



**NOVEMBER 6, 2018 GENERAL ELECTION
VOTERS DECIDE YES OR NO**

**Public Question #1
SECURING OUR CHILDREN'S FUTURE BOND ACT**

Question: Do you approve the Securing Our Children's Future Bond Act? This bond act authorizes the State to issue bonds in the aggregate principal amount of \$500 million. The money from the sale of the bonds would be used to provide grants to schools, school districts, county vocational school districts and county colleges. Money from the grants would be used to build, equip, and expand facilities to increase career and technical education program capacity. Money would also be used for school security upgrades and school district water infrastructure improvement projects.

INTERPRETIVE STATEMENT (as appearing on the ballot):

This act would allow the State to borrow a total principal amount of \$500 million. This money would be used to provide grants to county vocational school districts and county colleges to construct and equip buildings to increase capacity in career and technical education programs. The money would also be used to provide grants for school security projects at kindergarten through grade 12 schools. The money would also be used to provide grants for school district water infrastructure improvement projects. Three hundred fifty million dollars would support county vocational school district projects and school security projects. Fifty million dollars would support county college projects. One hundred million dollars would support school district water infrastructure improvement projects.

Background as prepared by the League of Women Voters of New Jersey:

Voters vote "yes" or "no" on ballot questions. If approved this question authorizes the State of New Jersey to borrow 500 million dollars in general obligation bonds, which carry the full faith and credit of the State for payment of principal and interest. In this bill

- \$350 million is allocated for career and technical education (CTE) grants at county vocational school and for school security projects at K-12 schools;
- \$50 million is allocated for CTE grants at county colleges; and
- \$100 million is allocated for school districts (local, regional, county special services, county vocational and those under state intervention) for the repair or replacement of water supply infrastructure to improve water quality.

The career and technical education grants are for construction and upgrading of buildings and equipment to increase capacity in CTE programs. Approved projects at county vocational schools and county colleges require the county to support 25% of the cost.

Projects that meet the following criteria will receive priority for CTE grant funding

- Offer a stackable credentials program - part of a sequence of credentials that can be accumulated over time to build up an individual's qualifications;

- Develop a partnership between the county vocational school and county college in provision of programs; and
- Develop a partnership with an employer to provide technical education and training.

Reasons to vote yes: This bond issue:

- Is intended to increase capacity of county vocational school districts and county colleges to serve more students, equipping them with the skills necessary to take advantage of high-demand, high-growth career opportunities, such as information technology, health care, logistics and distribution, advanced manufacturing, and aviation technology;
- Aims to foster an educational environment that combines core academics with real-world experience through collaboration between vocational-technical schools and county colleges;
- May help the state retain high-demand industries and attract new ones by assuring the availability of qualified employees;
- Provides grants to fund school infrastructure improvements in school security to help ensure that school grounds and school buildings are safe places in which to conduct educational activities; and
- Will improve school district water infrastructure to ensure the protection of water quality and clean drinking water in New Jersey's district schools.

Reasons to vote no: This bond issue:

- May foster a competitive environment between the county vocational-technical schools and the district high schools within each county with career and technical programs;
- May encourage more students to transfer from district high schools to vocational-technical schools, jeopardizing funding for district high schools, which depend upon per-pupil counts to maintain their budgets and qualify for state aid;
- May make it more difficult for special needs and socially disadvantaged students to access vocational-technical career pathways because, unlike district schools, the county vocational-technical schools have an admissions process they use for screening applicants;
- Will increase NJ's debt. According to the latest State debt report, our current bonded debt is \$41.8 billion; and
- Provides little clarification about the criteria for grant approval, making it difficult for voters to know how much money will be spent for career and technical education (CTE) grants versus district school security upgrades.