

IMPARTIAL ANALYSIS OF MEASURE R

San Joaquin County Board of Supervisor Resolution No. **XX**

Election on a Proposed County Ordinance Imposing Illegal Substance Dependence Screening and Treatment for Certain Recipients of County General Assistance Benefits

Prepared by the San Joaquin County Counsel

State law requires every county to provide public assistance programs for poor, single adults age 65 and under. San Joaquin County (“County”) does so through a program administered by the Human Services Agency under the County’s General Assistance Regulation Manual. The County’s General Assistance program serves single adults age 65 and under with no dependent children. General Assistance recipients collect benefit packages that pay for or provide needed services. In 2024, General Assistance recipients received a maximum of \$75 per month paid directly as a cash benefit (issued on an EBT card). The maximum benefit amount is \$367 when a recipient is in a Single Room Occupancy living situation, with \$340 paid directly to the landlord. Presently, General Assistance recipients are entitled to full benefits regardless of whether they are dependent on illegal drugs.

On August 1, 2024, the Board adopted a Resolution placing Measure R on the ballot. If passed, Measure R would require anyone who receives General Assistance benefits to be screened for substance use disorder if the County reasonably suspects the person to be dependent on illegal drugs. When screening indicates a recipient may be dependent on illegal drugs, the County will provide a professional evaluation and may refer the recipient to an appropriate treatment program. If the program is available at no cost, the recipient will be required to participate in the program to continue receiving General Assistance benefits. Measure R does not require recipients to maintain sobriety to be eligible for General Assistance benefits.

Under Measure R, General Assistance recipients who stop receiving benefits because they refuse to participate in the required screening, evaluation or treatment, will continue to receive assistance for 30 days from the effective date of the discontinuance and may continue to receive housing assistance if necessary to prevent eviction.

Measure R would create a County fund to support the costs of the screening, evaluation, and treatment. Any cost savings from discontinuing General Assistance benefits would go into that fund.

A “Yes” vote on Measure R would require single adults age 65 and under with no dependent children who receive County General Assistance benefits and are reasonably suspected to be dependent on illegal drugs to participate in screening, evaluation, and treatment to be eligible for those benefits.

A “No” vote on Measure R is a vote against the issuance of the proposed screening, evaluation and treatment eligibility requirements for those certain County General Assistance recipients suspected to be dependent on illegal drugs.

Measure R requires 50%+1 affirmative votes to pass.