

## MISSION POSSIBLE!

Your assignment, if you choose to accept:

Gather 1 million signatures from Californian voters to qualify our redistricting reform initiative for the November 2008 Election. You have until April 15, 2008 to accomplish your mission.

Do you accept?

To qualify this initiative, we are going to need your help!

Enclosed is an actual petition for the California Voters FIRST Initiative. Will you help us achieve our Mission Possible? You can do your part:

1) **Sign the petition yourself.**

2) **Gather a few more signatures.** If every Common Causer gathered just 3 more signatures - from your family, neighbors or friends - we would have well over 100,000 signatures! Then, return the petition in the self addressed envelope.

3) **Let us know if you can gather more!** We would be happy to send you more petitions. Maybe you can gather signatures of voters in your community group, work, bridge club, or residents association. We'd be happy to send you other materials as well.

4) **Get active with the campaign.** Feeling really ambitious? You can help by approaching local groups for endorsements, getting trained to talk about the initiative, or hosting a Petition Party. Let us know - we are happy to help!

5) **Donate money!** Of course, in a big state like California, we need to raise a lot of money to talk to voters. We may be up against big-money opposition. Contribute if you can. Every dollar counts.

**With the strength of Common Cause members' participation, we can make California Voters FIRST a reality!**



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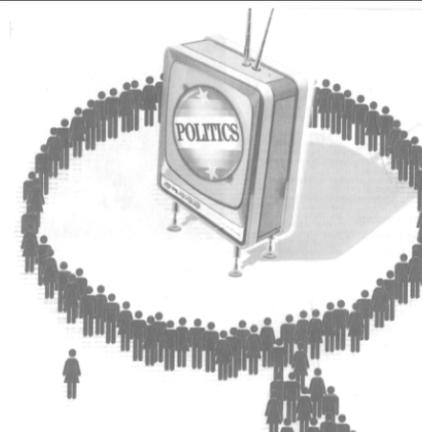
Please sign CCC's Redistricting Reform Petition!

Help us gather enough signatures to qualify  
the California Voters FIRST Initiative!



Redistricting Petition  
inside! We need your  
signature today!

JANUARY 2008



Sacramento Bee's Sam McManis covered the efforts of Common Cause's Sacramento Media Group. Illustration by Val Mina of the SacBee.

## Media Coverage: We can take back the power!

The press is supposed to be our government watchdog, but who watches the press?

That is the challenge members of the Sacramento Media Group (SMG) have set for ourselves. We are meeting with the station managers and news directors of our local television stations, telling them our community needs more substantive election news. In the month before the February presidential primary, we are asking stations to present five minutes a night of locally produced, fair and substantial coverage of election issues important to people.

SMG will watch the news in January and report how much election coverage there is compared to election ads. We will note if the coverage is about who is ahead in the polls or wore the wrong color jacket, all less useful to voters than information about the candidate's stands on important issues.

Our efforts are especially important right now. While broadcasters now are not required to help local communities understand important local issues, this is a prime time to push for such a requirement. Television station owners use our public airwaves for free to make huge profits. In the

coming year, broadcasters will be given the opportunity to split one channel into several channels as television moves to digital. This is the time to place some requirements on station owners!

In related news, the federal agency overseeing broadcasters, the FCC, recently eliminated broadcast cross-ownership limits. This would mean media corporations could own the local newspaper as well as a television station, radio stations, the cable system and billboards in a community.

**We now have a bill in the Senate (S.2332) and in the House (H.R.4835) that could serve to nullify the FCC vote.** Lawmakers have spoken out forcefully about their intention to overturn the FCC's rule change. Now we need to apply public pressure to be sure that lawmakers follow through.

