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March 7, 2011

Senator Leland Yee
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 4074
Sacramento, CA 95814

CC: Senator Correa, Senator LaMalfa, Senator de León, Senator Gaines, and Senator Lieu

Dear Senator Yee:

California Common Cause is pleased to sponsor SB 397, your bill establishing online voter registration for California.

California Common Cause is committed to broadening California's electorate and improving access to voting for all citizens. Our extensive work on voter registration campaigns and Election Day research has demonstrated that all too often our voter registration process acts as a barrier to voter participation. The advantages of Internet communication, including efficiency and convenience can help us lower those barriers. Billions of dollars in secure transactions happen via the Internet every day. It is time to bring California into the 21st century.

Paperless voter registration is a cost saving measure for counties and states. In Maricopa County, Arizona, the cost of voter registrations and changes of address decreased from 83¢ to 3¢ per transaction. A decrease of over 90% is hard to ignore during this financial crisis.

In addition, online registration is less prone to errors and more secure than paper registration. When a would-be registrant enters their own information online, all the data entry and processing points in place for paper registrations are shaved off. That change means fewer places errors and fraud might occur.

More, online voter registration could significantly increase voter turnout. After Arizona instituted online registration, their 28% turnout rate among people ages 18-24 inflated to 53%. SB 397 is a significant step for voting rights in California.

Please feel free to contact me with any further questions at kfleming@commoncause.org.

Sincerely,

Katie Fleming
Policy Advocate