

The Record · Follow the Money

Measure A Is Not a Tax. It Is a Blank Check.

Burbank Republican Party · October 29, 2026 ·

Three public safety unions have put about \$7.7 million into Los Angeles County Measure A. It would let arbitrators nobody elects make final decisions about the pay of county employees who already cost about \$4.1 billion a year, and no one could vote to undo them.

Who pays for a raise that no elected official approved and no voter can overturn?

Where we stand: We support public safety. Sheriff's deputies and firefighters do dangerous work, and they deserve fair pay. Our team recommends a **No** vote on Measure A because it takes the final decision about how much of your money goes to pay away from the people you elect, and gives it to a panel you cannot vote out.

\$7.7 million

raised for Measure A through mid-October, almost all of it from public safety unions

\$4.1 billion

a year in salaries and benefits for the employees Measure A covers

4,902

Sheriff and Fire employees paid more than \$300,000 in pay and benefits in 2025

None

dollars raised by any committee opposing Measure A

The mailer in your mailbox

This week, Burbank voters received a glossy mailer that says Measure A is “fair and helps protect public safety – with no new taxes.” Here it is, front and back. We blacked out only the name, address and postal barcode of the household that received it. Nothing else on the mailer has been changed.

Front of the mailer.

Back of the mailer. The black box marked “Redacted” covers the recipient’s name, address and barcode only.

What Measure A actually does

Measure A is a change to the Los Angeles County Charter. It sets up what is called “binding arbitration.” When the county and a public safety union cannot agree on a contract, a three-member panel of arbitrators would decide. The county picks one member, the union picks one, and the two sides choose the chair. The panel takes each side’s last offer on each issue and picks one of them.

After 30 days, the decision is final. In the words of the county’s own lawyers, “No further action by the County Board of Supervisors or by the electorate” is permitted or required. The elected Board of Supervisors, who answer to you, would no longer have the last word on the pay of these employees. Neither would you.

The mailer is correct that Measure A does not create a tax. The county’s Auditor-Controller says it “does not directly affect County revenues.” But the same official says the county has “no basis on which to predict” whether costs will go up or down, and that awards could spread to other county contracts that are tied to these. The county’s chief executive warned the Board in February that arbitration awards “could ... materially and detrimentally increase” costs and could put the county’s pension obligations and credit rating at risk.

Not a tax, but someone still pays. A raise decided by arbitrators is paid from the same place every county paycheck comes from: the property taxes, sales taxes, state money and fees described below. Measure A does not raise a tax today. It takes away the one check that stands between a pay award and your wallet.

The Board of Supervisors voted 4 to 1 on March 3, 2026 to place Measure A on the ballot. The county’s chief executive noted at the time that the unions had already begun gathering signatures for an initiative of their own. Measure A needs a simple majority to pass.

Follow the money

The mailer was paid for by “Yes on A – Safer Los Angeles County, Sponsored by Labor Organizations Representing First Responders and Other Essential Workers,” committee number 1485027. Its treasurer is Derek Hsieh, identified by the Los Angeles Times as being with the Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs. The return address on the mailer, 445 South Figueroa Street, Suite 2400, is the office of Kaufman Legal Group, a political law firm that files the committee’s reports.

These are the contributions of \$5,000 or more that we could verify in the committee’s filings with the Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder through June 30, 2026, plus one later report:

Contributor	What it is	Amount
Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs	Union for rank-and-file sheriff’s deputies and district attorney investigators	\$3,199,819
Professional Peace Officers Association	Union for sergeants, lieutenants and other sworn supervisors (including \$525,000 through its own committee)	\$1,025,000
Los Angeles County Firefighters Local 1014	County firefighters’ union, through its Community Issues committee	\$775,000
California Association of Highway Patrolmen	Union for state highway patrol officers (August 20, 2026)	\$250,000
Los Angeles County Lifeguard Association	County lifeguards’ union	\$225,000
Building trades committees	State Building and Construction Trades Council and the Los Angeles and Orange County building trades committee	\$65,000
Verified contributions of \$5,000 or more		\$5,539,819

The deputies' association amount includes \$49,819 of staff time, travel and office costs it gave as an in-kind contribution. The committee reported about \$7.45 million raised through June 30, 2026, and the Los Angeles Times reported \$7.7 million through mid-October. The difference is in reports filed electronically after June 30, which we could not yet itemize.

