argument against the ordinance. (EC 9315)

Rebuttal Arguments

Rebuttal arguments are only accepted if both an argument for and an argument against a measure have been filed. Immediately following the deadline to submit arguments, a copy of the argument selected for publication will be provided to the filer of the opposing argument for the purpose of preparing a rebuttal statement.

Rebuttal Arguments must be signed by the same authors of the arguments unless the original signers of the arguments authorize in writing others to sign the Rebuttal Arguments. A "Rebuttal Argument Alternate Signer Authorization Form" shall be filed with the Rebuttal Arguments. (See Attachment D.) (EC 9167, 9317, 9504)

Signature Statement:

Every argument and rebuttal must be accompanied by a Ballot Argument Signature Statement. (See Attachment C.)

- A ballot argument or rebuttal shall not be accepted unless accompanied by the printed name and signature or printed names and signatures of the person(s) submitting it, or, if submitted

on behalf of an organization, the name of the organization and the printed name and signature of at least one of its principal officers. (EC 9164, 9501.5)

- No more than five signatures shall appear with any argument. If more than five are submitted, the first five will be printed. Signatures will appear in the order as indicated on the Signature Statement. (EC 9164, 9501.5)

Argument & Rebuttal Submission

Contact the Yuba County Elections Office at (530) 749-7855 or visit our website at yuba.gov/elections for information regarding filing deadlines for a specific measure.

Filing Deadline: The County Clerk will set the deadline for filing arguments and rebuttals for each election. They will be due by 5:00 p.m. on the date set by the County Clerk. The filing deadlines will be published in the newspaper, posted on the Elections Office website, and available by calling the Elections Office. (EC 9163).

Where to File: Yuba County Elections Office, 915 8th Street, Suite 107, Marysville, CA 95901

IMPORTANT: Effective October 2023, Authors shall submit arguments only to the lead county when district/school election boundaries contain more than one county.

- For district elections, the lead county is the county with the most voters.
- For school district elections, the lead county is the county whose superintendent of schools covers the district.

Signature Statement: All arguments and rebuttals must include original signatures of the proponents/authors or authorized signers on the Ballot Argument Signature Statement.

Rebuttal Authorization: Rebuttal arguments must be signed by the same people who signed the argument unless the original signer(s) authorize someone else to sign the rebuttal by completing the Rebuttal Argument Alternate Signer Authorization Form. (See Attachment D.)

Confidentiality: Arguments and rebuttals shall remain confidential until 5:00 p.m. on the day they are due.

Withdrawal/Changes: Arguments and rebuttals may be withdrawn or changed until the final submission deadline. (EC 9601, 9163)

Public Review: Following the final deadline for filing documents, arguments and rebuttals are available at the Registrar of Voter's Office for a ten-calendar-day public review period. (EC 9163)

If More Than One Argument In Favor or Argument Against Is Filed (EC 9166, 9503)

Only one argument for and one argument against any measure will be printed in the County Voter Information Guide. If more than one argument for **or** more than one argument against any measure is filed, a single argument will be selected by the Registrar of Voters in the following order of preference and priority:

1. The board of supervisors or a member or members of the board.
2. The individual voter, or bona fide associations of citizens, or combination of voters and associations, who are the bona fide sponsors or proponents of the measure.
3. Bona fide associations of citizens.
4. Individual voters who are eligible to vote on the measure.

Note: In order to enable the county elections official to determine whether it qualifies as a bona fide association of citizens, an organization or association submitting an argument for or against a county measure shall submit with its argument a copy of one of the following:

- (1) Its articles of incorporation, articles of association, partnership documents, bylaws, or similar documents.
- (2) Letterhead containing the name of the organization and its principal officers.
- (3) If the organization or association is a primarily formed committee established to support or oppose the measure, its statement of organization filed pursuant to Section 84101 of the Government Code.

In selecting an argument from among bona fide associations of citizens, the county elections official shall not consider the type of documentation submitted or the form of the association.

A Writ of Mandate or injunction challenging any or all of the materials may be sought from the Superior Court to require amendments or deletions. (EC 9190, 9380, 9509)

IMPORTANT: Effective October 2023, when a district or school election is conducted in more than one county the Registrar of Voters for the lead county will select the argument to be printed. The elections official of the lead county will transmit a scanned copy of the selected arguments to the elections official of each other county in the district or school district. An elections official who receives arguments selected by the lead county shall include the arguments in their county voter information guide.

