March 30, 2016

Senator Ben Allen, Chair
Senate Standing Committee on Elections and Constitutional Amendments
State Capitol, Room 2203
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Senate Bill 1349 (Hertzberg) – Cal-Access Modernization – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Allen,

The undersigned organizations write to support Senate Bill 1349, which would direct the Secretary of State to modernize Cal-Access, California's online system for campaign finance filing and disclosure. This necessary upgrade would make the system more reliable, better inform voters, and simplify compliance by campaigns. Modernizing Cal-Access would increase the transparency of campaign financing without requiring new disclosure rules, simply by providing easier public access to the information that campaigns already report.

Since 2000, state candidates and political committees have submitted required filings through Cal-Access for online compliance and public access. At that time, Cal-Access was an early leader in electronic filing for campaign finance disclosure and set a national standard for online transparency. However, today the system is 16 years old and needs to be upgraded with modern capabilities. Currently, Cal-Access is not user-friendly for public access to information, filing is cumbersome, and the antiquated technology is difficult to maintain or modify.

SB 1349 would address these issues by updating Cal-Access. This legislation would give the Secretary of State the direction and resources necessary to bring Cal-Access into the 21st century.

Voters deserve ready access to campaign finance information, and a modern Cal-Access will help voters to make informed choices about state ballot measures and candidates. We support SB 1349 and urge its expeditious passage. If you have any questions, please contact Nicolas Heidorn at nheidorn@commoncause.org or (916) 443-1792.

Sincerely,

American Sustainable Business Council
CalChamber
California Business Roundtable
California Church IMPACT

California Clean Money Campaign
California Common Cause
California Forward
California Labor Federation
California League of Conservation Voters
California Professional Firefighters
California School Employees Association
California State Council of the Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
CALPIRG
Campaign Legal Center
Courage Campaign
First Amendment Coalition
Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association
League of Women Voters of California
MapLight
National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB)
National Institute on Money in State Politics
Public Citizen
Small Business Majority
UFCW Western States Council
Voices For Progress