

# UNDERSTANDING PROPOSITIONS

WHAT  
ARE THEY  
AND WHY  
DO THEY  
MATTER?

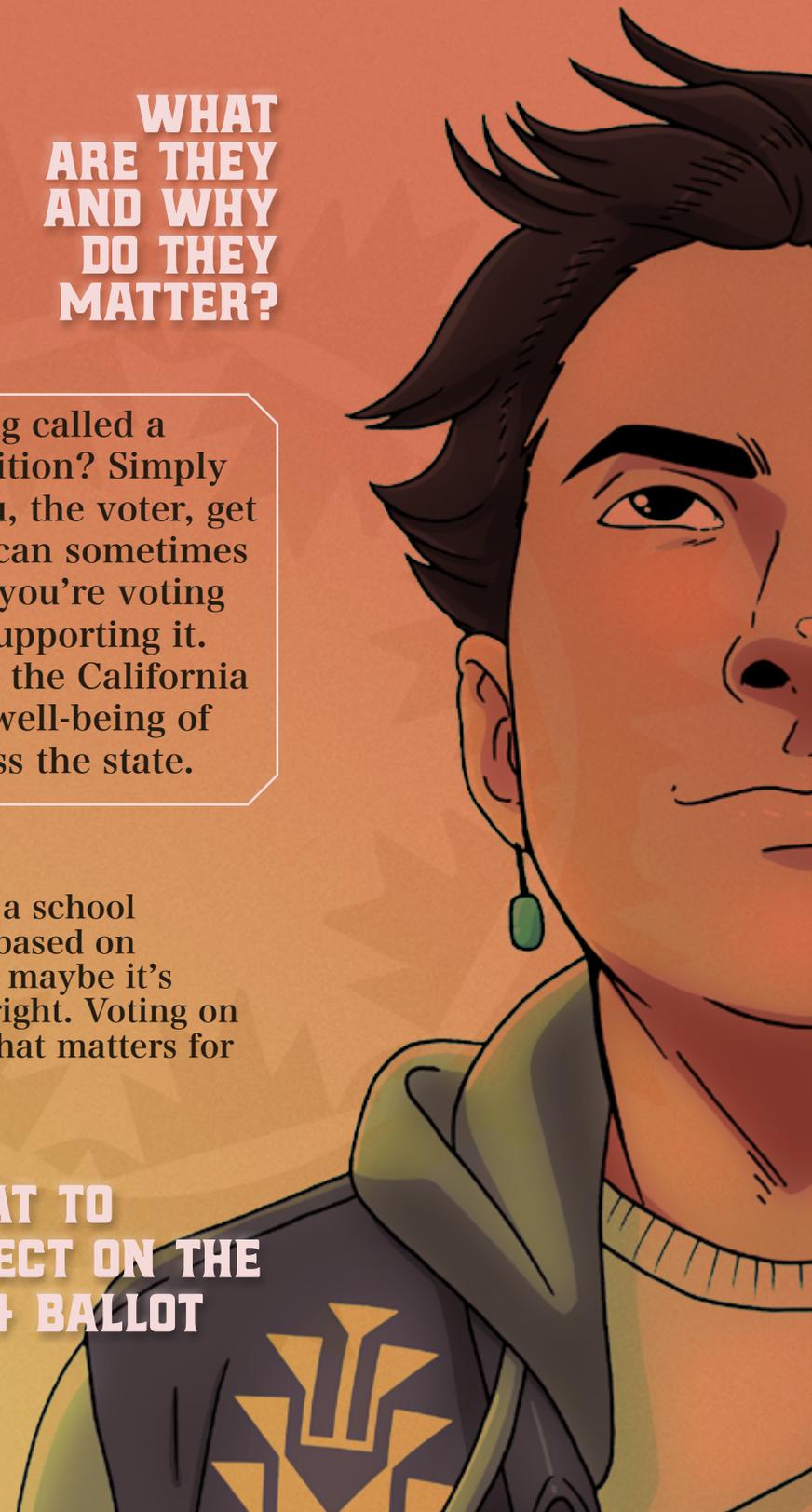
When you vote in an election, you might see something called a “proposition” on your ballot. But what exactly is a proposition? Simply put, a proposition is a proposed law or amendment that you, the voter, get to decide on. The topics can vary widely, and the wording can sometimes be tricky. For example, a “yes” vote might actually mean you’re voting against something, and a “no” vote might mean you’re supporting it. This blog is here to help make sense of the propositions on the California ballot, especially how they could impact the health and well-being of American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) people across the state.