**SMG meets the first Monday of every month at Access Sacramento, 4623 T Street Sacramento. For more information, contact us at: [smg@commoncause.org](mailto:smg@commoncause.org) or call JoAnn Fuller at (916) 443-1792, x 11.**

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Contact us: [ca-info@commoncause.org](mailto:ca-info@commoncause.org)

## California Voters FIRST Initiative: Real Redistricting Reform

After 3 years of trying to negotiate a solution out of the Legislature, we are biting the bullet and filing our own initiative! It is called California Voters FIRST, because it will put the interests of voters ahead of incumbent interests when drawing district lines. Here's how:

- **14-Person Citizens Redistricting Commission.** The California Voters FIRST Act would create a politically balanced Commission - 5 Democrats, 5 Republicans, 4 others. All Californian voters who meet basic requirements and have no conflicts of interest may apply. The State Auditor narrows applicants down to 60 people based on their qualifications and diversity. The legislative leaders may strike a limited num-



ber of names from that list. The Commissioners are picked through a hybrid process - 8 randomly and 6 chosen to ensure the Commission has a good balance of skills and diversity.

- **Protecting communities, cities, and counties.** The California Voters FIRST Act would create a list of prioritized mapping criteria for the Commission to follow. The mapping criteria include: equal population between districts, and

respect for the Voting Rights Act, counties, cities and communities of interest. After these criteria are met, the Commission may draw districts that are compact and nested.

- **Open and public process.** The Commission would hold hearings to receive public input. This would end the closed-door political deals. All maps and testimony would be posted on the Internet for the public to see.

We have a great coalition already: AARP, LA Chamber of Commerce, League of Women Voters of Cal., Cal. Church IMPACT, Gov. Schwarzenegger, and others.

But to qualify this initiative, we are going to need your help! To find out how, check out the back page of the newsletter.

## Strengthening California's Campaign Finance Laws



**Ross Johnson, head of California's government watchdog agency, the Fair Political Practices Commission.**

Johnson was a State Senator and Assemblymember for 26 years. He also served as both the Senate Republican Leader and the Assembly Republican Leader. He is allowed to serve one four-year term as the Chairman.

The new Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC) Chairman, former Republican Legislator Ross Johnson, is busy making headlines with his campaign finance reform efforts. Governor Schwarzenegger appointed Johnson Chairman of the Commission in February 2007.

Johnson started off with a bang when he applied enough pressure this spring to have a questionable bill, SB 381, pulled from the Governor's desk. SB 381, passed by the Senate and Assembly, would have weakened the reporting requirements for behested contributions (contributions to nonprofits and charities solicited by members of the Assembly, Senate and statewide elected officers). The FPPC also now posts reportable behested payments on the FPPC website.

Since Johnson was appointed Chairman, the FPPC now requires that expenditures from elected officials' legal defense accounts be spent directly on legal expenses and has proposed stricter reporting requirements for campaign fund spending.

We are working with the FPPC to continue to close loopholes in the Po-

litical Reform Act, attending FPPC meetings, meeting with their staff and working with a coalition of groups to propose additional reforms. Some of the reforms we are working on include:

- Create stronger disclosure and reporting regulations for behested contributions
- Create contribution limits for inaugural committees
- Create contribution limits for candidate-controlled ballot measure com-

mittees

- Increase campaign statement filings
- Change reporting requirements to list the largest donors first
- Create stronger contribution limits to candidates
- Better regulation of campaign fund expenditures

To find out more about our state legislative advocacy efforts, contact Christina Lokke at (916) 443-1792, or [clokke@commoncause.org](mailto:clokke@commoncause.org)

January 2008

Happy New Year!

*Legislators, get out of the way! Real redistricting reform is coming to California in 2008. We've assembled a strong coalition of folks from the left, right, and center to achieve what the Legislature could or (perhaps more accurately) would not: taking redistricting out of the hands of self-interested legislators and putting it in the hands of a truly independent commission.*

*Our newly minted redistricting initiative—the California Voter's FIRST Act—will replace a broken system where legislators draw their own districts in order to ensure a safe re-election, even if it means splitting up the communities they are suppose to represent. You can visit our website [www.commoncause.org/ca](http://www.commoncause.org/ca) for more information, or call us at (916) 443-1792.*

*Redistricting reform will be our first priority in 2008. But we will continue to work to pass public financing and ethics reforms in our cities, ensure that our voting equipment is secure and accessible, and lobby the media to present quality election news.*

