



**POSITION STATEMENT:** City of Scottsdale – 2018 Ballot | Proposition 420

**Date:** August 29, 2018

Scottsdale Area Association of REALTORS'® (SAAR) policy platform guides the position it takes as a professional trade organization on any issue, from a balanced perspective of the real estate industry, its members, and property owners. The platform tests all issues regarding their impact on:

- (1) Private Property Rights
- (2) Economic Vitality
- (3) Housing Opportunity and Choice
- (4) Preserving the Environment
- (5) Overall Quality of Life

After careful review of the **Scottsdale 2018 Ballot Measure – Proposition 420** (proposed City Charter Amendment), by the SAAR Government Affairs Committee and Board of Directors, it has been determined Proposition 420 does not pass the tests of SAAR's policy platform. Therefore, Proposition 420 is not supported and a vote of "NO" is recommended.

Key review and policy platform positions which lead to this determination:

**Environment Position** - *"SAAR, in an effort to maintain our community's quality of life and to protect the environment, supports policies and programs that encourage conservation, education and balanced incorporation of the environment, and the wise use of natural resources."* (\*SAAR Policy Platform)

**Quality of Life Position** – *"SAAR will work to promote livable communities by ensuring the jurisdiction's governmental bodies accommodate quality growth through policies embracing property rights, economic vitality....and the balanced conservation of the environment which will sustain and enhance the community's quality of life."* (\*SAAR Policy Platform)

**Housing Value Impact** - Removal of the ability to be responsive and timely in the event of unforeseen catastrophes such as wildfires, flooding, or droughts due to a required delay to hold a public vote, or even a potential lack of support by future voters to further fund the Preserve, could have many unintended consequences to property owners. Subsequent issues to affect surrounding properties could potentially range from infrastructure destruction, structural property damage, loss of scenic views, evacuations, endangerment of wildlife, public safety, to declining home values for impacted areas.

**Property Tax Impact** - Regardless whether Prop 420 is passed or not; any new tax, bond or property tax increase requires a public vote. The governing checks and

balance system for protecting citizens from over taxation is already in place; making it unnecessary to amend the City Charter.

Additional legislative points of weight and consequence taken into consideration:

**1. The City Charter is our constitution.**

- Changes to the charter, no matter how small, impact the governance of the city forever and should be taken seriously. It should be a deliberate decision – thoughtfully made with input from a wide cross section of citizens.
- A change must anticipate the future needs of the city and citizens.
- Charter language must remain flexible to provide for democratic change and simple to provide an evergreen document.
- Proposed changes should avoid creating issues that invite “interpretation.” Once a change is made, it’s difficult and complicated to reverse it.
- **Politics** should not influence changes to the charter.

**2. Prop 420 creates a lack of accountability.**

- The initiative’s language empowers the McDowell Sonoran Preserve Commission (MSPC), a group of individuals who are not duly elected to office by the citizens of Scottsdale, to interpret language and to make and mediate decisions about the future of the Preserve, circumventing the authority of the City Council.
- City Council’s authority would simply become a figurative pass-through for forwarding every recommendation from the MSPC directly to a public vote.

**3. Prop 420 creates a long list of “unintended consequences.”**

- None of the preserve tax could be used to fund the restoration of the Preserve following a flood, a wildfire or any other unforeseen catastrophe without first being approved by a public vote.
- A required public vote removes the ability to make timely and responsive decisions. It prevents the city from installing additional watering holes in the event of prolonged and significant drought. It prohibits the city from creating fire breaks or wash maintenance which could have a devastating impact on surrounding property and citizens.
- To do anything in the Preserve beyond repairing and maintaining existing trailheads or developing new ones already identified requires approval by voters in an expensive election.
- The cost to taxpayers for one publicly held special election is \$500,000.

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**Proposition 420 is not a “small change to our city charter.” It falls well short of creating wise public policy and measuring up to the precepts of good governance.**

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SAAR understands that when its organization takes a position on any issue, it must come from an overall **REALTOR® professional trade perspective** based upon facts and careful analysis with all committee and board members’ personal biases, emotions, and opinions set aside. The organization’s duty is to report the results of their research, professional assessment and resulting position on issues to their members and consumers as applicable on real estate issues, to assist them in obtaining a better understanding of the issue at hand and provide a trusted source of information for making informed decisions. As always, we encourage our members and the public to do their own ‘due diligence’ and take action by making an educated VOTE.

**Resources:** [SAAR Policy Platform](https://scottsdalerealtors.org/advocacy_) ([https://scottsdalerealtors.org/advocacy\\_](https://scottsdalerealtors.org/advocacy_))