



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Tuesday, May 6, 2008

Media Contact:

Molly Weedn/Reed Galen
(CA Voters FIRST)
415-209-4217/916-329-7403

Julie Soderlund
(Gov. Schwarzenegger)
916-806-1409 (cell)

Bipartisan California Voters FIRST Campaign Takes Significant Step Toward Making Sacramento More Accountable To California Voters

Governor Davis And The California Democratic Council Join Growing Coalition Supporting The Reform Plan

Los Angeles—Common Cause, AARP, the League of Women Voters of California, the LA Area Chamber of Commerce, Governor Schwarzenegger, Governor Davis, and other members of the broad and bipartisan coalition supporting the California Voters FIRST Act today submitted more than 1.2 million signatures to qualify the measure for the November 2008 ballot. In addition, Gov. Davis and the California Democratic Council joined the growing number of Republicans, Democrats and Independents supporting this reform plan that will make politicians more accountable to California voters.

“After years of negotiations in the Legislature that have not produced any results- we are pleased to announce that we have collected over 1.2 million signatures to qualify the California Voters FIRST act for the November 2008 ballot,” California Common Cause Executive Director Kathay Feng said. “The diverse coalition of people standing up to support this measure is a testament to the strength of this comprehensive and bipartisan approach to redistricting in California.”

“Californians are ready to remove the conflict that currently exists with politicians drawing their own legislative boundaries. Voters want to end the gridlock in this state and make their representatives accountable to addressing the needs of the communities that elected them,” California AARP President Jeannine English said in front of the Los Angeles County Registrar’s office.

“I have said many times that we need a system the truly represents the voters so when lawmakers go home they are held accountable and people get results on issues they care about - whether it is health care reform, budget reform, education, making sure California never runs out of water or rebuilding our infrastructure,” said Governor Schwarzenegger. “The California Voters FIRST Act will make it easier for people to come to Sacramento and find common ground, solve problems and end gridlock in our government. I ask the people of California to join us in supporting this reform.”



“Everyone in Sacramento wants a safe-seat. However, safe-seats generally produce legislators who are less accountable to voters, not more. Under the current rules legislators pick their voters, and with this reform voters will once again pick their legislators,” Governor Davis said as he announced his endorsement.

“Legislators have perpetuated partisan, incumbent protection when they draw their own districts. That serves the politicians’ interests, not those of the voters, and it negatively affects communities in Los Angeles, San Diego, Stockton, San Jose and a multitude of other places throughout California,” League of Women Voters of California President Janis Hirohama said. “California Voters FIRST has garnered the support of over 1.2 million voters across the state because the people want reform so that legislators will tackle the problems facing our state—jobs, health care, water, the economy, and more.”

The California Voters FIRST Act proposes the creation of a 14-person independent citizen’s commission comprised of an equal number of Democrats and Republicans and including representation of voters from neither major party- a voice that is often unheard in today’s system. The reform also requires support from Democrats, Republicans and Independents for approval of all new redistricting plans. The initiative requires 694,354 valid signatures to be placed on the November 2008 ballot.

-30-

Paid for by California Voters First, Business Leaders, Governor Schwarzenegger & Public Interest Groups Committed to Redistricting Reform. Major Funding by Governor Schwarzenegger's California Dream Team Committee and Michael Bloomberg.