

Statement by Anne-Marie Lamarche, Communications Chair, Yes on B&E campaign

League of Women Voters Parcel Tax Panel

May 29, 2009

Let's be a community we can be proud of!

- If you step back from the numbers and the emotion, our discussion tonight comes down to a vote to support the children in our community – or not.
- There are two tax measures: Measure B, the straight renewal of a measure that voters overwhelmingly supported four years ago; and Measure E, a modest increase to help offset the damage caused by the State's fiscal crisis.
 - By modest, I mean \$20/month on most parcels – so modest, that even if approved, there will be almost a million dollars cut from school programs.
- And while we recognize that this a difficult economic time, these measures are not extravagant.
- How each of us votes is a decision about what sort of a community we want to live in. *Is this a community that supports its children?*
- Education is a shared value in Piedmont. Most of us moved to Piedmont *for* the schools – I know we did, 19 years ago. I think most Piedmonters want a school

system that prepares our children for entry into college -- and to become contributing members of society.

- The good news is that our District is serving our kids well. We have the #2 ranked unified district in the State; our graduates gain admission to top colleges, and many come back to live in town and become active in our community.
- And for those of you who may be concerned that we are offering a “gold plated education” in Piedmont, this is not gold-plating. The reality is that the educational bar has been raised. It has become much tougher to get into college now than when we were students. Programs like Advanced Placement and honors classes aren’t luxuries today. They are essential to get into the U.C. schools. So are extra-curriculars, athletics and community service.
- Did you know that the average GPA for a student admitted to Cal is over 4.3? You can’t mathematically get over a 4.0 GPA without AP and Honors classes!
- And for elementary and middle school kids to be successful and to “learn to learn” – we need librarians and aides. They are not luxuries.
- So far the District has been able to deliver a Volvo education with a Volkswagen budget.
- They have bridged the gap -- between what it costs to deliver an academically

rigorous program and what we get from the State – with help from our local parcel tax, donations from parents and the community, and by cutting administrative services to the bone. They have been able to keep the gap from hurting the kids. But any more cuts will have to affect our children. There's no fat left to trim.

- Or to return to my car analogy, the next cuts will start removing the wheels.
- So, let's be clear: *this election is about what's right for our children.*
- Anthropologists evaluate societies by how they treat their elders and their children – traditionally those who are least able to advocate for themselves. This is an opportunity to show how we value our children.
- Let's be a community we can be proud of!