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Or e-mail us at: info-ca@commoncause.org

Check it out!

New Book on California Campaign Finance

Common Cause's new government watchdog program director, Derek Cressman, has a new book out titled:

The Recall's Broken Promise—How Big Money Still Runs California Politics.

Chuck Lewis, who founded the Center for Public Integrity, says this about the book:

The price of power is highest in California, site of the most expensive elections in the nation, where powerful interests have had a stranglehold for decades.... These issues are historic and systemic, as campaign finance expert and nonpartisan reformer Derek Cressman explains in this important book, and he has informed, thoughtful ideas about how citizens can help tame the beast of corruption.

The book is available at Amazon.com or your local bookstore. CCC will be co-hosting book readings—look out for them in your neighborhood!



OCTOBER 2007

Redistricting Reform: Where do we go from here?



Aug. 2007- Calling for a fundamental change in the way political boundaries are drawn to promote fairness and transparency in elections: Governor Schwarzenegger, former Governors Davis and Wilson, and CCC's K. Feng.

The clock has been ticking to get a Redistricting Commission measure on the ballot for voters to consider. This year, CA Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez announced, "The current system is indefensible. Legislators should not

cherry-pick their votes." He promised to pass a measure through the legislature to place on the February 2008 ballot. As we speak, we are still trying to secure a legislative bill.

Were those promises just an empty gesture to get groups like Common Cause to support his measure to extend term limits? So far, the four Legislative Leaders – Sen. Perata (D), Sen. Ackerman (R), Asm. Núñez (D), and Asm. Villines (R) have not made good on their promises.

Common Cause is working with a large coalition of good government,

civil rights, business, and membership groups to move beyond the excuses.

We'll have a lot of important decisions to make in the coming weeks.

Meanwhile, we are **working on a potential re-districting initiative for the November 2008 ballot.** If you are interested in getting involved to gather petition signatures, call us at 213 252-4552, or e-mail us at ca-info@commoncause.org.

We'll be posting the initiative language on our website for you to consider.

Stay tuned... every day brings a new development on the redistricting reform front!

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Term Limits Adjustment on the February 2008 Ballot

Speaker Fabian Núñez, with much support from big business and unions, has gathered enough signatures for a term limit adjustment initiative for the February 2008 ballot.

Our current term limits law holds lawmakers to serving no more than six years in the Assembly and eight years in the Senate.

The initiative would allow lawmakers to choose to serve in one house only for up to 12 years. There are special provisions that would grandfather in sitting legislators to give them extra time.

Tell us what you think Common Cause's position should be.

Should we support the term limits initiative be-

cause our legislators need more time in office to learn a broad range of policy issues and become more effective?

Should we oppose the initiative because the legislative leaders broke their promise to pair term limits reforms with redistricting reform?

Write us at:
ca-info@commoncause.org

National News

Fair Elections Now Act (FENA) is the Federal Clean Money Bill

Common Cause commends Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA) for introducing the Fair Elections Now Act, landmark bipartisan campaign finance legislation that would create a voluntary system of public funding for congressional campaigns modeled on successful public financing systems used for the past three election cycles in Maine and Arizona.

The bill now sits before the Senate Rules Committee, awaiting action. Call Senator Dianne Feinstein to tell her to support FENA.

Common Cause—in coordination with former Rep. Berk Bedell (D-IA)—launched an effort in late July to raise the issue of public funding of campaigns in the presidential debate.

Our newly hired organizer, Kyle Lobner, has already recruited over 50 activists who will "bird dog" the candidates by asking them about the issue at every opportunity.

Bedell, former Rep. Jim Leach (R-IA), and Common Cause President Bob Edgar will send a joint letter urging every candidate to support public financing as embodied in the Fair Elections Now Act and asking if they'll make it a priority as president.

How will the candidates answer? We'll keep you posted.



**Call Sen. Feinstein. Ask her to support FENA for Clean Elections in Congress. SF: (415) 393-0707
Fresno: (559) 485-7430
LA: (310) 914-7300
SD: (619) 231-9712**

Landmark Ethics Reform Bill Becomes Law!

Common Cause is celebrating the passage of the sweeping lobbying and ethics reform.

