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## **Anti-crime Measure Y's 'Great Divide'**

By Peggy Stinnett, Oakland Tribune

**Wednesday, October 20, 2004** - ON the eve of the Nov. 2 election, the presidential race has captured most of Oakland's political attention.

But a close runner-up is Oakland's local ballot Measure Y, daughter of the spring election's Measure R, which would have authorized 30 cops and expanded several violence- prevention programs.

The campaign was intense, led by Councilmember Nancy Nadel (Downtown-West Oakland) and opposed by Councilmember Danny Wan (Grand Lake-Chinatown). Voters were almost equally divided.

It failed in the end by only a couple hundred votes. But it didn't die. In fact, the debate over Measure Y came back with reborn vigor almost within days of the election and has gained in passion since then under the new title of Measure Y. Perhaps those who named it hoped that it would signal Y is for Yes?

But if we thought the Measure R campaign was intense, we had not seen anything yet. Measure Y beats all. This time both Nadel and Wan like it.

Campaigners for and against Measure Y are calling the split in Oakland "The Great Divide." Not only that, there's a divide within the divide -- a third side against the measure who think Oakland police are overly aggressive, citing the "Riders" case and the demonstration at the Port of Oakland when police peppered antiwar protesters with rubber pellets. They are independent from the major "No on Measure R" group who are cost-conscious taxpayers and rental property owners who are parcel-tax weary and skeptical of City Hall politics. They are joined by close to a dozen community organizations.

Last weekend, the campaign reached a new level with a jazzy mailer from the major opponents of the measure.

"Is this what City Hall thinks we are?" it asks with a huge, multicolored sucker looming over the copy.

Inside, the mailer says: "Don't be a Sucker. There's no guarantee of even one more police officer." And more: "Oakland's city hall leaders find it easy to raise millions for their pet projects. They tell us to reach into our pockets for more police officers. And when we do, they always spend the money on something else, Oakland City Hall is trying it again." The mailer tells you, "Don't be a sucker. No on Measure Y."

But the campaign for Measure Y, run by political consultant Larry Tramutola, has a dueling mailer, though not pejorative in the least.

To the contrary, it speaks of the violence in Oakland through compelling photos of victims and words of assurance that passage of Measure Y will provide funds to restore cuts to the Oakland Fire Department, hire 63 additional police officers and

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mandate they be assigned as community police and to domestic violence, child abuse, and child prostitution. It would provide \$500,000 a year for training and equipment.

Violence prevention programs with focus on children and youth would pay for outreach counselors to work with police and the justice system, after- and in-school programs in recreation, tutoring and mentoring for at risk youth.

The measure would generate \$19.7 million per year from a new parcel tax by taxing single- family homes at \$88 a year, rental units at \$60 a year and nonresidential parcels at \$45. It exempts vacant property and parcels occupied by very low-income residents.

A second source would be an 8.5 percent surcharge of parking fees at commercial lots estimated to generate \$7.7 million per year.

The revenue would be shared by: police, 48 percent; violence prevention programs, 32 percent, and Fire Department, 20 percent.

Can it pass the only test that counts on Nov. 2, when the voters have the final say?

If the measure passes by a large margin, I would guess the opposition would fade away. It has to pass the two-thirds line to make it.

And if the measure fails badly? Even so, I think it will come back again because there are ground-zero residents who don't care how the city pays for police, just so they get them. They want and need cops. By the way, the original cops ballot (which also failed to pass) proposed by Mayor Jerry Brown called for 100 officers.

But if it is another very close vote, as it was in March? There could be another generation of measures and another and another -- until crime in Oakland declines to a level the community can tolerate.

And what level would that be? When people can walk the neighborhoods they live in without fear of violence, send their children to school and the store without worrying for their safety, and perhaps, some day, to be able to take the burglar bars off the windows.