WHY  
PROPS  
MATTER  
FOR YOU

When we vote, whether it’s for our favorite color, a school election, or even the president, we make choices based on what’s important to us. It could be about fairness, maybe it’s about money, or maybe it’s just about what feels right. Voting on propositions is no different—it’s about deciding what matters for our community and our future.

In the November 5th, 2024 election, there are 10 propositions up for a vote. Here’s a breakdown of each one with a summary, including what problem it is trying to solve and what it could mean for AIAN communities.

WHAT TO  
EXPECT ON THE  
2024 BALLOT



## PROPOSITION 2: SCHOOL BONDS

### SUMMARY:

Proposition 2 proposes issuing \$10 billion in state general obligation bonds to build new facilities and renovate existing ones at public schools, including charter schools and community colleges across California. These bonds are provided on a matching fund basis, meaning that schools are required to raise a portion of the necessary funds locally to qualify for state funding. For school districts with lower assessed property values and higher numbers of low-income students, English learners, and foster youth, the matching funds may be increased from 50% to up to 65%

### WHAT PROBLEM IS PROPOSITION 2 TRYING TO SOLVE?

- » **CHALLENGES IN OUR SCHOOLS:** Many California schools are outdated and need significant repairs. Issues like leaky roofs, broken air conditioning, and peeling paint create environments that could be less conducive to learning, making it difficult for students to focus and succeed.
- » **SAFETY STANDARDS:** Alarming, 38% of California students attend schools that fail to meet the state's minimum safety standards. This puts students at risk and negatively impacts their attendance, morale, and academic performance.
- » **NO PERMANENT FUNDING:** Unlike many other states, California lacks a dedicated funding stream for school repairs and improvements. Instead, the state relies on bond measures like Proposition 2 to finance these essential updates. Because this is a matching bond, schools must raise funds locally to access the state funds, which can be challenging for less affluent districts.

### IMPACT ON AIAN COMMUNITIES:

The outcome of Proposition 2 could affect American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) students, particularly in urban areas. The proposed local fund-matching requirement may be challenging for schools in lower-income areas. Securing the necessary funds would be important for schools to access state support and maintain safe, modern, and culturally supportive educational environments for AIAN students.

# PROPOSITION 3: ENSHRINING SAME-SEX MARRIAGE IN THE CALIFORNIA CONSTITUTION

## SUMMARY:

Proposition 3 aims to formally enshrine the right to same-sex marriage in the California Constitution, effectively repealing Proposition 8—a 2008 measure that defined marriage as between a man and a woman. In practice, this measure would not change who can marry, as same-sex marriage has been legal in California since 2013 and nationwide since 2015.

## WHAT PROBLEM IS PROPOSITION 3 TRYING TO SOLVE?

- » **HISTORICAL CONTEXT:** California has been a focal point in the national debate over same-sex marriage. In San Francisco in 2004, the first same-sex marriage certificate was accepted, though defying federal law. This action led to a state Supreme Court decision to halt such marriages, followed by the passage of Proposition 8 in 2008, which banned same-sex marriage.
- » **LEGAL DEVELOPMENTS:** Although Proposition 8 remains on the books, it became legally void when the U.S. Supreme Court allowed same-sex marriages to resume in California in 2013 and subsequently legalized same-sex marriage nationwide in 2015.
- » **PREEMPTIVE PROTECTION:** The proposed constitutional amendment, introduced by California state Sen. Scott Wiener and Assemblymember Evan Low, responds to concerns about potential future reversals of LGBTQ rights. This concern was heightened after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned federal abortion protections in 2022. Justice Clarence Thomas suggested that the court should reconsider the constitutionality of same-sex marriage, though other conservative justices disagreed.

## IMPACT ON AIAN COMMUNITIES:

For American Indian and Alaska Native (AIAN) communities, the passage of Proposition 3 could hold significant cultural and social implications. Many AIAN individuals who identify as LGBTQ+ face unique challenges due to the intersection of their sexual or gender identity with their cultural and community roles. Enshrining the right to same-sex marriage in the state constitution could provide stronger legal protections and a greater sense of security for AIAN LGBTQ+ individuals and couples. Additionally, the explicit protection of same-sex marriage rights within the California Constitution could help AIAN LGBTQ+ youth feel more supported and validated, potentially reducing the stigma and mental health challenges that often accompany discrimination and marginalization.