Argument & Rebuttal Format

Heading:

The argument/rebuttal must include the appropriate heading (see below). It will not be included in the word count. (EC 9162, 9315, 9501, 9167, 9317, 9504)

Argument Headings:

"ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE ____"
"ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE ____"

Rebuttal Headings:

"REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF MEASURE ____"
"REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT AGAINST MEASURE ____"

Word Count:

Arguments must not exceed 300 words. (EC 9162, 9315, 9501)

Rebuttals must not exceed 250 words. (EC 9167, 9317, 9504)

Formatting:

- **Documents will be printed as submitted.** Spelling, punctuation, and grammatical errors will not be corrected by the Elections Office.
- An argument or rebuttal argument must be written to address a single measure on the ballot. A document combining statements pertaining to more than one measure will **not** be accepted.
- Arguments and rebuttals must be typed. They will be printed in block paragraph form.
- Do not use symbols, signs, tables, lists, or any other materials requiring unusual spacing or indentation.
- No profanity, obscene, or slanderous comments may be used.
- The following formatting is **NOT** permitted: **bolding**, CAPITALIZING, underlining, *italics*, centering text, and bullets.

How to Count Words:

Pursuant to Election Code §9, each word is counted as one word except as specified:

- **Punctuation:** Punctuation is not counted.
- **All Proper Nouns:** All proper nouns should be considered as one word.
- **Cities/Counties:** All geographical names shall be counted as one word; for example, "City and County of San Francisco" shall be counted as one word.
- **Abbreviations:** Each abbreviation for a word, phrase, or expression shall be counted as one word.
- **Hyphenations:** Hyphenated words that appear in any generally available standard reference dictionary, published in the United States at any time within the ten calendar years immediately preceding the election for which the words are counted, shall be considered as one word. Each part of all other hyphenated words shall be counted as a separate word.
- **Dates:** Dates shall be counted as one word.
- **Numbers:** Any number consisting of a digit or digits shall be considered as one word. Any number which is spelled, such as "one," shall be considered as a separate word or words. "One" shall be counted as one word whereas "one hundred" shall be counted as two words.

“100” shall be counted as one word.

- **Phone & Internet:** Web site addresses and telephone numbers shall be counted as one word.

Letter Assignments

Letters are assigned to local measures to identify them and prevent voter confusion. (*EC 13116*)

Timeline for Assigning Measure Letters

The Registrar of Voters assigns measure letters on the 82nd day before the election.

Multiple Jurisdictions (County, City, School and Special Districts) on Ballot

For districts that cross into other counties, the lead county will assign a letter that will not conflict or confuse the voter. The letter assigned to these measures may not be in alphabetical order.

Assignment of Letters

All letters will be assigned in alphabetical order, beginning with the letter following the last letter assigned in the previous election and continuing through Z, or as close to the end of the alphabet as possible to accommodate all measures filed for the current election. For example, if the previous election ended with Measure V and five measures are on the ballot, the measures will be assigned A, B, C, D, E rather than W, X, Y, Z, A.

Note: The letter “I” is skipped to avoid confusion.

Voter Information Guide

When a local measure qualifies to be placed on the ballot, information related to the measure is provided to voters in the Yuba County Voter Information Guide. This information may include:

Ballot Question: The Ballot Question, prepared by county counsel or district attorney, is the ballot question that appears on the official ballot. (*EC 9105*)

Full Text: The full text is the complete resolution or ordinance for the measure. In the event it is not included, voters may view the information on the county website or by contacting the Elections Office. (*EC 9160 (4)*)

Impartial Analysis: The Impartial Analysis shows the effect of the measure on the existing law and the operation of the measure. (*EC 9105, 9160, 9313, 9500*)

A Yes Vote / A No Vote: County Counsel may prepare a 75 word or less summary of the impartial analysis in a format that answers the questions “What does a yes vote mean?” and “What does a no vote mean?” for each measure. (County Measures only per *EC 9160 (a)*)

Tax Rate Statement (if applicable): A Tax Rate Statement will be printed for each bond measure which constitutes a lien on a property within the jurisdiction. (*EC 9400, 9401*)

Fiscal Impact Statement (if applicable): The County Auditor-Controller may be requested by the Board of Supervisors to prepare a Fiscal Impact Statement to estimate the amount of increase or decrease in revenues or costs to the county if the proposed measure is adopted. (*EC 9160*)

Arguments in Favor or Opposed to the Measure: An argument is a written statement expressing a person's or organization's support for or against a ballot measure.

