

1938

# HIGHWAY AND TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION

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**HIGHWAY AND TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION. Initiative Constitutional Amendment.** Creates, and provides for organization of a Highway and Traffic Safety Commission of five members appointed by Governor with consent of Senate. Prescribes terms of office and salaries of members. Provides Commission shall succeed to powers and duties of certain existing State agencies relating to highways and enforcement of vehicle laws except registration and tax collections. Abolishes present State Highway Commission and transfers California Highway Patrol to new Commission. Preserves existing civil service rights. Authorizes Legislature to change existing laws and enlarge powers and duties of Commission concerning highways and vehicular traffic.

YES

NO

(For full text of measure, see page 11, Part II)

**Argument in Favor of Initiative Proposition No. 4**

This measure will combine the responsibility for all State highway functions—building, maintaining, and policing of State highways and examining and licensing of operators—in a single administrative unit, the California Highway and Traffic Safety Commission.

The measure thus definitely places upon one body the responsibility for building safe highways and keeping them safe. At present these duties are scattered among five State governmental units. As a consequence, it is impossible, under the existing system, to develop a unified program of highway construction and traffic safety.

The setting up of a long-term commission free from political domination has been found advantageous in the administration of a number of other State functions. The Regents of the University of California serve for sixteen-year terms. Members of the State Personnel Board serve for ten-year terms, as do members of the State Prison Board. The sole reason why these commissions enjoy long terms is to enable them to perform their duties efficiently, effectively, and free from outside interference. The same reasons prompt the establishment of a Highway and Traffic Safety Commission to handle all State highway affairs. Under the measure, not more than three members could be of the same political party.

At present, commissioners have no fixed terms and serve at the pleasure of the Governor, a condition that is unwholesome because it tends to give undue weight to political considerations in State highway affairs.

This measure will not increase taxes. On the contrary, the savings which will be effected through modernizing State highway administration and through the elimination of needless duplication of activities, will more than offset the costs of a paid commission.

This measure makes the California Highway Patrol an important unit in a logically organ-

ized highway and traffic safety administration. It frees patrolmen from the duties of collecting taxes, registering motor vehicles and engaging in other activities which are not related to the control and regulation of traffic.

Traffic safety has become one of the most serious problems of the present day. In order to attack this problem effectively, it is necessary that the building of safety into highways, the control of drivers and the regulation of traffic be administered under a single responsible State agency having the authority to meet every phase of the traffic accident problem. Such is a major purpose of the proposed Highway and Traffic Safety Commission.

This measure creates no new powers or privileges, abolishes no existing bodies, except the present Highway Commission which it will supplant.

The Legislature will continue to fix salaries, define policies and duties, designate State routes and allocate State highway revenues. The measure does not interfere with city and county street and highway authorities, nor with local traffic safety functions.

For the first time, California will be given a real State highway authority vested with the power and charged with the responsibility of building safety into our State highways and operating such highways safely and efficiently. Vote "YES" on Proposition 4.

**H. W. KELLER,**  
Vice-president and Chairman,  
Roads and Highways Com-  
mittee, Automobile Club of  
Southern California.

**FRANCIS CARR,**  
President, California State  
Automobile Association.

**CHAS. A. WHITMORE,** Visalia,  
Former Chairman, California  
Highway Commission.

**Argument Against Initiative Proposition  
No. 4**

**THIS IS A DIVERSION OF GAS TAX  
FUNDS.**

Diversion of the gasoline tax, consistently opposed by public opinion and good public policy, would be accomplished under this privately initiated amendment to the State constitution.

Public opinion repeatedly has held that expenditure of gas tax funds should be confined entirely to the financing of highway construction but careful analysis of this proposed amendment shows:

1. It would divert upwards to \$50,000 annually for the payment of high salaries alone for commissioners and operating personnel;

2. It would replace a commission which at present serves without salary with a five-man commission involving salaries of \$6,000 per year per man;

3. It would open the door to further diversion of gas tax funds by vesting full rights of expenditure with this proposed salaried commission.

**VOTE "NO" ON THIS AMENDMENT.**

**W. P. RICH,**  
Senator, Tenth District.

**Argument Against Initiative Proposition  
No. 4**

First: This is a piece of statute law masquerading as a constitutional amendment. It has no rightful place in the Constitution.

Second: This measure takes out of the hands of the people forever the control of the distribution of highway funds, the construction of highways, the construction or abolishment of toll bridges, and the regulation of highway traffic, and puts not only the highways but our present highly efficient highway patrol neatly in the pocket of a super-political hierarchy and subject to its slightest whim.

Third: The members of this superpower commission serve for ten years and can not be removed except by a two-thirds vote of the Senate.

If you wish to retain control over your highways, your highway patrol, and the moneys collected for these purposes, vote "NO" on this measure.

**HELEN SWAIN GILMORE.**

**Argument Against Initiative Proposition  
No. 4**

This measure is sponsored by two privately owned automobile corporations or so-called "clubs." These private clubs, already receiving annually thousands of dollars of public funds, could be permitted, under their proposed commission, at additional State expense, to usurp and exercise governmental functions.

The amendment is definitely opposed by the California Association of Highway Patrolmen. This fine body of men has so far been kept above and out of the reach of politics and politicians, and they desire to continue so.

The present method of highway construction, maintenance and supervision is economic, coordinated, efficient and thorough, and has increased highway safety. This could not be done by the creation of a new, inexperienced, political, high-salaried, long-term commission.

It is argued that the new commission would combine the functions and duties of several State departments. This argument is bait for the unsuspecting. The very proposed act authorizes the commission to "create any new division or subdivision as it may deem necessary." This new proposed ten-year commission could not resist this power to create other juicy plums for political patronage. This law would duplicate facilities, lower morale, increase governmental expense, decrease efficiency, and inject politics into law enforcement. It is opposed to public welfare.

Please vote "NO."

**EMIL GUMPERT,**  
Of Gumpert and Mazzera,  
Counsel for California Association  
of Highway Patrolmen.