This bill contains the most far-reaching ethics and lobby reforms since Watergate and we expect it will really change the way the influence game is played in Washington.

Common Causers played an important part in crafting the bill and lobbied extensively for its passage.

Common Cause testified before three separate congressional committees on what should be in the bill. We worked closely with congressional staffers to craft meaningful legislation that will really work. It was Common Cause members who made the calls and met with their representatives to demand that something be done to correct the abuses so evident in the past few years.

We let Congress know that voters were outraged over the recent con-

gressional scandals and that they needed to address these abuses with real changes.

In celebrating the passage of the national ethics bill, Common Cause President Bob Edgar said, "We are going to know a lot more about what goes on under the Capitol dome. This bill will change business as usual in Washington by shining a light on how Congress conducts itself and how legislation is made."



California Common Cause Welcomes New National President, Bob Edgar

Technically, Bob Edgar has only been on the job for one month, but it's been a whirlwind of activity!

Edgar previously headed the National Council of Churches, where he focused the organization's efforts on peace, poverty and Planet Earth. He was elected to the U.S. House in 1974, coming in as part of the wave of reformers after the Watergate scandal.

Thank You California Common Cause Supporters!

From the Desk of Kathay Feng

I wanted to give a special thank you to members who were able to support our work by donating beyond your membership dues. We are especially appreciative of your support at this time when the vital issues we work on are in the news!

California Common Cause is providing leadership on redistricting, voter protections, public financing of elections, ethics and media reform.

When you join Common Cause, you are automatically a member at the national, state and local levels. While our national office in DC focuses on federal issues, California Common Cause is responsible for our efforts at the state capitol and in cities and counties throughout California.

Thank you for your support which makes our work possible!

Sincerely,

Kathay Feng, Executive Director

Best Wishes to Kris Greenlee!

After years of service on the CCC Board of Directors, Kris is retiring. Kris helped put Proposition 208 on the ballot, gathering thousands of signatures with a crew of over 100 volunteers in the Sacramento area. Her crowning achievement was her work to successfully pass public financing of election campaigns in Sacramento. Kris made hundreds of presentations to local groups, lobbied the city council, and sustained a coalition of activists over the seven years it took to pass the ordinance. Kris says, "It has been a privilege to work on a Cause which is (and should be) Common for all of us, that of reforming our democracy."



CCC Staff - Comings and Goings

As we say goodbye and good luck to Ned Wigglesworth who moved to the California Medical Association and to Marcy Koukhab who is getting her masters degree in public policy at UCLA, we are excited to report that **Christina Lokke** has become our Policy Advocate at the state capital. **LaToya Jarrett** has moved to Los Angeles and is now the Los Angeles Organizer. **Jeanne Brown** has joined the staff as the San Diego Organizer.

We can't thank you enough for your time, money and effort!

J. Abbott, Mrs. C. Ammen, A. Appleford, A. Bartley, Mr. and Mrs. A. Beek, Mr. and Mrs. Berks, R. Bettis, J. Biggs, A. Billingsley, V. Blackledge, G. Born, P. Cherner, K. Coldiron, L. Colen, E. Conlisk, C. Couric, J. Dykstra, E. Eckis, D. Fayman, S. Freedland, R. and C. Friese, L. Gallup, Mr. and Mrs. Gamble, A. George, M. Gildea, J. Greenwald, D. Guggenhime, D. Hart, A. Haskell, T. Hassler, J. and C. Heller, A. Hiller, P. Hok, Mr. and Mrs. G. Humphrey, J. Hyra, A. and C. Jennings, E. Jones, B. Kastin, D. Keith, D. Knutson, J. Kotzin, F. LaMar, W. Libaw, E. Lieblich, E. Maccoby, Mr. and Mrs. MacDonald, H. Marshall, G. and J. Matthaei, S. Mayeski, R. McHugh, G. Mitchell, W. Nisbet, Mr. and Mrs. Norris, G. O'Kelly, M. O'Regan, Mr. and Mrs. Pace, R. Powell, W. Reller, J. Rhyne, M. Riggs, A. Russell, J. and B. Scarborough, H. Simon, B. and P. Skehan, B. and D. Smith, J. Spencer, E. Steel, W. Stern, J. Sutter, T. Swift, A. Thomasian, P. Victor, D. and R. Waldman, R. Ward, P. and B. Weiss, A. and E. Weitzman, M. West, H. Williams, L. Wilson, A. Wood, J. Woods, N. and M. Wyss, A. Zook.



