

# San Juan County 2021 Local Voters' Guides

## Administrative Rules for Ballot Measure Statements

(amended December 2020)



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## Purpose

Local voters' guides provide the citizens of San Juan County with information about candidates and ballot measures. A printed voters' pamphlet is distributed for the August Primary and November General election only, and online guides are available for every election.

These Administrative Rules establish the requirements for participation in the guides by local jurisdictions and advocacy committees.

Local jurisdictions sponsoring ballot measures are responsible for providing explanatory statements and for appointing advocacy committees for and against the measure. Advocacy committees provide statements advocating approval or rejection of ballot measures. Important information regarding deadlines and format for both are included herein.

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## Important dates

	<b>February 9 Special</b>	<b>April 27 Special</b>	<b>August 3 Primary</b>	<b>November 2 General Election</b>
<b>Resolution deadline</b> Deadline to file a resolution with the County Auditor to place a measure on the ballot	<b>Dec 11</b>	<b>Feb 26</b>	<b>May 14</b>	<b>August 3 (same day as the Primary)</b>
<b>Appointment of advocacy committees deadline</b> Deadline for jurisdictions to appoint committees to write advocacy statements for and against approval of a ballot measure	<b>Dec 18</b>	<b>March 5</b>	<b>May 21</b>	<b>August 3</b>
<b>Statement deadline</b> Deadline to submit explanatory statements and advocacy statements for a ballot measure	<b>Jan 4</b>	<b>Mar 22</b>	<b>June 11</b>	<b>August 20</b>



## What to submit—jurisdictions

- Name, telephone number, and email of one person to serve as liaison with Elections staff regarding any statement questions. Please place this information at the top of the document.
- Official ballot title, as prepared or approved by the County Prosecuting Attorney.
- Explanatory statement prepared by the sponsoring jurisdiction or its attorney, or by the County Prosecuting Attorney for County ballot measures.
- Names and contact information of advocacy committee members.

## What to submit—committees

- Name and contact information of one committee member to serve as liaison with Elections staff regarding any questions about the statement. Please place this information at the top of the document.
- Name of the advocacy committee, names of the committee members who will “sign” the advocacy statement, and campaign phone, email(s) and/or website address to be published for voters to obtain more information. Note: Committees may include up to three members, though they may seek the advice of any other person(s). (RCW 29A.32.280)
- Advocacy statement for or against passage of the measure.

## How to submit

- Electronic submissions should be emailed to [elections@sanjuanco.com](mailto:elections@sanjuanco.com). The contact information and statement may be sent as a word-processing file (Microsoft Word or other common word-processing application) as an attachment to the email, or the text may be placed in the body of the email. Do not submit a PDF file only.
- If submitting by email, please include the jurisdiction’s name or the advocacy committee’s name in the subject line.
- If delivering in person or by mail, submit the word-processing file on a flash drive. Do not submit a PDF file or hardcopy only. The Elections office mailing and physical addresses are listed on the front cover of this document.



## **Appointment of advocacy committees by the jurisdictions**

### ***Deadlines for advocacy committee appointments:***

***February 9 Special - December 18, 2020***

***April 27 Special - March 5, 2021***

***August 3 Primary - May 21, 2021***

***November 2 General - August 10, 2021***

### ***Advocacy committee appointments***

It is the responsibility of the legislative authority of a local jurisdiction submitting a ballot measure to formally appoint committees to prepare arguments advocating approval of a measure and rejection of a measure for the local voters' guides. The authority must appoint persons known to favor the measure to serve on the committee advocating approval and, whenever possible, must appoint persons known to oppose the measure to serve on the committee advocating rejection. (RCW 29A.32.280)

If the legislative authority is unable to make advocacy committee appointments, the responsibility to make the appointments falls to the County Auditor. Therefore, the Auditor may begin to search for argument writers, particularly for writers who oppose the measure, prior to the district's deadline for appointing committees.

Each committee may have no more than three members; however, a committee may seek the advice of any other person(s).

At the time of committee appointment, the legislative authority should provide the committees the voters' guides rules. The rules can be downloaded from the Elections website: [www.sanjuanico.com/elections](http://www.sanjuanico.com/elections).

### ***Submit committee information to the Auditor***

Upon appointment of the advocacy committees, the legislative authority should immediately submit to the Auditor/Elections the names and contact information of the committee members. Elections staff will then work with committees regarding voters' guide submissions.



