

# Special interests to take their cause to voters in '14

By Anthony York, Los Angeles Times

SACRAMENTO – While much of the country is gearing up for the holidays, political forces in Sacramento are girding for battle.

Already, special interests are lined up with plans that could shape next year's general election ballot. They are considering propositions to increase medical malpractice awards, hike tobacco taxes and give local governments the right to scale back public employee pensions, among other ideas.

Each of the proposals could spawn campaigns costing tens of millions of dollars. Decisions about whether to proceed will be made in the next couple of weeks as de facto deadlines loom.

Some propositions have already qualified for the November ballot. One would allow the state insurance commissioner to veto proposed increases in healthcare premiums, as he now can with auto policies. Another is a referendum on a new Central Valley casino project approved by Gov. Jerry Brown this year.

Votes are also scheduled on a multibillion-dollar water bond and a limit on state spending. But those measures were placed on the ballot by the Legislature and could change, because lawmakers are not bound by the same rules or deadlines as initiative sponsors.

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