Ric Bainter, our CCC State Chair has moved to Bosnia to serve as legal counsel to the Office of the High Representative (OHR), which monitors and enforces compliance with the Dayton Peace Agreement for Bosnian affairs.

The unsettled situation in Kosovo and the lack of progress on some key reforms in Bosnia means Ric is working on issues related to the closure of the OHR and some of the unfinished reform issues, namely police restructuring. You can find out more about OHR at www.ohrint

San Diego Charter Reform, Upcoming Events

Changes to the San Diego City Charter

Now that San Diego voters have chosen to try a "strong mayor" form of government for a period of five years, the Mayor has put together a Charter Reform committee, nominated mainly by him. This committee may recommend changes to the SD City Charter that will make the mayor's office even more powerful by taking power away from the City Council and City Attorney.

We are working with a group of community organizations to ensure the Charter Review process is transparent and has checks and balances.

As part of this effort, we held a Common Cause Forum to discuss

the latest developments. Norma Damashek, of LWV of SD and Corry Briggs, an attorney from Progressive San Diego were our speakers.

CCC is advocating an elected Charter Reform Commission, to balance the perspectives of the appointed commission.

Join us!

Effects of Media Consolidation on Our Democracy. Mission Valley Library, Nov. 17th, 2007, 12pm

Has the Telecommunications Act of 1996 decreased competition between media outlets?

Since the public owns the airwaves, is it possible to require media corporations better serve the public interest? Are the large donations given to our political parties from these media conglomerates having an effect on the information we receive?

Join us for a lively discussion with **J.W. August**, investigative reporter from Channel 10 in San Diego; **Doug Myrland**, General Manager of KPBS, our local PBS affiliate; and **Andrew Donohue**, from Voice of San Diego, San Diego's on-line newspaper.

To RSVP, contact Jeanne Brown at: jbrown@commoncause.org

619 857-1807

San Diego UT, 7/11/07:

"Former Assemblyman Howard Wayne urged the committee to meet exclusively after normal working hours to ensure maximum public participation. **LaToya Jarrett**, a spokeswoman for California Common Cause, said the committee should meet in each council district for that same reason."

Common Cause has been involved in the research and we will play an instrumental roll in working with the City of Los Angeles to improve their voter outreach and accessibility. We support Instant Runoff Voting and Vote By Mail, early voting and strong voter outreach as ways to improve voter turnout.

largest election jurisdiction in California with some 2 million registered voters, 2,000 voting precincts, 8,000 poll workers and an operating budget of approximately \$16 million. Given the challenges facing the City Clerk's Election Division in terms of supporting the current model for municipal elections and the low rate of voter participation, it is an appropriate time to conduct a comprehensive review of the conduct of municipal elections.

As the various options are reviewed, the analysis will include the impact on the City's diverse voting population, the ability of candidates to effectively compete, and the staff, equipment and contractual resources necessary to adequately support each option.

Los Angeles: Election Reforms Considered

What's Next for the City of Los Angeles Votes Committee?

This May, LA City held municipal elections that drew record low voter turnout of less than 7%.

Over the summer City Clerk, Frank Martinez discussed possible major changes to the way elections are conducted. The City Clerk is now looking into the feasibility and impact of ideas such as switching to all Vote By Mail paired with early voting at vote centers around the city, and Instant Run Off Voting.

This October, the City Clerk is holding a Los Angeles Votes Committee meeting to discuss these reform proposals. The City's municipal elections represent the second

Media Reform

Sacramento: Free Internet for the City



Success! Free Internet for Sacramentans!

Thanks to the leadership of California Common Cause, people in Sacramento will soon be able to log onto free Internet service, 24 hours a day, seven days a week at a speed fast

enough to be useful. The Sacramento City Council has signed a contract with a WiFi Internet service provider, and within two years people should be able to use the Internet wherever they are within the city limits.

