

March 31, 2009

Sacramento City Council
915 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: March 31 Council Meeting Agenda Item 5, Campaign Finance

Dear Mayor Johnson and Councilmembers:

The League of Women Voters of Sacramento County asks that you not go forward with the major revisions of tonight's Agenda Item 5 without more input and consideration of the public interest. This action would "Approve for Publication" very substantive revisions to the City's Campaign Finance Code. We believe this action is premature and these issues should be the subject of substantial community input such as was conducted prior to the adoption of the current provisions.

The current ordinances were adopted during the period from approximately 2001 through 2003 following an extensive public input process. This process started in 1999 with the appointment of a Campaign Finance Advisory Committee the Council approved during the tenure of the late Mayor Serna. This Committee was Chaired by Professor Robert Waste, appointed by Mayor Serna, and included members appointed by each Councilmember.

Following extensive deliberations and public input the Committee recommended a comprehensive package of reform measures including a system of partial public campaign financing. This was followed by deliberations and numerous hearings by the Law and Legislation Committee and the full Council until the measures were adopted.

These measures received broad public support, with approximately 40 community associations and other non governmental organizations endorsing even more comprehensive and stronger measures being advocated by California Common Cause and the League of Women Voters of Sacramento County.

It is recognized that some revisions of these measures may be necessary. However, we believe a hasty repeal and weakening of these ordinances would result in a degradation of public trust and confidence in City Government. We urge you to reconsider this process and the apparently very rapid timeline.

The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan political organization of women and men, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. The League has long worked for the citizen's right to know and for broad citizen participation in government.

Thank you for your consideration.

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