

California COMMON CAUSE

PEOPLE . ACTION . DEMOCRACY

FALL 2011

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Next Generation of CCC Leaders



Berkeley, CA— On July 22nd, we hosted our 2nd Annual Student Activist Training on the University of California, Berkeley campus with 27 amazing student activists from around the state. Each of them brought a unique story about why they are inspired to become more active in their school and community and what goals they have to

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GOV. BROWN SIGNS ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION BILL!

You did it! Your thousands of letters, calls and petition signatures made the difference! Now, in addition to being able to register by mailing in a paper form, eligible voters in California will be able to go online to register to vote. With the support of a broad coalition of supporters across California, we led the efforts to pass the Online Voter Registration bill (Senate Bill 397 by Sen. Leland Yee)—and succeeded!

Online Voter Registration has proven to be a safe, secure, and convenient system of voter registration in other states. The Sacramento Bee estimates it could increase registration in California by 6.4 million voters while saving millions for state and local governments. We expect the system to be ready by October 2012.

A special thanks to Ca CC staff and board members Norman Klein, Todd Dipaola, Kathay Feng, Ignacio Hernandez, Anjuli Kronheim, and Phillip Ung!

CALIFORNIA REDISTRICTING

The Citizens Redistricting Commission - created through the hard work of CA Common Cause and partners - approved new maps for state Assembly, Senate, Board of Equalization, and Congress this August. Defying all the pundits, the Commission's Democrats, Rep-

ublicans and non-partisan members were able to work together and draw maps that reflected the public's input.

For the first time in our history, these electoral district maps were drawn using non-partisan data and public comments from

over 20,000 Californians.

The new district maps have sent shock waves through the political system from Sacramento to Washington DC. Many incumbents find themselves in different districts, some even sharing a district with other incumbents.

If you wish to view the new maps and even what your districts look like, go to:
www.wedrawthelines.com.

P.S. There are partisan efforts to challenge these maps in courts and by referendum. We support the League of Women Voters' "Decline to Sign" the referendum campaign. We will also be filing an amicus brief in court to defend the process against incumbent gerrymandering.



WELCOME OUR NEWEST CA STAFFERS



John Smith Southern CA Organizer

John Smith was raised in a political family and has been involved in nearly every level of campaigning since he was a boy, beginning with shaking the hand of Senator John F Kennedy at the 1960 Democratic National Convention.

John's primary interests are in helping to grow the membership of Common Cause and to reach out to organizations with similar interests to form coalitions.

His area of responsibility is Southern California from Los Angeles to San Diego. John has a Bachelors in Business from the University of Redlands.



Phillip Ung Policy Advocate

At the young age of 7, Phillip fell in love with policy development and politics while watching the media coverage of the first Gulf War and the end of Communist Russia.

He is responsible for developing and implementing California Common Cause's policy advocacy agenda around state issues, including our legislative and campaign efforts.

Phillip has worked both inside the State Capitol as a policy aide and outside the Capitol as an advocate.

Before joining Common Cause, he worked at CA Coalition Against Sexual Assault as a policy advocate from 2009 to 2011. He has degrees from California State University Sacramento in Government and History.

Phillip works out of the Sacramento office.

DIRECT ADVOCACY ROUND-UP

Breaking news: New bills just signed into law!

- **Pension Board Reform:** AB 873 (Furutani) - extends a current ban prohibiting former CalPERS or CalSTRS employees from lobbying their former colleagues to two years after leaving employment. It further prohibits those former board members and staff from accepting compensation for trying to secure an investment deal from CalPERS or CalSTRS for 10 years.
- **Prison-based Gerrymandering Reform:** If you saw the film Gerrymandering, you know about this problem. AB 420 (Davis), which would require prisoners to be counted in their last place of residence instead in prisons for redistricting purposes in the next round of redistricting, was signed.



Join the conversation on twitter [@commoncauseca](https://twitter.com/commoncauseca)
and facebook.com/commoncauseca



UPCOMING EVENTS

San Diego

When: November 5, 2011, Noon to 2 pm

**Where: Mission Valley Library,
2123 Fenton Parkway,
San Diego 92108**

Our Topic - Exposing the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) one of the most dangerous organizations you've never heard about, a secretive group of hundreds of corporations, and legislators investing millions of dollars a year writing business-friendly legislation at the expense of the middle class.

For more info or to RSVP, contact:
John Smith—562-237-3482 cell
jsmith@commoncause.org

San Francisco

When: November 14, 2011, 6—8pm

Where: Golden Gate Law School

A Question of Integrity: Politics, Ethics and the Supreme Court

Film premiere and panel of speakers discussing recent ethical lapses of the Supreme Court, and what can be done about it. Featuring: Common Cause's Derek Cressman, Alliance for Justice's Nan Aron.

For more info or to RSVP, contact:
Helen Grieco at
hgrieco@commoncause.org

Redlands

When: October 29, at 3 pm

Common Cause is pleased to announce the formation of a new local group in the City of Redlands. Join us for this Common Cause Kick Off gathering. You'll meet other members of Common Cause, learn more about our history and our current projects, and help to inaugurate this new local chapter.

Call 213-252-4551 for location and reservations.

TEXT MESSAGE CAMPAIGN CONTRIBUTIONS?

The Fair Political Practices Commission is receiving public comment on the possibility of low-dollar campaign contributions through mobile phone text messages.

