California County News

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Counties, Local Law Organizations Look to Guarantee Funding

When California readjusted its activities on Oct. 1, many responsibilities shifted to the local level, not the least of which included the transfer of many inmates to county jails. On Nov. 1, counties and local law enforcement groups filed an initiative that would require the state continue to pay them billions of dollars each year to continue funding these new duties.

The "Local Taxpayers, Public Safety and Local Services Protection Act of 2012" does not raise taxes; instead, it guarantees that California give local governments a 1.06-cent share of the state sales tax (about $5.1 billion) and a share of the state vehicle tax. The coalition includes the California State Association of Counties, California State Sheriffs' Association, and the Chief Probation Officers of California.

"Passing a measure to protect local funding is absolutely vital to protect the public safety and to provide local law enforcement officers the resources we need to take on the added responsibility that was just shifted from the state to local government," Merced County Sheriff Mark Pazin, head of the sheriffs' association, said in a statement.

School officials are a little concerned about the initiative; they worry school groups could be at greater risk for budget cuts if voters refuse to raise taxes, but also approve funding protection for counties and law enforcement.

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