



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF CALIFORNIA

The Ballot Initiative Transparency Act

SB 1253

The issue

Voters strongly support the initiative process but believe it has been hijacked by moneyed special interests. They want clarity, transparency, and fairness.

What SB 1253 does

- Gives voters more useful information about initiatives so they can make informed decisions. This law would enhance the Secretary of State's website and use of online resources, giving voters *one-stop access to information* about individuals and groups behind each initiative and *exposing the sources of funding*. Voters also could request an email version of the voter guide, reducing the costs of printing and mailing the guides.
- *Identifies and allows for corrections to mistakes* in an initiative before it appears on the ballot. Now, initiative backers have few options to correct or withdraw initiative language, even when legal flaws are identified.
- Opens the process for comment and improvement. This law would give voters an opportunity to comment on initiatives before they are circulated for signature. And by extending the time for gathering signatures by a month, this law would require the Legislature to hold earlier public hearings to review initiatives. This law would also allow the authors of an initiative to withdraw it after petitions and signatures are certified, but before ballots are printed, *simplifying the ballot*.

Strong support among Californians – Democrats, Republicans and Independents

- According to the Public Policy Institute of California Statewide Survey 2013:
- 83% of voters agree that initiative wording is too complicated and confusing
- 84% of voters favor increasing public disclosure of funding sources for signature gathering and initiative campaigns
- 77% of voters support a review and revision process to avoid legal issues and drafting errors
- 75% of likely voters are in favor of giving initiative sponsors more time if they are using volunteers rather than paid workers to gather signatures

Broad support for this legislation

SB 1253 is authored by Senate President pro Tem Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento). Coauthors include Senators Galgiani, Leno, Lieu and Wolk, and Assembly Members Gatto, Mullin, Quirk-Silva and Ting. The bill passed the Senate and Assembly with bipartisan support.

A broad coalition of sponsors includes the League of Women Voters of California, California Common Cause, California Chamber of Commerce, California NAACP, California Business Roundtable, CSEA, Think Long Committee for California, California Church IMPACT, AARP, Bay Area Council, California Forward and Los Angeles Business Council. The California Democratic Party endorses the bill.