

10/23/2025

Item #9

SUSAN Supervisor Ellenberg

Fighting for All Families and Children

Honorable Mayor Gillmor and Council Members:

Thank you for agendizing a conversation regarding support for Measure A, an element of the county's multi-pronged response to the devastating federal cuts enacted by H.R.1. **This 5 year-limited, 5% cent sales tax will enable our County to maintain the top tier health care we directly provide to one of every four County residents.** The sales tax would generate \$330 million annually, which represents about 1/3 of the calculated billion dollar annual budget hole created by H.R.1 cuts.

The residents of the city of Santa Clara depend on County hospitals for emergency services.

In Santa Clara, about 45% of 911 transports go to County hospitals, and O'Connor Hospital is especially vital to this city — in 2024, ambulances transported more Santa Clara residents to O'Connor than to Kaiser. If O'Connor reduces the capacity of their emergency room, Santa Clara residents would face longer ambulance transport times and longer ER waits upon arrival. Every healthcare professional knows that each minute is crucial when it comes to saving lives.

A vote for Measure A is a vote to keep all of us healthier and increases the likelihood that emergency care will be there for us in the very moment we need it.

I'll leave you with a few bits of important information about Measure A.

Measure A is a general tax. The Board of Supervisors has publicly committed to using those new funds to backfill budget holes created by the dramatic cuts to Medicaid, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP/CalFresh), and other critical safety net programs. We have taken the unprecedented step of including in the ballot measure language specifying that our expenditures will be subject to independent audit/oversight. We want you to know what we are doing with this revenue.

Sales taxes exempt many of the necessities of daily living, including groceries, rent, childcare, education and health care. The actual impact of the tax is \$6.25 per \$1000 of taxable goods.

The tax will sunset after 5 years. If voters wish to continue the tax, a new measure will have to be

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put on a future ballot.

Whether you and your residents hold commercial insurance, Medicaid, or Medicare, **your access to high quality and affordable care is in jeopardy without Measure A.** Ambulance response times will slow, emergency room wait times will increase, specialty services will be drastically reduced, and we will all be exposed to more sick people in our community due to their loss of preventative and early intervention care.

Right now, we have the opportunity to mitigate the losses and help keep our hospitals open and functioning at full capacity. I know **you share my commitment to protecting the health of all our residents.** I stood with most of you last week as Sutter opened a magnificent new primary care and specialty center in Santa Clara and learned you are supportive of their further expansion in this city. Thank you for focusing on access to healthcare — please extend that focus to residents who may one day need access to our County hospitals' top tier emergency care.

I will close by urging the Mayor and Council to support Measure A to **keep our communities healthy and our emergency rooms open.** The time to act is now.

Please reach out to me if you have additional questions or concerns regarding Measure A or the broad impacts of HR 1, and I would be more than happy to continue this conversation.

With gratitude,

Supervisor Susan Ellenberg