It is a simple concept of donating small sums of money that would eventually be paid through the subscriber's regular mobile phone billing cycle.

This innovation may increase the number of small donors to election campaigns to balance the wealthy special interests that corrupt our political process. For more info, visit

www.fppc.ca.gov



FOCUS ON THE INITIATIVE

A group of voters from the San Gabriel Valley recently took part in a unique exercise aimed at finding solutions to California's broken initiative system. We partnered with the Greenlining Institute to host two focus groups to hear the thoughts and reactions of everyday people to our state's version of direct democracy.

California's initiative system came into being 100 years ago in response to the corruption that enveloped the state capitol in that era. The railroad industry was choking the state legislature and ignoring the will of the people. So Governor Hiram



Johnson started the initiative as a means of overturning or blocking legislation that was designed to only benefit the railroads at the expense of everyone else. For many years, the initiative was a tool that was seldom used.

In recent years, however, the populism of the initiative process has been heavily co-opted by special interests that spend millions to push through initiatives that are purposefully confusing. Specially paid signature gatherers are hired. Publicity and campaign consultants charge millions to "sell" the initiative to the people with 30-second sound bites and misleading advertising.

Organized by CA Common Cause newest organizer, John Smith, and facilitated by Greenlining Institute's Michelle Romero and Blanca Hernandez, the focus groups discussed such possibilities as



changing the number of signatures required for an initiative to qualify, the way signatures can be gathered, and the majority requirement for an initiative to pass. The panel also discussed whether the state legislature should be able to revise an initiative after it has been the law for 3 or 4 years, as is the case in many other states.

The Greenlining Institute will be publishing a report in the near future.

STUDENT ACTIVIST TRAINING A SUCCESS!

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create a better way of life for their generation.

Over the course of 3 days, students participated in sessions led by Ca CC Executive Director Kathay Feng, CA CC Board member / UC Student Regent Jonathan Stein, Co-founder of MoveOn.org Joan Blades, Executive Director of MapLight.org Dan Newman, and more.

California Common Cause Organizers Anjuli Kronheim (Los Angeles) and Helen Grieco (San Francisco) trained our students on organizing and activist skills using our new Student Activist Training Manual.

The 2011 Student Activist Training Manual is a valuable resource that lays out the groundwork to plan a campaign, choose specific issues, plan an action, and how to motivate and recruit volunteers.

Newly introduced to California Common Cause's issues, students were challenged to create strategic plans on issues like Same Day Registration, Campaign Finance Reform, and Redistricting. Through group presentations and breakout sessions, students were given time to work collaboratively with staff to develop mock plans that apply the activist skills they were learning to organize their peers.

Students networked and bonded with their new cohort to discuss issues that affect their campuses. They also participated in roundtable brainstorming about what CA Common Cause could do to further support and cultivate student leaders to create lasting change.

CA Common Cause will continue to mentor these Student Activist Training graduates as they work to make our democracy work for the people and the public's interest.

A huge thank you goes out to all of our generous members who donated to help fund our 2nd Annual Student Activist Training, especially: Todd Di-paola, Roy Ulrich, Polly Cherner, Charlie Couric, Bernard Kastin, and Judd Williams.



Dean Searcy, UC San Diego Class of 2012 Student Activist Training Graduate - Class of 2011

I came to the activist training expecting it to be like other conferences I had attended, all talk with no concrete plans for the future. After spending just an hour with the leadership and fellow attendees, I could feel the passion and thirst for action heavy in the air.

In the "safe zone," people shared their personal stories and their desires for a campaign to improve the lives of people like (and not so like) themselves. Following the rigorous 3-day training, I felt re-energized and ready to set out on my own campaign for student voter registration.

The Student Activist Training held in Berkeley was inspiring, engaging, and enlightening. It not only showed me what is necessary to build a student movement, but also that my ideas for a better democracy through student action are far more than a simple fantasy.



California
COMMON CAUSE
Staff

SACRAMENTO

Derek Cressman
Western States Regional Director

Phillip Ung
Policy Advocate

BAY AREA

Helen Grieco
Northern California Organizer



SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Kathay Feng
CCC Executive Director

Brooke Erdmann
West Coast Development

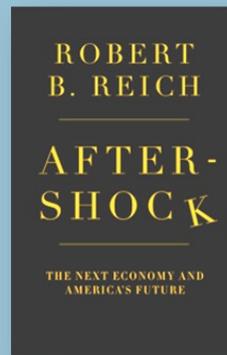
Anjuli Kronheim
Los Angeles Organizer

Megumi Kaminaga
Operations Manager

John Smith
Southern California Organizer

Derek Cressman caught this snapshot at OccupySacramento.

*If you have inspiring or just funny pictures to share, please send them to:
ca-info@commoncause.org*



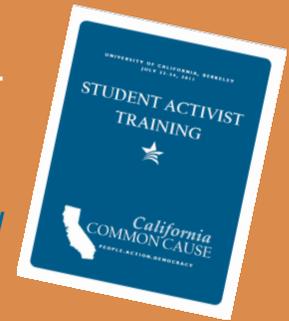
Want your own copy of Robert Reich's book *Aftershock*?

For a limited time, we are offering a FREE autographed copy of his book when you sign up online and become a sustaining donor.

Please visit www.commoncause.org/cal/aftershock to support California Common Cause.

Check out our 2011 Student Activist Training Manual!

Go online to download:
www.commoncause.org/cal/trainingmanual



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