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February 17, 2012

Honorable Kristin Olsen
State Capitol
Room 2111
Sacramento, CA 94249

RE: AB 1730 (Olsen) – Legislative Transparency Act – SUPPORT

Dear Assemblywoman Olsen,

On behalf of California Common Cause and our 400,000 national members, please accept this letter of support for Assembly Bill 1730, the Legislative Transparency Act, which would bring accountability to the operations of the State Capitol.

AB 1730 would require respective Assembly and Senate Committees on Rules to provide members with monthly budget reports who would then need to disclose reports on their Internet website. This bill will prohibit a vote on a bill that has not been made public for 72- hours on an Internet website. AB 1730 will also require that members report within 24 hours any “legislative deadline contributions” following legislative deadlines for regular session.

California Common Cause strongly supports this measure because it will bring much needed transparency to the Legislature. By requiring monthly budget reports to be made available on member websites, voters will have access to information on expenses and how public funds are being spent. The 72-hour “waiting period” for legislation will reduce the number of “gut and amend” bills and allow voters, legislators, and the media to finally have a chance to review legislation before Floor vote are cast. The public should have a chance to review and respond to legislation they believe will affect their everyday lives. We have been long time opponents of the “gut and amend” practice and we believe this bill will go a long way to restoring order and clarity in the legislative process.

For these reasons, Common Cause looks forward to partnering with your office and the sponsors of AB 1730 to bring transparency to California’s Legislature.

Please contact me at pung@commoncause.org or (916) 520-4070 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Phillip Ung
Policy Advocate