*We will remain the people's most effective voice for political reform and the watchdogs that you can depend upon to hold government accountable!*

Sincerely,

**Grant Davis-Denny**

Chair, CCC Board of Directors

## Democracy Matters

Now is the time to tap into the political minds of college students! Some are brand new voters at the ripe age of 18, others are working 35-40 hours a week to keep up with the price of books and tuition, while others have already been to the capitol this year to tell the legislature that higher education should be affordable. Starting in 2008 Common Cause and Democracy Matters are joining forces to offer students a channel for their voices. Common Cause is welcoming students to join us in our efforts to reform the political process and uphold government ethics.

The Democracy Matters Project has campus-based chapters throughout the country. We will focus on the issue of money in politics and other pro-

democracy reforms. Democracy Matters encourages the emergence of a new generation of reform leaders.

LaToya Jarrett, our Los Angeles organizer is coordinating with students from California Lutheran University, Claremont McKenna College, LA Valley Community College, Occidental College, and UCLA. Common Cause will be working with Democracy Matters to establish campus chapters, involve students in workshops on public financing, redistricting and other reforms, and collaborate efforts on advocating for legislation.

Special thanks to Todd DiPaola for his support of the project! We are looking forward to the beginning of a great relationship. To find out more, contact LaToya at (213) 252-4552 or e-mail [Ljarrett@commoncause.org](mailto:Ljarrett@commoncause.org)

## San Diego Update

In November, our Media Consolidation Forum brought together people who are concerned about corporate media's increasing control over the information we get from the radio, TV, and newspapers. The recent removal of KLSB, an Air America radio station brought in many people frustrated by their loss of power over what they can listen to on the radio. KLSB was doing fine financially. This may have been a political decision by the station's owner, Clear Channel.

The FCC recommendations to allow corporations to own more media in large markets are affecting our access to information. The speakers argued that the Internet will take the place of many of our current sources,

but this claim did not go over well with the audience. CCC members did not feel that they should have to search for the information; that is the function of the media. All in all, it was a lively meeting that ended with members sending cards to their representatives, asking them to support S2332 and other similar legislation.

On December 13, Common Cause San Diego joined with San Diego's Neighborhoods for Clean Elections to present the San Diego Clean Elections Ordinance to San Diego's Ethics Commission. Simon Mayeski and Larry Remer made presentations about the polling done for and the organization of the ordinance. Jeanne Brown gave a short summary of its importance to San Diego. We are urging the Ethics Commission to



*Media Consolidation Forum draws lively debate about how the public can re-assert ownership of our airwaves.*

**LA Media Reform** efforts are alive and well! Jim Rhyne and company meet regularly to improve news coverage and media access. Planning is underway to organize a March conference in LA. To join, go to <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mediaaccountability>

**San Clemente Residents!** Local members are organizing to oppose Measure C on the February 5th Ballot, which would threaten local open spaces. For more info, check out: [www.savesclopenspace.com](http://www.savesclopenspace.com)

**OC Residents— Mark your Calendars!** The Great OC Write-In is scheduled for April 5th, Irvine, CA. Join concerned citizens to let your representatives hear your opinions—through letters. For more info, call Larry Gallup or LaToya Jarrett at (213) 252-4552.

**Next San Diego Meeting:** January 19, 2008, 12–2 pm  
Preparing for the 2008 Elections  
Mission Valley Library

**March 17–23 is Sunshine Week**  
Want to push for more open government? We welcome ideas for local CCC events for Sunshine Week! Call us!

recommend it to the City Council. Our next meeting on January 19th will be in the Mission Valley Library from 12 to 2:00 pm. We will be looking at various election reform initiatives on the 2008 ballots. We will examine Prop 93 (on the Feb. 5 Ballot) which would make changes to our state term limits laws, a proposition proposing to change how we allocate our electoral votes (may be on the November ballot), and of course our own redistricting initiative, which we hope will be on the November ballot. Join us for an exciting discussion about these important issues from different viewpoints, left, right and center. For info on these events, call Jeanne Brown at (619) 857-1807.