



# AB 1416 (Santiago), the *Ballot DISCLOSE Act* FAQ

## What will AB 1416 do?

AB 1416 add to each state measure on the ballot a short list of supporters and opponents from the official arguments in the voter information guide (max 125 characters each). Currently the ballot lists just a 75-word title, summary, and fiscal analysis written in legalese that often confuses voters.

## Why is AB 1416 necessary?

**Big Money special interests gain an unfair advantage by spending millions while deceiving voters about who supports or opposes state ballot measures.** True supporters and opponents are in the voter guide, but many voters can't or don't find them buried in the often 100+ pages of dense text. AB 1416 provides this information on the ballot itself so voters see it when it matters most.

## Do voters really want and need this information?

**A 2019 Clean Money poll found that 79% of likely voters say it's important to them to know who supports and opposes ballot measures when they vote.** But only 42% of voters say they know they can find supporters and opponents in the voter guide and it's quick and easy. The rest said it wasn't quick and easy, that they didn't know where to find them in the voter guide, or that they didn't even know they could find them there. 75% of likely voters favor "adding to the ballot a short list of the supporters and opponents of each ballot proposition" — exactly what AB 1416 does.

## AB 1416 ENDORSERS

### 5,500+ petition Signers

- California Clean Money Campaign (sponsor)
- California Common Cause
- League of Women Voters of California
- American Family Voices
- California Alliance of Retired Americans
- California Church IMPACT
- California Environmental Voters
- Communication Workers of America, District 9
- Courage California
- MapLight
- Money Out Voters In
- Pax World LLC
- Progressive Democrats of California
- Public Citizen
- Voices for Progress
- Western Center on Law and Poverty
- California Democratic Party
- Alameda County Democratic Party
- Contra Costa County Democratic Party
- Los Angeles County Democratic Party
- San Mateo County Democratic Party
- Santa Clara County Democratic Party

## Will AB 1416 substantially increase the length of the ballot?

**No.** The California Association of Clerks and Election Officials (CACEO) raised concerns about potential costs of the 2019 version (SB 636), saying "this bill appears to add eight lines of additional text to the average ballot label — one for each argument signer's name and title, one line for the word 'Supporters' and one line for the word 'Opponents'". AB 1416 clarifies that it simply appends the supporters and opponents to each ballot label's 75-word entry. In many cases no extra ballot paper will be needed at all. Here's an example of how Prop 26 from the 2010 ballot would look under AB 1416:

<p><b>26</b> REQUIRES THAT CERTAIN STATE AND LOCAL FEES BE APPROVED BY TWO-THIRDS VOTE. FEES INCLUDE THOSE THAT ADDRESS ADVERSE IMPACTS ON SOCIETY OR THE ENVIRONMENT CAUSED BY THE FEE-PAYER'S BUSINESS. INITIATIVE</p> <p><b>CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.</b> Fiscal Impact: Depending on decisions by governing bodies and voters, decreased state and local government revenues and spending (up to billions of dollars annually). Increased transportation spending and state General Fund costs (\$1 billion annually). <b>Supporters:</b> California Taxpayers' Association, California Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Action Committee, Nisei Farmers League. <b>Opponents:</b> League of Women Voters California, American Lung Association, Sierra Club California, California League Conservation Voters..</p>	<p>132 YES → <input type="radio"/></p> <p>133 NO → <input type="radio"/></p>
	<p>Part added by AB 1416</p>



### Shouldn't voters just read the voter guide?

**Ideally, they would. But many people don't or can't read the entire 100+ pages of voter guides** because they're overwhelmed by work and family. When they vote without knowing who really supports and opposes measures, or even worse when they're misled by deceptive ads from special interests, it hurts all of us.

### Would AB 1416 clutter the ballot?

**No. It would actually make it easier for voters to understand.**

On each measure, the ballot currently uses 75 words of legalese for the summary and fiscal analysis that's often confusing and rarely gives the full picture. Adding 125 characters of supporters and 125 characters of opponents would provide easy to grasp information voters want and would help them put the legalese in context by knowing the positions of organizations they know and trust.

### Would AB 1416 politicize the ballot?

**The ballot is already political!** You can't get any more political than the word "Democrat" or "Republican" next to candidates! But to address these concerns, both bills bar political parties from being listed as supporters or opponents on the ballot. Only legitimate non-profit organizations, businesses, elected officials, and individuals could be listed.

### Shouldn't voters make their own decisions?

**Voters would still make their own decisions. AB 1416 would simply provide valuable information that voters want and need.** Even if all voters had time to read the full 100+ page voter guide, the devil of initiatives is in the details. Regular voters don't have the time or expertise to read and understand every line of each initiative. But organizations who appear in the ballot arguments do. Voters need to know when the organizations many people trust have a strong enough opinion to go on the record.

### Is this the right information to add to the ballot?

**Yes!** Ballot labels already have a condensed version of the summary and fiscal analysis from the voter guide. AB 1416 add a condensed summary of the other crucial info in the pamphlet — supporters and opponents from the official arguments for and against each measure. This is the most important info in the voter guide that's not on the ballot, and 79% of voters say it's important to them to know.

### Will AB 1416 cause voter confusion?

**No.** CACEO expressed the concern that voters may be confused because AB 1416 applies to only state ballot measures, and not to local ballot measures. However, confusion is unlikely because state ballot measures are listed in a separate section on the ballot. Counties may also choose to list supporters and opponents on all the local ballot measures, too — which we hope most will — eliminating this concern.

### Who picks the listed supporters and opponents?

The proponents and opponents who sign the ballot arguments in the voter information guide send in a maximum 125 characters describing who either signed or appears in their arguments. The Secretary of State then verifies that the listings meet AB 1416's requirements to prevent political parties and newly created sham organizations from being listed on the ballot.

### Could the ballot list fake names?

**AB 1416 has protections against** it because corporations, non-profits, and committees can be listed only if (1) they've been active for at least two years and (2) either had one full-time employee or had at least 500 unique donors during the last two years. That way campaigns can't create new sham organizations to mislead voters.

### Most important, voters will see real organizations that support or oppose each measure.

If one side of a ballot campaign lists fake organizations but the other side lists real ones that they know and trust, voters will tend to believe the judgment of longstanding and respected organizations over fake organizations with good-sounding names they've never heard of.

### Is AB 1416 bipartisan?

**Yes.** 2019's version, SB 636, passed the Senate on an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 31-5 with 3 Republicans joining every Democrat to vote "Yes".

### Who is behind AB 1416?

AB 1416 is sponsored by the California Clean Money Campaign, a grassroots non-profit organization with hundreds of volunteers and over 150,000 supporters across the state. CCMC is financed entirely by small contributions from individuals.

### Is it worth the small extra printing cost?

**Yes!** Even when an extra ballot sheet is needed to include the extra information (and in many case no extra sheets will be needed), spending a relatively small additional amount so voters have the information they want and need when they vote will help stop the sometimes billions of dollars in costs incurred by California when wealthy interests are able to deceive voters into passing bad initiatives or killing good ones.

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#### For more information:

Printed in-house  
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