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February 17, 2012

Honorable Martin Garrick
State Capitol
Room 2158
Sacramento, CA 94249

RE: AB 1716 (Garrick) – Elections: Voter Identification – OPPOSE

Dear Assemblymember Garrick,

On behalf of California Common Cause and our 400,000 national members, please accept this letter of opposition for Assembly Bill 1716, which would require increased voter information on vote-by-mail ballot envelopes and would require proof of identification to cast a ballot in polling places.

Across the nation, Common Cause has consistently opposed voter ID laws because they are onerous and lead to voter suppression. AB 1716 aims to construct yet another barrier to block eligible Californians from exercising their Constitutional right to vote. The NYU Brennan Center for Justice found that:

“[eleven] percent of eligible voters do not have government-issued photo ID. That percentage is even higher for seniors, people of color, people with disabilities, low-income voters, and students. Many citizens find it hard to get government photo IDs, because the underlying documentation like birth certificates (the ID one needs to get ID) is often difficult or expensive to come by. At the same time, voter ID policies are far more costly to implement than many assume.”

Common Cause believes our election system needs reform, but it must be responsible and thoughtful reform that does not result in the disenfranchisement of scores of Californians. For these reasons, Common Cause opposes AB 1716.

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

Sincerely,

Phillip Ung
Policy Advocate