# PROPOSITION 4: ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE PROJECTS BOND

## SUMMARY:

Proposition 4 would authorize \$10 billion in state debt to fund various environmental and climate-related projects. The most considerable portion, \$1.9 billion, would go toward improving drinking water systems, particularly in lower-income communities and areas most vulnerable to climate change. Other key allocations include:

- \$3.8 billion for water projects (such as improving water quality and protecting against floods and droughts).
- \$1.95 billion for wildfire prevention and extreme heat resilience projects.
- \$1.9 billion for natural lands, parks, and wildlife restoration.
- \$1.2 billion for coastal lands, bays, and ocean protection.
- \$850 million for clean energy projects.
- \$300 million for agricultural projects.

## WHAT PROBLEM IS PROPOSITION 4 TRYING TO SOLVE?

- » **ADDRESSING GAPS IN CLIMATE FUNDING:** Proposition 4 addresses the shortfall in climate and environmental funding created when the “California Climate Commitment” package was reduced from \$54.3 billion to \$44.6 billion due to budget constraints.
- » **ENHANCING WATER, DISASTER, AND CLEAN ENERGY RESOURCES:** The proposition aims to provide additional funding for essential projects such as water quality improvements, disaster protection, and clean energy investments and also address concerns about the fair distribution of resources to disadvantaged communities.

It is also important to ask different questions: *What are the funding sources for this initiative? How will these funds be managed and allocated to ensure transparency and effectiveness?* Proposition 4 will be funded through \$10 billion in general obligation bonds, loans the state takes on, and repays over time using general tax revenue. The repayment is estimated to cost about \$400 million annually over 40 years, totaling approximately \$16 billion.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...

### **DETERMINING WHERE THE MONEY IS SPENT:**

Proposition 4 funds will be distributed primarily to state agencies, local governments, nonprofits, and community organizations responsible for implementing projects. These entities can apply for funding through grants or contracts based on specific project requirements outlined in the bond measure. The spending priorities will focus on areas designated as disadvantaged or most vulnerable to environmental harm, determined using tools like CalEnviroScreen, which identifies communities disproportionately affected by pollution and climate risks. There are concerns about the accuracy and equity of these designations, which can influence which communities receive funding.

### **IMPACT ON AIAN COMMUNITIES:**

For AIAN communities, particularly those in underserved areas, Proposition 4 presents both opportunities and challenges. Although funds are targeted toward vulnerable communities facing severe climate impacts, the existing environmental assessment methods may overlook specific AIAN needs due to limitations in defining disadvantaged areas. To ensure AIAN communities benefit equitably:

- » **WATER QUALITY AND ACCESS:** \$1.9 billion is allocated to improving drinking water. There may also be an opportunity to examine the current selection criteria and advocate beyond this proposition to ensure it reaches the communities most in need.
- » **WILDFIRE PROTECTION:** AIAN communities near forests could greatly benefit from the \$1.95 billion in wildfire resilience funds, but equitable access remains a concern.
- » **CULTURAL AND NATURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION:** Funding for natural lands could support AIAN cultural preservation, but effectiveness depends on accurate and inclusive funding criteria.

# PROPOSITION 5: LOWERING VOTE THRESHOLD FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT BORROWING

## SUMMARY:

Proposition 5 would amend the California constitution to reduce the required voter approval threshold from two-thirds to 55% for local governments to issue bonds for affordable housing, down payment assistance, and various public infrastructure projects like water management, hospitals, and parks.

## WHAT PROBLEM IS PROPOSITION 5 TRYING TO SOLVE?

- » **CHALLENGE OF HIGH APPROVAL THRESHOLDS:** California's current two-thirds voter requirement makes it difficult for local governments to secure funding for critical projects, slowing progress on affordable housing and infrastructure needs.
- » **EMPOWERING LOCAL DECISION-MAKING:** By lowering the approval threshold to 55%, Proposition 5 allows local governments to pass bonds more easily, enabling them to raise funds independently through borrowing. This reduces their reliance on state or federal funding by allowing local projects to be funded through bonds repaid via local property taxes or other local revenue sources.
- » **STREAMLINING ACCESS TO RESOURCES:** The proposition seeks to make it easier to fund community needs, but it also raises concerns about equity, as the lower threshold could allow bonds that may not fully reflect or serve the best interests of all community members, including AIAN populations.

