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## MINIMUM WAGE MEASURE

# Activists Savor Victory, Expect Fight to Go On

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By GINA PICCALO  
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Labor activists Wednesday cheered the overwhelming defeat in Santa Monica of a ballot measure designed to bar the City Council from increasing the local minimum wage.

But both sides say the ultimate battle is far from over, although Proposition KK failed.

Now, the fate of a proposed city-mandated living wage shifts to the newly re-elected liberal majority on the City Council. And both sides are gearing up for the next round of a debate that ana-

lysts say has national implications. If Santa Monica requires the wage hikes for a beach-side district, the city could be a model for dozens of other municipalities grappling with similar issues.

"It's just begun," said Vivian Rothstein, one of the community activists who led the charge against Proposition KK. "But we've definitely won the first round."

More than 78% of the city's 59,000 voters cast ballots against Proposition KK, which would have set a minimum wage of \$8.32 per hour for about 62 employees of city contractors. More significantly, the hotel-backed measure also

would have prohibited the City Council from passing a broader wage hike to \$10.69 an hour for 2,500 hotel maids, food servers and other service workers in the city's coastal zone.

In a statement released Wednesday Tim Dubois, president of the pro-KK Edward Thomas Cos., operator of the Casa del Mar and the Shutters on the Beach hotels, said: "We look forward to collaborating with all interested parties toward framing a fair and equitable living wage policy for Santa Monica." He could not be reached for an interview.

A spokeswoman for the Loews Hotels  
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# WAGE: Labor Activists Win Round vs. Hotels

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chain, which also financially backed KK, said of the measure's defeat: "The process is what was important." She declined to elaborate on the hotels' next step.

Supporters of KK, mainly luxury beach-side hotels, spent more than \$900,000 on their campaign for its passage.

The measure's defeat sent a message nationwide that "money isn't everything," Rothstein said. KK's supporters, he said, "spent a million dollars for 7,000 votes."

The hotels sensed defeat two weeks ago and stopped spending additional money on the ballot campaign. They began to quietly funnel more than \$350,000 into the campaigns of two pro-business City Council candidates in hopes of swaying the expected council debate early next year on the coastal area pay hike.

One of those candidates lost and the other, Herb Katz, won the seat vacated by pro-union Councilman Paul Rosenstein. But it's unlikely that Katz will sway any of the four decidedly pro-labor council members on the seven-member panel.

Hotels and other businesses along

Santa Monica's two-mile coastline worry that an imposed minimum wage would force hundreds of layoffs and drive property values down. They have threatened a lawsuit if the coastal proposal passes.

The dispute in Santa Monica emerged last year when a group of

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**MADELINE JANIS-APARICIO**

*Santa Monicans Allied  
for Responsible Tourism*

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clergy, community activists and union leaders proposed raising wages for coastal zone workers.

In response, a group of hotels formed "Santa Monicans for a Living Wage" and swiftly qualified Proposition KK for the ballot.

Community activists said the full name of the pro-KK campaign attempted to fool liberal voters into supporting the measure.

"People were so outraged about it," said Madeline Janis-Aparicio of Santa Monicans Allied for Responsible Tourism. "People didn't like

feeling deceived."

Anti-KK volunteers walked neighborhoods, phoned voters and even offered to drive some to the polls at the last minute. Ultimately, they personally contacted 15,400 confirmed anti-KK voters.

"It's a sweet victory," Rothstein said. "All we really had was people power."

Santa Monica's other hotly debated ballot initiative, Proposition LL, championed by the Ralph Nader-backed Oaks Project, won 58% of the vote in Tuesday's election.

The measure amends the City Charter to bar elected officials from accepting gifts, money or jobs from developers, contractors or others who have benefited from their votes.

A similar measure won 82.5% of the vote in San Francisco, but lost in Vista in San Diego County to a counter-initiative crafted by the city that limits only gifts to elected officials.

"This is a resounding, double victory," Oaks Project coordinator Paul Herzog said. "Both for preventing special interest money from influencing political decisions and for the power of a volunteer-based effort to run a campaign."