## Explanatory statement guidelines

### ***Deadlines for explanatory statements:***

***February 9 Special - January 4, 2021***

***April 27 Special - March 22, 2021***

***August 3 Primary - June 11, 2021***

***November 2 General - August 20, 2021***

The attorney for the jurisdiction sponsoring the ballot measure, or the Prosecuting Attorney for County measures, will prepare and submit the explanatory statement to the Elections office. Statements written and submitted by jurisdictions themselves will be forwarded to the Prosecuting Attorney's office for review. Any changes suggested by the Prosecuting Attorney will be returned to the jurisdiction for concurrence prior to publication.

Jurisdictions should notify the Elections office as soon as possible if they will not be submitting a statement so that Elections staff can arrange with the Prosecuting Attorney for statement preparation. A copy of the Prosecuting Attorney's statement will be provided to the jurisdiction prior to publication.

### ***Explanatory statements consist of the following elements:***

- The official ballot title of the measure
- A neutrally-worded explanatory statement explaining the law regarding the ballot measure as it currently exists and the fiscal effect that the ballot measure will have if approved

### ***The following general guidelines will apply to explanatory statements:***

- The name of the jurisdiction and the name of the designated contact person who will serve as the liaison with Elections staff should appear at the top of the statement document. This information does not count toward the word limit.
- **Word limit: 400 words.** Manually count the number of words in your statement, using the guidelines below. If your statement exceeds the word limit you will be notified by email and asked to correct it.
- Use block paragraph style for your statement (no paragraph indents).
- Do not use tables, bullets, lists, or other material requiring multiple paragraphs or formatting.
- You may use italics to emphasize specific words or statements. Do not use bold, underline, or all-caps.
- Hyphenated words will count as two words unless the hyphenation is listed as one word in [dictionary.com](https://www.dictionary.com).
- Numbers will count as one word (e.g. "1,000,000"). However, "1 million" or "one million" will count as two words.
- Two words with a slash between them will count as two words (e.g., "public/private" or "\$0.22/\$1,000").

***NOTE: See page 7 for more information regarding statements.***



## Advocacy committee statement guidelines

### *Deadlines for advocacy committee appointments:*

*February 9 Special - December 18, 2020*

*April 27 Special - March 5, 2021*

*August 3 Primary - May 21, 2021*

*November 2 General - August 10, 2021*

### **Contact information**

At the top of your submission materials, please place:

- Name and contact information of one committee member to serve as liaison with the Elections staff regarding any questions about the statement.
- The advocacy committee's name (if applicable).
- The names of up to three committee members.
- Optional: Relevant "identifiers" may be submitted that will follow the names of each member. Up to 8 words are allowed (e.g., John Doe, Committee Chair, School Board Member).
- Contact phone, email(s) and/or campaign website.

The committee name, names of members, and the contact information for the campaign will be published in the "Argument prepared by" section following the statement and do not count toward the word limit.

Be sure that your campaign contact email(s) and website address are functional when you submit your statement.

### **Statement word limit: 250 words.**

Committees are responsible for observing the word limit. Manually count the number of words in your statement using the guidelines provided. If your statement exceeds the word limit, your designated liaison will be notified by email and asked to correct it. Only deletions will be allowed. No changes or additions will be allowed.

If the statement length is not corrected by the committee, all material in excess of the word limit will be omitted. If that deletion creates an incomplete sentence at the end of the statement, that incomplete sentence will be omitted. There are no exceptions to these limitations.

### **The following guidelines will apply to advocacy statements:**

- Do not use tables, bullets, lists, or other material requiring multiple paragraphs or formatting.
- Use block paragraph style for your statement (no paragraph indents).
- Elections staff reserves the right to eliminate excessive paragraph returns if the statement does not fit in the space provided.
- You may use italics to emphasize specific words or statements. Do not use bold, underline, or all-caps for emphasis.
- Hyphenated words will count as two words unless the hyphenation is listed as one word in [dictionary.com](http://dictionary.com).
- Numbers will count as one word (e.g. "1,000,000"). However, "1 million" or "one million" will count as two words.
- Two words with a slash between them will count as two words (e.g., "public/private" or "\$0.22/\$1,000").
- Obscene, profane, libelous, or defamatory language will be rejected.