## IMPACT ON AIAN COMMUNITIES:

Proposition 5 could increase access to affordable housing and infrastructure improvements, and the lower approval threshold may raise concerns about the potential for bonds to pass without thorough community input. This could lead to projects that do not fully consider the needs of AIAN communities, especially if local decisions prioritize short-term gains over long-term equity. The reduced voter threshold might allow for bonds that could increase property taxes, disproportionately affecting low-income Native families and risking unintended financial burdens on vulnerable populations. Careful consideration is needed to ensure that projects funded under this new system are truly equitable and beneficial for all community members. That being said, this proposition does aim to limit the length of time and potential barriers that could lead to more beneficial local measures being passed in the future.

# PROPOSITION 6: ELIMINATES INVOLUNTARY SERVITUDE FOR INCARCERATED PERSONS

## SUMMARY:

Proposition 6 proposes amending the California Constitution to ban involuntary servitude as a punishment for crime. It would prohibit prisons from disciplining incarcerated individuals who refuse to work but still allow time credits for those who choose to work.

## WHAT PROBLEM IS PROPOSITION 6 TRYING TO SOLVE?

- » **ADDRESSING INVOLUNTARY SERVITUDE:** Proposition 6 aims to end forcing incarcerated individuals to work, aligning California's laws with modern human rights standards.
- » **PROTECTING INCARCERATED WORKERS' RIGHTS:** The measure seeks to protect incarcerated individuals from being penalized if they choose not to work, thus addressing ethical concerns around prison labor.

## UNCERTAIN FISCAL IMPACTS:

The financial effects are uncertain and could increase costs if prisons incentivize work through higher pay or savings if more time credits are granted, reducing sentences.

## IMPACT ON AIAN COMMUNITIES:

AIAN individuals are disproportionately represented in the criminal justice system, and this proposition could impact the conditions they face while incarcerated. Ending involuntary servitude could provide AIAN incarcerated individuals with greater autonomy and dignity. Still, the changes in prison work rules may also affect available programs that reduce sentence times, which need careful evaluation to ensure equitable outcomes.

# PROPOSITION 32: RAISE STATE MINIMUM WAGE TO \$18 AN HOUR

## SUMMARY:

Proposition 32 would increase California's state minimum wage to \$17 per hour for the remainder of 2024, and \$18 starting in January 2025. Small businesses with 25 or fewer employees would phase into the \$18 rate by 2026. The minimum wage would then adjust annually based on inflation.

## WHAT PROBLEM IS PROPOSITION 32 TRYING TO SOLVE?

- » **HIGH COST OF LIVING:** California's high cost of living means that the current minimum wage of \$16 is no longer sufficient. Even the cheapest areas require higher wages to meet basic needs.
- » **ECONOMIC INEQUALITY:** Proposition 32 aims to address wage stagnation and economic inequality, particularly for workers in lower-wage jobs who have yet to benefit from localized or industry-specific raises.
- » **BOOSTING LOCAL ECONOMIES:** Raising wages seeks to increase consumer spending at local businesses and reduce reliance on public assistance programs.

## IMPACT ON AIAN COMMUNITIES:

For AIAN communities, especially in urban and underserved areas, raising the minimum wage to \$18 could help families better manage the high costs of living. This increase may provide immediate relief, it also may not be a complete solution, as the cost of living will likely continue to rise. Without ongoing adjustments, the purchasing power of the minimum wage may quickly diminish, necessitating further increases in the future. Balancing wage growth with support for small businesses and sustainable job opportunities will be key to long-term economic stability for AIAN communities.

# PROPOSITION 33: ALLOW LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO IMPOSE RENT CONTROLS

## SUMMARY:

Proposition 33 would allow local governments to implement rent control on any type of housing, including single-family homes and newly built apartments, overturning current restrictions imposed by Costa-Hawkins, which has limited rent control policies for nearly 30 years.

## WHAT PROBLEM IS PROPOSITION 33 TRYING TO SOLVE?

- » **HIGH HOUSING COSTS:** Nearly 30% of California renters spend more than half of their income on rent, contributing to housing instability and financial stress.
- » **LOCAL CONTROL OVER RENT POLICIES:** Proposition 33 aims to give cities the ability to tailor rent control measures to local needs, addressing affordability more directly.
- » **EXPANDING RENT CONTROL PROTECTIONS:** The measure seeks to protect renters in all types of housing, including single-family homes and new builds, which are currently exempt.