Rebuttals to the Argument in Favor or the Argument Opposed to the Measure: When an argument in favor and an argument against a measure have been selected for publication, a rebuttal argument may be submitted.

Order of Measures in the County Voter Information Guide

1. School Measures (County Board of Education, College District, Unified School District, High School District and Elementary School District)
2. County Initiatives and Referenda
3. City Initiatives and Referenda
4. Local District Measures

Attachment A

County Voter Information Guide – Example Arguments

MEASURE A	City of Johnstown
Arguments and rebuttals are the opinions of the authors. Arguments are printed exactly as submitted.	
Argument In Favor of Measure A	Argument Against Measure A
Every resident deserves the opportunity to enjoy their home without excessive or unreasonable noise disrupting daily life. Measure A establishes fair, consistent standards that help protect neighborhoods while respecting responsible businesses, community events, and individual property rights. Uncontrolled noise can interfere with sleep, affect health, reduce quality of life, and create unnecessary conflicts between neighbors. Existing regulations may be outdated, difficult to enforce, or inconsistent. Measure A provides clear rules that promote voluntary compliance and give law enforcement and code <u>enforcement</u> officers practical tools to address repeated violations. Measure A is designed to balance the interests of residents, businesses, and community organizations. It includes reasonable exceptions for emergency services, permitted public events, construction activities allowed during designated hours, and other appropriate community needs. The goal is not to punish responsible activities but to address ongoing disturbances that negatively affect others. By adopting modern noise standards, our community can improve neighborhood livability, support public health, and encourage respectful coexistence. Clear expectations help reduce disputes before they escalate and provide a fair process for addressing complaints when they do occur. Measure A also promotes accountability by establishing transparent enforcement procedures and ensuring that penalties apply only to violations of the ordinance, not to ordinary everyday activities. A quieter community benefits everyone—families, seniors, students, workers, and local businesses alike. Reasonable noise regulations help preserve the peace of our neighborhoods while allowing community life to continue to thrive. Measure A represents a balanced approach that protects residents, provides clear standards, and promotes a safer, healthier, and more enjoyable community for current and future generations. /s/ John Smith, Business Owner /s/ Jane Doe, Business Owner /s/ Robert Davis, Business Owner /s/ Joseph Finl, Contractor /s/ Jeff Evans, Director of Marketing	Everyone agrees that excessive noise can be a problem, but Measure A is not the right solution. This proposal creates additional regulations that may be overly broad, difficult to interpret, and subject to inconsistent enforcement. Most communities already have laws that address disturbing the peace, public nuisances, and excessive noise. Rather than creating another layer of regulation, local officials should focus on enforcing existing ordinances fairly and consistently. Measure A could unintentionally affect homeowners, neighborhood gatherings, youth sports, community celebrations, local businesses, and other everyday activities that contribute to a vibrant community. Even with exceptions, the ordinance may leave too much discretion in determining what constitutes an unreasonable noise violation. The measure could also require additional enforcement, administrative costs, and staff time, diverting limited public resources from higher priorities such as public safety, road maintenance, and emergency services. Good neighbors solve most noise concerns through communication and existing legal remedies. Creating more regulations may increase conflicts rather than reduce them by encouraging complaints instead of cooperation. If changes to the current ordinance are needed, they should be developed through the regular public process, allowing residents, businesses, and community organizations to work together on targeted improvements rather than adopting a broad ballot measure that may be difficult to revise later. Before approving new restrictions that could affect residents and businesses alike, voters should carefully consider whether Measure A provides meaningful benefits beyond the laws already in place. A better approach is thoughtful enforcement of existing regulations, not additional government oversight. Citizens Association Against Noise /s/ Denise Donaldson, President

