

## ***PAID ARGUMENT***

San Francisco is the only City in the State of California that allows paid arguments (SFEC Sec. 830). It is freedom of speech but the fee for publishing in the VIP is \$200 plus \$2 per word not to exceed 300 words. Ballot Argument Guides are updated for each election and posted on the elections website.

The maximum discount is up to \$225. Minimum fee is \$50. The breakdown is:

Form only: \$25                      Early submittal, E-74: \$150

Form + Diskette \$75              Early submittal, E-71: \$50

Another discount offered to voters is signatures-in-lieu of fees (SFEC Sec. 840). Each signature submitted in lieu of fee is reduced by \$.50.

The amount of paid arguments submitted varies on how many measures are on the ballot and how controversial the measure is. Also, if the election historically has had higher turnout (e.g. General Presidential Election), more measures would be on the ballot, which in turn increase more paid arguments.

To cover the complete cost of the VIP, an increase in cost may benefit the Department of Elections. Every VIP varies and in the November 2000 election, paid arguments comprised at least 40% of the VIP. Whereas in the November 2001 election, paid arguments comprised at least 20% of the VIP. Increasing the fees would mean going before the Board of Supervisors and amending SFEC 830.

The procedure is basically the same as it is for receiving proponent/opponent arguments. In addition to collecting the fees, Campaign Service must:

- Count the words in text and give discounts if submitted early (with a minimum fee of \$50)
- Review the control sheets for the "True Source of Funds" if payment of publication fee qualifies as a recipient political committee
- Review control sheet for disclosure of the 3 largest contributors
- Receive diskettes in addition to control sheet
- If any, receive signatures in lieu of filing fee and forward signatures to Voter Services for verification
- Review argument that uses an organization or name of a person in the text where letter of authorizations must accompany argument.
- Copies made for public file

### November 01 Paid Argument Stats

\$23,962 Total Net Fee (with discounts)

\$48,228 Total Fee (without discounts)

135 Total Arguments

10,777 total words

79.82 words per argument

### March 02 Paid Argument Stats

\$17,482 Total Net Fee (with discounts)

\$45,151 Total Fee (without discounts)

134 Total Arguments

9429 total words

70.36 words per argument