## IMPACT ON AIAN COMMUNITIES:

For AIAN communities, Proposition 33 could provide needed relief from rising rent costs, helping to prevent displacement and housing instability. There are concerns that expanded rent control might discourage new housing developments, potentially worsening the overall housing shortage. Balancing protections for renters with the need to maintain housing availability will be critical for AIAN communities that already face significant housing challenges.

# **PROPOSITION 34: REQUIRE CERTAIN PROVIDERS TO USE PRESCRIPTION DRUG REVENUE FOR PATIENTS**

## **SUMMARY:**

Proposition 34 would mandate that certain healthcare providers in California use at least 98% of their net revenue from prescription drug sales on direct patient care. It specifically targets providers that meet criteria related to spending, property ownership, and safety violations, primarily affecting the AIDS Healthcare Foundation.

## **WHAT PROBLEM IS PROPOSITION 34 TRYING TO SOLVE?**

- » **ENSURING FUNDS BENEFIT PATIENTS:** The measure aims to ensure that discounted drug revenues are spent on patient care rather than other expenses or political activities.
- » **INCREASING ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY:** Proposition 34 seeks to hold providers accountable for how they use funds intended to serve low-income and at-risk patients.

## **IMPACT ON AIAN COMMUNITIES:**

Proposition 34 could indirectly benefit AIAN communities by ensuring that healthcare providers use funds appropriately to expand services for low-income patients. It may also create legal and operational challenges that could affect access to services if providers face financial penalties or litigation due to compliance issues.

# **PROPOSITION 35: MAKE PERMANENT A TAX ON MANAGED CARE HEALTH INSURANCE PLANS**

## **SUMMARY:**

Proposition 35 would permanently tax managed care health plans and direct the revenue exclusively to Medi-Cal, California's public health insurance program for low-income residents. The funds would support various services, including primary care, mental health, and emergency services, and ensure the revenue is not used to replace existing Medi-Cal funding.

## **WHAT PROBLEM IS PROPOSITION 35 TRYING TO SOLVE?**

- » **FUNDING MEDI-CAL EXPANSION:** As Medi-Cal has expanded to cover more Californians, including all low-income residents regardless of citizenship, funding demands have grown significantly.
- » **ENSURING ADEQUATE PROVIDER PAYMENTS:** With low reimbursement rates for providers, many are unwilling to accept Medi-Cal patients. Proposition 35 aims to improve payment rates to encourage provider participation.
- » **SECURING CONSISTENT HEALTHCARE FUNDING:** The measure seeks to ensure that managed care tax revenue is used directly for healthcare investments rather than balancing the state's general fund.

## **IMPACT ON AIAN COMMUNITIES:**

Proposition 35 directs managed care tax funds to Medi-Cal, enhancing support for primary care, mental health, emergency services, and other essential healthcare needs for low-income residents, including AI/AN communities. This proposition aims to improve access to care by directly funding healthcare providers like Indian Health Programs. Prop 35 will limit how the legislature can utilize future MCO Tax dollars and would require amendments to future statewide propositions.

