



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CALIFORNIA

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August 29, 2006

The Honorable Fabian Nunez, Speaker
The Honorable George Plescia, Minority Floor Leader
California State Assembly
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0001

Dear Speaker Nunez and Minority Leader Plescia:

The League of Women Voters of California is anxious to see that your pledge to put real redistricting reform on the ballot is carried out during this legislative session. With only three days remaining to pass SCA 3 (Lowenthal and Ashburn), the need for action is urgent!

In response to concerns raised in the Senate floor debate and in the redistricting reform discussions that occurred during conference committee hearings on SCA 10, we worked with Senators Lowenthal and Ashburn and a broad coalition of groups and individuals to propose improvements to SCA 3. **Amendments are ready to be made** that will address the questions raised in several areas:

- The Judicial Council and retired judges would **not** be involved in nominating eligible citizens for selection as members of the citizens redistricting commission. Rather, a screening panel of city clerks and registrars of voters would have responsibility for nominating the pool of citizens from which the commission members would be chosen. Although the roles of the Judicial Council and retired judges are quite limited in the current version of SCA 3, we recognize that some persons have questioned whether those bodies are diverse enough to ensure a fair, representative process. We believe that clerks and registrars, who have experience dealing with the election process in a strictly nonpartisan manner, are an excellent substitute.
- The language describing diversity of the screening panel, the pool of candidates, and the commission would be made more inclusive.
- The bill would be amended to require that two Democrats, two Republicans, and one commissioner who is not a member of either of those parties must vote for any redistricting plan. This strengthens the procedure for avoiding partisan collusion among commissioners.
- Amendments would further clarify that the data needed to ensure compliance with the Voting Rights Act will be available to the commissioners.

It is our understanding that the above amendments will address the concerns raised by civil rights groups such as the Asian Pacific American Legal Center, the National Association of

Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, and the Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund.

Polls show that Californians strongly support reform of the redistricting process. SCA 3 contains the elements of reform that voters want: redistricting by a commission rather than the Legislature; an open process with information readily available through hearings and use of the Internet; and fair criteria for drawing maps that will keep neighborhoods and cities together and protect the voting rights of all.

We urge you to give your support to action on SCA 3 this week. It has already been thoroughly examined and discussed by members of both houses of the Legislature. With your backing, there is still time for the amended bill to be approved by the full Legislature before the end of the session. Californians deserve nothing less!

Sincerely,

/signed/

Jacqueline Jacobberger
President

CC: Senator Alan Lowenthal
Senator Roy Ashburn
Senate President pro Tempore Don Perata
Senate Minority Leader Dick Ackerman
Members of the Assembly