### **Disclaimer**

Thoroughly proofread your materials and correct any spelling, typographical, or grammatical errors prior to submitting.

The following statement will appear at the bottom of each page where advocacy statements appear:  
"Statements are printed as submitted. Committees are solely responsible for content."

### **Rebuttal statements**

No rebuttal statements will be allowed.

**NOTE: See page 7 for more information regarding statements. See page 8 for an example of advocacy statements displayed in the online voters' guide.**



## More about statements

### Rejected statements and appeal process

Any statement that is libelous or otherwise inappropriate will be rejected. If any portion of your statement is rejected, only that rejected portion may be re-written and submitted for inclusion in the final statement.

If your statement, or any portion thereof, has been rejected because it contains what the Elections Supervisor believes are libelous statements or otherwise inappropriate material, the advocacy committee liaison will be notified in writing and/or by email not more than five business days following the statement submission. You will have until the day following receipt of the notice to do one of the following:

- Appeal that determination to the County Auditor, in writing, citing reasons why you believe the statement is not libelous or otherwise inappropriate; **or**
- Submit a re-written statement for only the portion found objectionable.

The County Auditor will consider any appeals. After consideration of the Elections Supervisor's written notice and the advocacy committee's appeal statement, the County Auditor will make a final determination.

### Proof copies

Elections staff will email a proof copy of your statement to the liaison contact listed on your statement prior to publication of the online voters' guide and/or printed voters' pamphlet.

### Fees

No fee shall be charged to committees for submitting statements to be included in the online voters' guide or local voters' pamphlet.

The total cost of the Local Voters' Pamphlet shall be considered an election cost to those local jurisdictions included in the pamphlet, and the cost shall be prorated in the manner provided in RCW 29A.04.410. (RCW 29A.32.270)

### Public viewing of statements

After the official deadline for submission of statements has passed, the statements become public record. At that time, they are available for viewing by the public upon request to the Elections office.

# Example

## Online Voters' Guide Advocacy Statements

### Arguments For and Against

#### Argument For

The emergency responders of Orcas Island Fire and Rescue are neighbors serving neighbors by protecting our lives, our property and our beautiful environment. They enable us all to have greater peace of mind and a sense of security, day and night.

Orcas has a unique rural character but must confront significant real world challenges. Since the last levy passed in 1999, OIFR, like all EMS/fire departments, faces increased state mandated regulations (such as a 400% increase in the cost of equipping volunteers and increases in training hours from 76 to 174), steady inflation (37%) and major increases in call volume (119%) with an aging population. Our emergency responders have improved response times, have strengthened their skills and have one of the highest cardiac resuscitation rates in Washington. The cost per capita of OIFR services is almost identical to Lopez and is half of San Juan's. OIFR is appropriately staffed to train responders, comply with regulations, and lead/manage this organization.

We urge You to vote Yes on Proposition 1. This vital levy will not increase taxes and enables our emergency responders to maintain the current, excellent level of service you receive in a fiscally responsible manner.

#### Rebuttal of Argument Against

No rebuttals are allowed.

#### Argument Prepared By

Rick Hughes, Committee Co-Chair  
Moana Kutsche, Committee Co-Chair;  
Attorney  
Clyde Duke, OIFR Commissioner

For more information:  
Committee website:  
[www.supportoifr.com](http://www.supportoifr.com) or  
Art Lange: 376-8005 or  
[artlanna@centurylink.net](mailto:artlanna@centurylink.net)

#### Argument Against

When you vote no you are not voting against the Fire Department or the volunteers, you are voting for fiscal responsibility. The 'temporary' lid lift of 1999 did its job, building 2 new stations, buying and updating our equipment, but it also made it easy to spend at will. The amount of money being requested now is far in excess of that which is necessary to provide Orcas Island with the level of emergency response to which we have become accustomed. The wage and benefit packages for the paid staff have increased having now reached one million dollars! The top two positions cost taxpayers close to a quarter of a million dollars a year. Their projected increase for staff over the next 10 years is \$400,000. I want the Commissioners to go back and assess the expenditures and ask for funding that shows fiscal responsibility. They have time to do this. The School Board did it when the voters rejected their proposal twice. When you see where we spend money it has a sobering effect! Vote No.

#### Rebuttal of Argument For

No rebuttals are allowed.

#### Argument Prepared By

Pierrette Guimond, Orcas