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March 29, 2016

The Honorable Robert M. Hertzberg  
State Capitol, Room 4038  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 1349 – Cal-Access Modernization – SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Hertzberg,

On behalf of California Common Cause and our members, I am writing with a letter of support for Senate Bill 1349, which would direct the Secretary of State to modernize Cal-Access, the online system for campaign finance filing and disclosure. Thank you for your leadership on this bill.

Under the Political Reform Act, candidates for elected office and other political committees must publicly disclose their financial contributions and expenditures. Since 2000, state candidates and political committees have submitted required filings online through Cal-Access for compliance and public access. Because they allow voters to make informed choices about state ballot measures and candidates, these filings are vital to the transparency and accountability of California's politics.

However, the Cal-Access system – now 16 years old – is woefully outdated and overdue for an update:

- The current site is not user-friendly for the public: it is difficult to search and does not provide voters with commonly-requested information, such as who were the largest contributors to a particular committee.
- Filing is cumbersome and requires campaigns to input duplicate information.
- The antiquated technology is difficult for the Secretary of State to maintain – Secretary Padilla has called Cal-Access “a Frankenstein’s monster of code.”
- These technical limitations constrain the Legislature from adopting policies to modernize campaign finance reporting requirements.

SB 1349 would address these issues by reforming Cal-Access. This necessary upgrade would make this critical state system more reliable, better inform voters, and simplify compliance by campaigns. Notably, 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.

Secretary Padilla has been a leader in working to fix Cal-Access. SB 1349 would give the Secretary the direction and resources necessary to bring Cal-Access into the 21st century.

This commonsense reform was developed in consultation with a diverse group of California's civic leaders. The Political Reform and Modernization (PRAM) group is co-convened by the California

Business Roundtable, California Common Cause, California Forward, and the California Labor Federation. PRAM has selected modernizing Cal-Access as its legislative priority for 2016.

For these reasons, California Common Cause strongly supports SB 1349 and we urge its expeditious passage. Please contact me at [nheidorn@commoncause.org](mailto:nheidorn@commoncause.org) or (916) 443-1792 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



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