# PROPOSITION 36: INCREASE PENALTIES FOR THEFT AND DRUG TRAFFICKING

## SUMMARY:

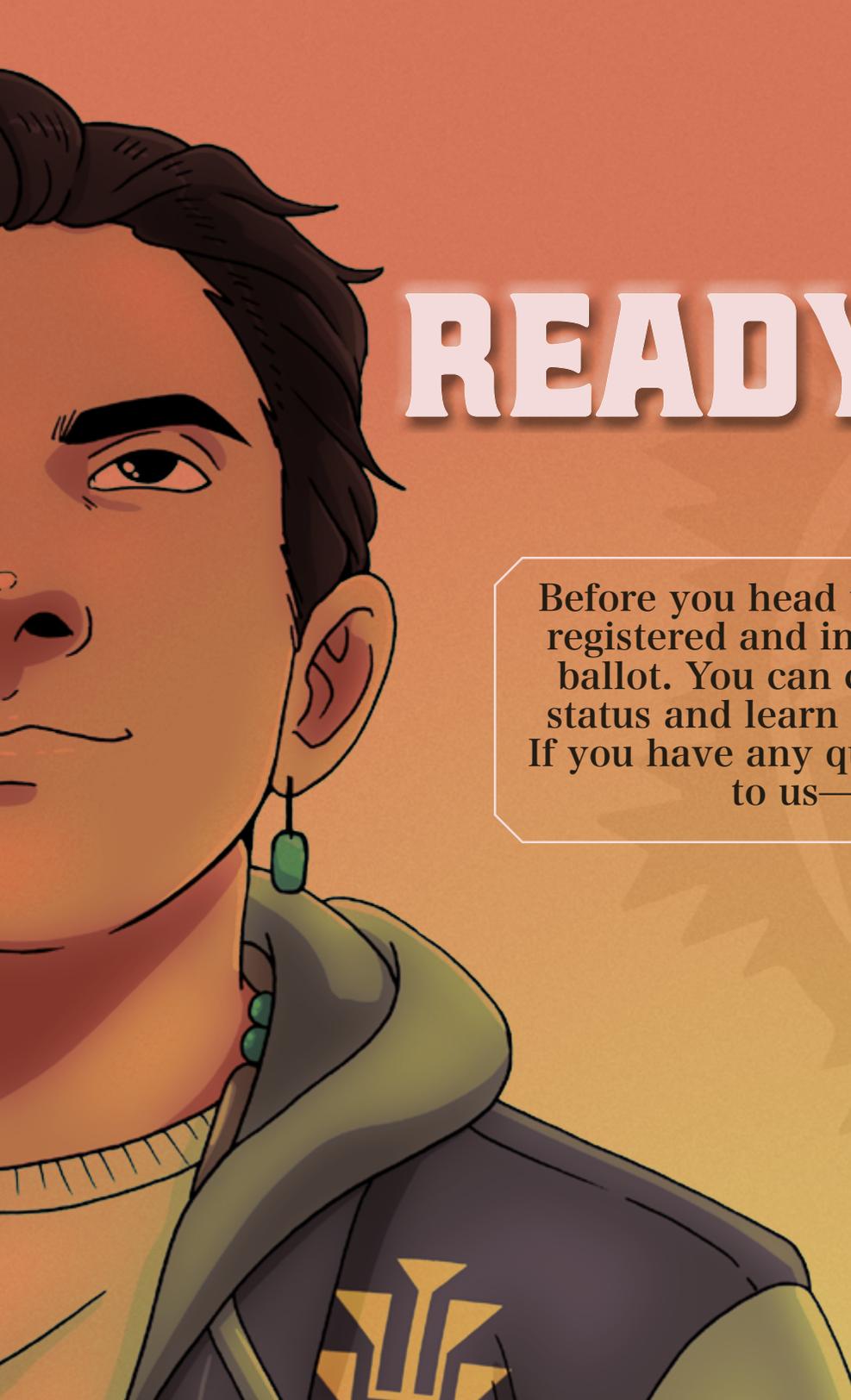
Proposition 36 would reclassify some misdemeanor theft and drug crimes as felonies, introducing a new “treatment-mandated felony” category. Offenders could opt for drug treatment instead of prison, but failure to complete the program could result in up to three years in prison

## WHAT PROBLEM IS PROPOSITION 36 TRYING TO SOLVE?

- » **ADDRESSING CRIME RATES:** Proposition 36 seeks to counteract some effects of Prop—47, which lowered penalties for certain offenses by imposing stricter consequences on theft and drug trafficking.
- » **REDUCING HOMELESSNESS AND DRUG DEPENDENCY:** Supporters believe increasing penalties will drive individuals towards treatment, reducing crime and homelessness. If offenders are not involved in drug use, they would not qualify for treatment options and would face harsher penalties without the chance for diversion.

## IMPACT ON AIAN COMMUNITIES:

The proposition could disproportionately impact AIAN communities, who are already overrepresented in the criminal justice system. For non-drug-related offenders, the lack of access to alternative treatment could lead to increased incarceration, compounding existing systemic inequities and stressing the need for equitable and culturally appropriate solutions.



# READY TO VOTE?

Before you head to the polls, make sure you're registered and informed about what's on your ballot. You can check your voter registration status and learn more about the process [here](#). If you have any questions, feel free to reach out to us—we're here to help!

**LET'S MAKE  
YOUR VOTE  
COUNT THIS  
NOVEMBER!**