This means that everyone will be able to access the knowledge of the Internet, lobby their representatives and more easily participate in civic life. CCC spearheaded a coalition of 60 nonprofits and lobbied the city council to help bridge the digital divide. Plans are now going forward to get refurbished computers and other equipment and training to families who need them.

Capitol Weekly, April 12, 2007: Speaking about Sacramento's move to be the first major city to offer city-wide, free Internet access, **JoAnn Fuller** said, "It could really open the Web to families that previously had no access."



Should local news cover who's ahead in the polls or who stands for the issues you care about?

Local Television News: Why has the election news been reduced to campaign ads?

While most people get their news from television, at election time there is little coverage of the candidates' positions on the important issues that impact our daily lives. What news is presented is usually little more than which candidate is ahead and who's behind in the polls. Broadcasters claim the public is satisfied with what they get. The Sacramento Media Group disagrees. Instead, members of the group see that the unprecedented corporate me-

dia consolidation has nearly eliminated diversity in voice and viewpoint on our publicly-owned airwaves and left viewers with reduced local programming. The public is left with campaign ads as their source of information about candidates.

Before the presidential primary in February, SMG is taking a closer look at local television election coverage and the amount of substantial news presented. In partnership with California State University, Sacramento, SMG will monitor the kind of election coverage broadcast on our local stations. With a Citizen Advisory Panel, SMG will develop public interest standards for local television election coverage, using recommendations of national public interest organizations. SMG will release their findings in a report.

If you would like to participate in this study or for more informa-

tion, contact SMG at California Common Cause at smg@commoncause.org or 916-443 1792 extension 11. Formed in 2003, SMG is a volunteer organization committed to the belief that free, independent and diverse media are essential to public discourse and a healthy democracy. Join Us!

Did you know?

Once in the lead, the US is now 15th in the world in deployment and adoption of affordable Internet services.

What happened? The New York Times (July 23, 2007) says it was simply bad policy. Other countries used judicious regulation to promote competition. At the most, customers in the US have a choice between a cable monopoly and phone monopoly for Internet service. The price is high, the service is poor, but there's nowhere else to go.

Clean Money – Clean Cities Conferences.

Our two Clean Money – Clean Cities Conferences were a great success! Thanks to all of the volunteers, speakers and attendees for helping to make them so enjoyable and informative! California Common Cause, joined by California Clean Money Campaign, organized the conferences—one in San José and one in Pasadena.

Over 200 city officials, community leaders and activists attended the conferences in order to learn practical information about implementing public financing for local campaigns.

Speakers were from as diverse backgrounds as conference attendees, including Clean Money experts, constitutional experts, local officials, activists, professors and communication experts.

Eric Griego, a former Albuquerque City Councilmember and a sponsor of the Albuquerque Clean Elections Ordinance, which was recently adopted by voters, commented, "Once you get it passed, it's the job of advocates, good government groups and citizens to make sure that it does what it says it was going to do and this should not be a foregone conclusion."

Janice Thompson, from the Money in Politics Research Action Project in Portland, OR, presented a report on how Portland's Voter Owned Elections (VOE) public financing system has positively influenced local elections. For example, private money fundraising and qualifying contribution and seed money fundraising by VOE candidates came from very different areas of Portland. Private money came mostly from only a few, wealthy neighborhoods and business districts. However, money for VOE candidates came almost evenly from all areas of Portland, showing more



California Common Cause's **Executive Director, Kathay Feng** discusses the benefits of public financing of campaigns.

diverse participation in the campaign process.

Overall, local officials and activists were motivated and excited about the future of implementing Clean Money in their cities.

For those who were unable to attend, we have posted all materials from the conference on the conference website, as well as video from the San José conference. Check it out at www.cacleancities.org!

San Francisco News

California Common Cause joined a law suit (Committee on Jobs v. Herrera) defending San Francisco's \$500 limit on contributions to independent expenditure committees. The limit is part of Proposition O that CCC helped draft and pass following a series of pay-to-play scandals in San Francisco.

Besides contribution limits, Prop. O included partial public financing and other good-government reforms. Only the independent expenditure contribution limit is being challenged.

