



March 13, 2014

The Honorable Fran Pavley
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 4035
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Senate Bill 844 (Pavley) - SUPPORT

Dear Senator Pavley:

The California Voter Foundation (CVF) supports Senate Bill 844, an important measure that, if enacted will enable voters to easily identify the top ten largest financial contributors for and against California propositions. The bill requires the Secretary of State to establish and maintain an up-to-date website that provides the public with two lists—one list for the top 10 supporters and a second list for the top 10 contributors against each state proposition. The legislation will also require voter information pamphlets to direct voters to the Secretary of State's website for a link to the current top ten donor lists.

CVF is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization working through research, oversight, outreach and demonstration projects to improve the election process so that it better serves the needs and interests of voters. For the past twenty years, CVF has worked to expand voter access to information about campaign donors so that they are able to make informed choices. This information is particularly crucial in initiative campaigns, which are often very confusing and complicated. Knowing who the top donors are behind a proposition is a great shortcut that helps voters make more informed choices.

According to MapLight, a nonprofit, nonpartisan elections research organization, it currently takes hundreds of clicks on the state's disclosure web site to obtain complete lists of contributors for and against each ballot initiative. Average voters do not have the time, nor the expertise to parse through multiple campaign committees to figure the real total that individuals or groups have contributed for or against a single issue.

We support SB 844 because it is a narrowly crafted bill that addresses many of the failings and omissions of previous legislative attempts and provides a sensible and efficient way for voters to access this information, which is crucial to ensuring that voters make informed decisions at the ballot box. If enacted, SB 844 will equip voters with reliable information prior to making their voting decisions and shed some much needed light on the initiative process. Thank you for authoring this important legislation.

Sincerely,

Kim Alexander
President