



September 19, 2019

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
 Governor, State of California
 State Capitol Building
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Cc: The Honorable Ben Allen

RE: SB 47 (Allen) – Support

Dear Governor Brown:

The below listed organizations are pleased to support SB 47, the *Petition DISCLOSE Act*.

California's initiative process was created over 100 years ago to allow voters to bypass the special interests who had a stranglehold on Sacramento. Unfortunately, special interests now often abuse the very process that was meant to limit their power by spending millions to qualify deceptive initiatives. Voters deserve to know who's behind the initiatives they're being asked to sign to put on the ballot.

For the 2018 election, 37 initiatives qualified for circulation and 12 qualified for the ballot. And for 2016, a dizzying 115 initiatives qualified to circulate, and a near record 17 measures appeared on the November ballot.

All of the propositions that qualified by signature gathering did so only after a million dollars or more was spent on paid signature gathering, with voters rarely knowing who the funders were.

SB 47 makes a commonsense improvement to California's current campaign disclosure laws by requiring initiative signature gatherers to show voters the top three funders of the committee paying for the petition circulation before they sign. They can do so either by showing voters an easily-printable "Official Top Funders Sheet" or by listing the top three funders on the initiative signature page itself. Committees can optionally also list up to 3 endorsing individuals, corporations, or non-profit organizations.

The top funders must be calculated the same way that the *California DISCLOSE Act* (AB 249, now in effect) calculates funders of political ads about ballot measures, including AB 249's follow-the-money earmarking rules that identify the true source of funds for specific ballot measures even if they pass through multiple front groups. The top funders must be updated monthly.

SB 47 also makes printing of initiative petitions less expensive by allowing the text of initiatives to be stapled to the signature page rather than professionally bound, which allows initiative petitions to be printed at home.

This kind of disclosure is overwhelmingly popular with the public. The March 2013 PPIC Poll found that 84% of all likely voters, across political ideology, want increased public disclosure of funding sources for signature gathering and initiative campaigns. A February 2018 poll of 617 likely California voters by the California Clean Money Campaign found that 79% of voters support "requiring initiative signature-gatherers to show voters the top funders paying for their signature-gathering", with across-the-board support from 84% of Democrats, 73% of Republicans, and 78% of independent voters.

Providing Californians with relevant facts about the source of money to qualify an initiative, referendum, or recall, and who endorses it, is a reasonable, important step the legislature can take to help voters make an informed decision about whether or not to sign a petition.

For these reasons, the organizations below SUPPORT SB 47 and respectfully request that you sign it into law. Thank you.

FROM: California Clean Money Campaign (Sponsor)
California League of Conservation Voters
California Common Cause
California League of Conservation Voters
California Public Interest Research Group (CALPIRG)
Climate Hawks Vote
Consumer Federation of California
Consumer Watchdog
Courage Campaign
Demand Progress
Democracy for America
End Citizens United Action Fund
Endangered Habitats League
Franciscan Action Network
Free Speech for People
GMO Free California
Greenpeace USA
Indivisible CA: StateStrong
LegitAction
Maplight
Money Out Voters In (MOVI)

New Progressive Alliance
People Demanding Action
People for the American Way
Progressive Democrats for America – California
Public Citizen
RootsAction.org
Voices for Progress
Voters Right to Know