Attachment B

County Voter Information Guide – Example Rebuttal Arguments

MEASURE A	City of Johnstown
Arguments and rebuttals are the opinions of the authors. Arguments are printed exactly as submitted.	
Rebuttal to Argument in Favor of Measure A	Rebuttal to Argument Against Measure A
No one disputes that residents deserve peaceful neighborhoods, but Measure A is not the only—or the best—way to achieve that goal. Supporters claim the ordinance simply updates existing rules, yet it creates additional regulations that could be difficult to interpret and unevenly enforced. The argument in favor assures voters that everyday activities will not be affected. However, broad language and subjective standards may leave homeowners, small businesses, and community organizations uncertain about what is permitted, increasing the risk of unnecessary complaints and disputes. Existing local laws already provide tools to address excessive or disruptive noise. Before adopting new restrictions, the community should focus on improving education, communication, and enforcement of the regulations already on the books. Once approved by voters, changing a ballot measure can be more difficult than amending an ordinance through the normal public process. If improvements are needed, they should be carefully crafted with input from residents, businesses, and other stakeholders—not adopted through a broad measure with unintended consequences. Protect neighborhood peace without creating unnecessary regulation. Citizens Association Against Noise /s/ Denise Donaldson, President	The opponents suggest that existing laws are enough, but if they were adequately addressing excessive noise, this measure would not be necessary. Measure A provides clear, modern standards that make enforcement <u>more consistent and fair</u> for everyone. Claims that the ordinance will restrict ordinary activities are misleading. Measure A is carefully written to include reasonable exceptions for community events, emergency services, permitted construction, and other normal activities. Its purpose is to address persistent, unreasonable noise. Opponents also raise concerns about costs, yet preventing ongoing disturbances can reduce repeated complaints, improve enforcement efficiency, and minimize conflicts between neighbors. Clear rules often save public resources by reducing uncertainty and encouraging voluntary compliance. This measure protects the right of residents to enjoy their homes while balancing the needs of businesses and community organizations. It promotes accountability, transparency, and a healthier quality of life without placing unnecessary burdens on responsible members of the community. Measure A is a practical, balanced solution that benefits everyone. /s/ John Smith, Business Owner /s/ Jane Doe, Business Owner /s/ Robert Davis, Business Owner /s/ Joseph Finl, Contractor /s/ Jeff Evans, Director of Marketing

Attachment C
Ballot Argument Signature Statement

YUBA COUNTY BALLOT ARGUMENT SIGNATURE STATEMENT

Pursuant to Election Code Section 9600, this statement must be completed and submitted with the argument. Names and titles listed will be printed in the order provided and will appear as indicated. No more than five (5) names will be printed.

Argument / Rebuttal Filed by:

- ☐ Board of Supervisors or Governing Body of a School District or Special District
 - ☐ Member(s) of the County Board of Supervisors or Governing Body of a School or Special District
 - ☐ Initiative Proponents
 - ☐ Individual voter eligible to vote on the measure
 - ☐ Bona fide association of citizens
 - ☐ Combination of eligible voters and bona fide association of citizens

Name of Governing Body, Name of Member of Governing Body, Eligible Voter, or Bona Fide Association:	
Contact Person:	
Contact Phone:	Contact Email:

Signature of Filer: _____

The undersigned author(s) of the:

- ☐ Argument in Favor of
 - ☐ Rebuttal to the Argument in Favor of
 - ☐ Argument Against
 - ☐ Rebuttal to the Argument Against

ballot measure _____ to be voted on at the ☐ Primary ☐ General ☐ Special election for the
(Measure Letter)

_____ to be held on _____,
(Jurisdiction – Name of District) (Election Date)

hereby state that this argument is true and correct to the best of his/her/their knowledge and belief.

	PRINT NAME (as it will be printed in County VIG)	TITLE* <i>If signing on behalf of an organization</i>	SIGNATURE	DATE
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				

* If signing as part of a bona fide association the signer's title must list the name of the bona fide association and it may include their position within that association.

Attachment D
Rebuttal Argument Alternate Signer Authorization Form

YUBA COUNTY

REBUTTAL ARGUMENT ALTERNATE SIGNER AUTHORIZATION

(Elections Code Sections 9167, 9317, 9504)

The authors may authorize in writing any other person or persons to prepare, submit or sign a rebuttal argument. This form must be submitted in addition to the Ballot Argument Signature Statement.

The undersigned primary argument signer(s) authorize(s) the following individual(s) to sign the:

☐ Rebuttal to the Argument in Favor of
Measure _____.

☐ Rebuttal to the Argument Against Measure
_____.

Primary Argument Signer	Authorized Rebuttal Argument Signer
Printed Name: Signature:	Printed Name: Signature:
Printed Name: Signature:	Printed Name: Signature:
Printed Name: Signature:	Printed Name: Signature:
Printed Name: Signature:	Printed Name: Signature:
Printed Name: Signature:	Printed Name: Signature:

Filers Signature:_____ **Date:**_____

Attach this form to the Signature Statement submitted with the rebuttal argument.