

City Council May 10, 2005 Item 22 – Campaign Finance Reform

Problem

1. Municipal law is unclear when a ballot measure committee must form and start reporting contributions and expenditures.

2. State law requires ballot measure committees to file infrequent reports, which do not always give voters up-to-date information about who is funding a measure – especially large contributors.

3. State law is unclear whether past expenditures / contributions must be reported once a PAC is formed.

4. There is almost no regulation of paid signature gatherers.

Solution

Require the ballot measure committee to register as a PAC within 72 hours of (1) submitting to the City Clerk and City Attorney a request for initiative title and impartial analysis; and (2) collecting \$250.

Require committees to (1) report contributions of \$1,000 or more (monetary or in-kind) within 24 hours of receipt; (2) file quarterly reports (all expenditures and contributions); and (3) file, in the last 90 days prior to the election, biweekly reports that are due within seven days of the close of the reporting period.

Require at the time the committee registers as a PAC, it must report all past expenditures / contributions *in pursuit of* an initiative, including but not limited to: polling, public relations expenses, signs, bumper stickers, brochures, etc.

Require paid signature gatherers to clearly declare on the petition if they are paid or volunteers (as Sen. Bowen is proposing in Senate Bill 469).



May 10, 2005

City Council and Mayor's office
333 West Ocean Blvd. 14th Floor
Long Beach, CA 90802

Honorable Mayor and City Council Members,

On behalf of California Common Cause, I am writing to express our support for increased transparency in contributions in the City of Long Beach.

Common Cause is a non-profit, non-partisan citizens' lobby that works to strengthen public participation and to ensure that the political process serves the public interest, rather than the special interests. Our 30,000 California members actively seek to make public officials and public institutions accountable and responsive to citizens.

Regular and timely reporting requirements lead to greater transparency and accountability. When voters are informed of the sources of ballot measure funding and expenditures, they are better able to judge the value of a measure, the interests served, and how they will choose to vote.

Should you need to contact California Common Cause, I can be reached at (213) 252-4552 or you may contact JoAnn Fuller at (916) 443-1792.

Sincerely

Kathay Feng
Executive Director
California Common Cause

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