

No On #2 Coalition Rejects Misinformation on Ballot Proposal

Yesterday, patrons of the New Orleans Public Library received an email containing inaccurate and misleading information about the upcoming December ballot measures.

This is only the latest turn in the ongoing use of official channels to promote a political agenda. In addition to likely violating ethics laws by promoting a political campaign, it is plainly unethical for a public library to distribute inaccurate information to voters.

The No On #2 Coalition feels it is essential that voters have access to accurate information, so we can make a choice that reflects our community's priorities on December 5. We are a diverse group of librarians, parents, and concerned citizens seeking to bring clarity to the realities of proposition #2.

- Yesterday's email falsely claimed Proposition #2 is a renewal of existing library funding. In reality, Prop #2 would immediately cut 40% of the library's operating budget — over \$7.5 million in 2021 alone.

- This would bring NOPL's funding to its lowest levels since branches destroyed in Katrina were rebuilt. The NOPL cannot sustain 15 library branches throughout the city with the proposed budget. There is no doubt that these budget cuts would lead to reductions to services, laid-off staff, and closed branches.

- Moreover, Proposition #2 would lock in funding at this insufficient level for 20 years. Less than \$1 of every \$5 cut from the library would go toward early childhood education. The vast majority of these taxpayer dollars wind up in an "economic development" slush fund.

- The library's current millage does not expire until the end of 2021, meaning the NOPL would maintain its current funding for over a year if Prop #2 fails. That leaves us with plenty of time to pass an alternative measure that would maintain current NOPL funding levels and provide meaningful funding for early childhood education, without funnelling taxpayer money to private interests.

The Lens has detailed the stark divisions on the NOPL board regarding Proposition #2, and it's worth noting that library staff have been banned from speaking out on the issue. Independent analysis from the Bureau of Governmental Research has shown what these cuts would mean for the library, and detailed how meager the city's new plans for the money are.

We are proud to count the following organizations in our growing coalition: Friends of the New Orleans Public Library, Erase the Board Coalition, UniteHere Local 23, NOCWOC (New Orleans City Workers Organizing Committee), AFSCME Council 17, United Teachers of New Orleans (UTNO-AFT), Greater New Orleans AFL-CIO, Louisiana AFL-CIO, IATSE 478, Black to the Table, OPPRC, DSA NOLA, Solidarity Tulane, Greater New Orleans Archivists.

Fund our libraries. Fund education. Vote no on Proposition #2.



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