

# Los Angeles Daily News

## Endorsements



By THE EDITORIAL BOARD | [opinion@scng.com](mailto:opinion@scng.com)  
PUBLISHED: May 3, 2026 at 11:08 AM PDT

Los Angeles County voters are facing another demand for a one-half percent sales tax increase less than two years after the last one.

If approved by voters on June 2, Measure ER would raise the sales tax in L.A. County from 9.75% to 10.25%. Many of the county's 88 cities have even higher rates. Lancaster and Palmdale currently lead the state and the nation with an 11.25% transactions and use tax, as the sales tax is formally known. Measure ER would push that rate up to 11.75%.

Sales taxes are regressive, putting the greatest burden on lower income people. With affordability a top concern of voters, the supporters of Measure ER are trying to sell the tax increase as "half a penny," needed to prevent the "collapse" of the health care system in Los Angeles County.

Another rhetorical sleight of hand is the spending plan in the measure that shows it will be spent on health care, with an oversight committee. Measure ER is a general sales tax, the money can legally be spent for any purpose, and the oversight committee can only watch. The fine print states that is only "the Board's intent" to spend the money on healthcare.

If the tax was legally committed to fund healthcare, it would be a special tax and need a two-thirds vote to pass. General taxes require only 50% plus one vote.

Another illusion is the well-worn "It's temporary" trick, expiring in five years. Voters will recall that the Measure H sales tax increase for homeless services, one-quarter percent for 10 years, was replaced by Measure A in 2024, a half-cent sales tax with no sunset date. Extension are achieved by scaring voters about budget cuts and asserting that the renewal is not a tax increase.

But the biggest deception is the effort to conceal from voters the real reason the county is desperate for a tax increase to pay for healthcare.

Supporters of Measure ER cite the 2025 passage of H.R. 1 and blame the federal government for “cuts” resulting in hundreds of thousands of people losing their Medi-Cal coverage. In fact, the “cuts” are administrative changes to ensure that only eligible individuals receive full-scope Medi-Cal.

Another change is a new federal rule ending a loophole that allowed states including California to draw down extra federal matching funds with a Managed Care Organization tax that inflated reimbursable Medi-Cal expenses.

California used those extra federal dollars to subsidize the cost of providing full-scope Medi-Cal to all undocumented immigrants. Because federal law does not allow reimbursement to states for healthcare provided to undocumented immigrants except for emergencies and pregnancy, the Medi-Cal expansion was entirely at state expense. The cost turned out to be billions over budget every year, and in January, Gov. Gavin Newsom closed the program to new enrollment by undocumented adults.

Other Medi-Cal enrollees are dropping their coverage due to requirements for some recipients to redetermine their income eligibility every six months. Fewer Medi-Cal recipients means lower revenues for the clinics and other health care providers that serve the Medi-Cal population. Supporters of Measure ER warn that without the tax increase, the healthcare system will “collapse.”

Although supporters talk circles around the topic, there’s no escaping the fact that Measure ER is a sales tax increase to backfill the cost of providing healthcare services to undocumented immigrants.

Kathryn Barger, who was the sole vote on the Board of Supervisors against putting this measure on the ballot, said the funding shortfall needs a state solution and the costs should not be borne by L.A. County alone.

Vote no on Measure ER.

<https://www.dailynews.com/2026/05/03/endorsement-no-on-los-angeles-countys-measure-er-sales-tax-increase/>