Where the money went. The biggest early expense was \$841,008 to PCI Campaigns of Calabasas for signature gathering, with another \$37,464 to The Monaco Group for the same work. The committee also paid Kaufman Legal Group, consultants The Strategy Group of Chicago and Paloma Public Affairs, and J&Z Strategies for web work. By June 30 it still had about \$6.2 million in the bank for the fall campaign, which is the season of mailers like this one.

Who is on the other side? Nobody with money. No committee has been formed to oppose Measure A, and no argument against it was filed for the official voter pamphlet. When one side spends \$7.7 million and the other spends nothing, voters hear only one side of the story.

These unions are experienced political spenders. The deputies' association led a coalition that gave \$1.35 million in the 2024 district attorney race and spent more than \$700,000 in a 2022 supervisor race. Firefighters Local 1014 gave \$4 million in 2024 to pass the county's fire parcel tax, Measure E. The unions whose members' pay is at stake are the same groups that help elect the officials who sit across the bargaining table from them.

What county public safety employees are paid

Public pay records posted by Transparent California for 2025 show that many county public safety employees already earn far more than most of the people whose taxes pay them. These are total pay plus the county's cost of benefits such as pensions and health care.

Department	Paid over \$300,000	Paid over \$500,000
Sheriff's Department	3,125	205
Fire Department	1,777	187
Both departments	4,902	392

Among the Sheriff's Department employees over \$300,000 were 1,585 deputy sheriffs and 960 sergeants. In the Fire Department they included 652 fire captains and 361 firefighters. Much of it is overtime: the employees over \$300,000 alone were paid \$261 million in Sheriff's Department overtime and \$209 million in Fire Department overtime. The Los Angeles Times reported that the Sheriff's Department spent \$458 million on overtime in a single recent fiscal year.

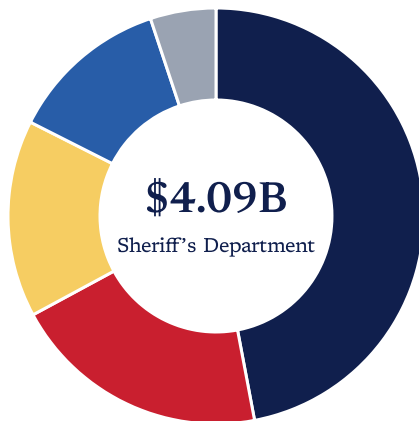
Some examples from the 2025 records, by job title. We show titles, not names.

Job title	Base pay	Overtime	Pay and benefits
Sheriff's sergeant	\$181,148	\$371,517	\$681,227
Sheriff's lieutenant	\$257,686	\$258,794	\$740,245
Sheriff's captain	\$282,191	\$0	\$857,337
Deputy sheriff	\$132,402	\$118,798	\$334,753
Fire captain	\$185,156	\$377,084	\$700,252
Battalion chief	\$230,958	\$422,802	\$849,586
Firefighter	\$167,460	\$267,326	\$553,025

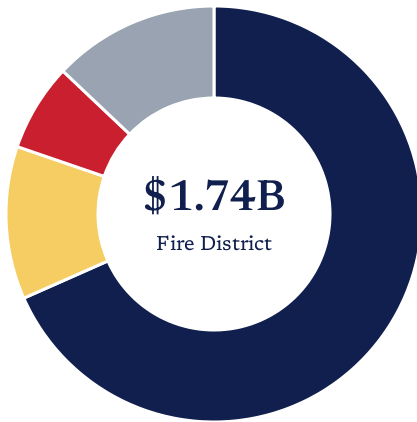
These are individual records, chosen to show the range at the top. They are not averages. The deputy sheriff shown is the middle of the 1,585 deputies paid over \$300,000. Neither Transparent California nor the county publishes a median for these titles. For comparison, the middle Burbank police officer record for 2025 was \$213,311 in pay and benefits, and the middle Burbank firefighter record was \$229,008.

How public safety is already paid for

Measure A's supporters say public safety pay should not be set by politics. It is not set by politics. It is set by budgets, paid for with taxes you already pay. Here is where the money comes from in the county's 2026-27 budget.