Clean Money in Sunnyvale

It's possible! The City of Sunnyvale will soon possibly place a Clean Money measure on the ballot and we need you to help make this happen!

The effort initially began last summer, in 2006, when Councilmember Melinda Hamilton requested that public financing of campaigns be included in the City Council's work plan on studying the City Council election process and possible reforms. Hamilton was very concerned about the influence of money on elections in Sunnyvale and was interested in learning more about Clean Money. Fast forward to March of this year, when the City Council formally voted on a motion asking the Council Ethics Committee to look into a structure (and possible funding sources) for public campaign financing, as well as prepare an Advisory Measure for the November 2007 ballot. As part of this work, Councilmember Christopher Moylan, one of three members of the Ethics Committee attended our own Clean Money – Clean Cities Conference in San José! Unfortunately, the other two councilmembers on the committee were close-minded on the benefits of public financing, passing a poorly written Advisory Measure. Fortunately, the majority of the City Council wisely chose not to accept this measure, instead asking that the matter be taken up again next year.

So it's not over yet! The majority of the City Council is very interested in learning more about public financing and we need to help remind them to take the issue up again next year! We will need all Sunnyvale residents' help to fight for a well crafted public financing measure in Sunnyvale! Any interested Sunnyvale residents should contact our policy advocate, Christina Lokke, at (916) 443-1792 or CLokke@commoncause.org

State Legislative Update

The Governor has until October 14, 2007 to sign or veto legislation and we are still waiting for the final decision on number of key bills. Below are the bills that Common Cause is working on (*status as of 10/1*). For the latest developments, check out <http://www.commoncause.org/calegislation>.

Bills Opposed by CA Common Cause

- **AB 1430 (Garrick) Political Reform Act of 1974: contribution limitations**

AB 1430 would prohibit local jurisdictions from regulating the source and amount of money that political parties can use to campaign for candidates—even though the state legislature does the exact same thing for state elections.

Not only would this bill prevent this specific type of local campaign contribution limits, it also sets a bad precedent regarding the state's ability to dictate local campaign finance laws.

Common Cause is working hard with allies to kill this stealth bill. Local ethics commissions strongly oppose the bill.

Bills Supported by CA Common Cause

- **AB 44 (Mendoza) Absentee voters: ballot materials** AB 44 would ensure that absentee voters receive their sample ballot and candidate statements with, or before, their absentee ballot.

• **AB 466 (Hancock) Pupils: average daily attendance:** AB 466 would allow service by a student as an election worker to be designated independent study. The student must complete a report about the experience. This would then allow schools to receive the daily funding for absent student poll workers, removing the negative financial impact schools face when its students chose to volunteer on Election Day.

- **SB 854 (Ridley-Thomas) Voter registration: students**

SB 854 would require California Community Colleges and California State Universities, with automated class registration, to provide the opportunity for students to register to vote when they register for class. This bill also encourages the University of California to enact the same policy.

- **AB 1294 (Mullin) Ranked voting: local elections**

AB 1294 would allow general law cities and counties the option of using ranked voting electoral systems like instant runoff voting (IRV) to elect local officials. Municipalities wishing to do so would need to obtain voter approval for the change. This bill would provide local governments the tools they need to respond to the wishes of their voters.

Business Week, 09/13/07:

In the waning hours of the legislative session, state lawmakers agreed to let bond money approved by voters for affordable housing flow to private business ventures, including an entertainment complex in downtown Los Angeles...

"It's definitely a case where campaign donors were allowed special access," said **Christina Lokke**, policy advocate for California Common Cause. "While the general public was home sleeping, their views were being usurped by one wealthy donor."

Bills on the Horizon for 2008...

- **AB 355 (Price) Elections: voter registration:** Would allow every eligible voter to register to vote on Election Day and cast a provisional ballot for the election.
- **AB 583 (Hancock) Political Reform Act of 1974: California Clean Money and Fair Elections Act:** Would create a pilot project of full public financing of campaigns. It would cover the 2010 races for Governor, Insurance Commissioner, 1 Assembly seat and 1 Senate seat.
- **SB 536 (Simitian) Political Reform Act of 1974: Insurance Commissioner campaigns:** Would create a public financing system for Insurance Commissioner candidates.