■ County general fund	\$1,924M
Mostly your property taxes	47.0%
■ Proposition 172 sales tax	\$822M
A half-cent sales tax dedicated to public safety	20.1%
■ Law enforcement contracts	\$627M
42 contract cities, the courts, Metro and colleges	15.3%
■ State realignment money	\$510M
Public safety and court security funds from the state	12.5%
■ Other	\$209M
Grants, fines, fees and transfers	5.1%



■ Property tax	\$1,189M
The district's share of your 1% property tax	68.4%
■ Contract cities	\$207M
Cities that buy fire service from the county	11.9%
■ Special tax and assessments	\$119M
The 1997 voter-approved fire tax and assessments	6.8%
■ Other	\$225M
Charges for services, permits, interest and transfers	12.9%

On top of this, Measure E, the fire parcel tax voters passed in 2024, is projected to raise another \$146 million for the Fire District this year, kept in a separate fund. Figures are from the county's 2026-27 recommended budget, the latest version that breaks each department down by funding source.

And the taxes keep coming. On October 1, 2026, the sales tax in Burbank went up again, from 10.5% to 11%, after county voters narrowly passed Measure ER in June. Burbank residents also pay the county's homelessness sales tax, approved in 2024, and the city's own Measure P sales tax from 2018. Burbank has its own police and fire departments, so Burbank residents do not pay the county fire taxes, but they do pay the property taxes and the Proposition 172 sales tax that fund the Sheriff's Department.

Los Angeles County's total budget this year is \$54.2 billion. Public protection is \$12.3 billion of it. There is no shortage of tax money going to public safety. The question Measure A raises is who decides how it is spent: the officials you elect, or arbitrators you cannot remove.

What we could not yet confirm: the committee's contributions and spending after June 30, 2026, which are in electronic filings we could not yet itemize; the department-wide overtime totals for 2025; and any newspaper editorial positions on Measure A. We will update this page as those records become available.

We support the men and women who keep us safe, and we support paying them fairly. But fair pay should be decided in the open, by officials who answer to voters, inside a budget the public can see. Measure A hands that decision to arbitrators no one elects and no one can overrule, and taxpayers get the bill. Vote No on Measure A.

Election Day is Tuesday, November 3, 2026, and polls close at 8 p.m. If you have not voted yet, please vote, and invite a friend to vote too.

See our full voter guide ►

Sources:

1. Los Angeles County Counsel, impartial analysis of Measure A:
content.lavote.gov/docs/rrcc/documents/m0001053410e.pdf
2. Los Angeles County Auditor-Controller, fiscal impact statement for Measure A:
content.lavote.gov/docs/rrcc/documents/m0001053475e.pdf
3. Acting Chief Executive Officer memo to the Board of Supervisors, February 9, 2026:
file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/supdocs/212881.pdf
4. Board of Supervisors statement of proceedings, March 3, 2026, item 83:
file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/bos/sop/1203845_030326.pdf
5. Los Angeles County Registrar-Recorder, campaign statements for committee 1485027 (2025 semi-annual, first and second quarter 2026, and 24-hour reports of April 16 and August 21, 2026):
content.lavote.gov/campaign-finance/
6. Los Angeles Times reporting on Measure A fundraising and Sheriff's Department overtime, 2025 and 2026; LAist reporting on public safety union political spending, 2022 to 2026.
7. Transparent California, 2025 pay records for Los Angeles County and the City of Burbank:
transparentcalifornia.com/salaries/2025/los-angeles-county and [/burbank](https://transparentcalifornia.com/salaries/2025/burbank). Counts are our tally of those records.
8. Los Angeles County 2026-27 Recommended Budget, Volume One (Sheriff and Fire sections):
file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/lac/1206161_2026-27RecommendedBudgetVol1-FINALOnline.pdf;
2026-27 Final Adopted Budget charts: file.lacounty.gov/SDSInter/lac/1218281_2026-27FinalAdoptedBudgetCharts.pdf
9. California Department of Tax and Fee Administration, sales tax rate change notice effective October 1, 2026: cdtfa.ca.gov/formspubs/11037.pdf
10. The recipient's copy of the Yes on A mailer, received in Burbank, October 2026.
Analysis by the Burbank Republican Party.