

Major California programs and activities



Redistricting campaign: On May 6, 2008, we turned in over 1.2 million signatures to registrars across the state! At the press conference, our original group of supporters (including CC, AARP, LA Chamber, and LWV, and Gov. Schwarzenegger) were joined by Gov. Gray Davis and members of the California Democratic Council which just voted to endorse. The registrars will be looking at the signatures to verify them. We expect to hear by mid-June that we have gathered enough signatures

(need 700,000) to place the California Voters FIRST initiative on the November 2008 ballot. Working with CCC members and staff and coalition groups, we anchored the volunteer signature gathering and the endorsement outreach. New organizations and individuals endorse every day, including local Chambers of Commerce and Democratic Clubs, the New America Foundation, California Council of Churches/California Church IMPACT and the City of Pasadena. The official website of the campaign is www.cavotersfirst.org. We also have updates on the CCC website. All CCC staff are actively engaged in this campaign. Now we are moving into campaign mode.



Youth work: CCC staffer LaToya Jarrett has been working with Democracy Matters interns on Southern California campuses. We are helping students plan monthly events, educate others and lobby on Clean Money and redistricting, and do voter education. In Northern California, through the volunteer leadership of Kathy Armstrong and help of Kathay Feng, we are guiding a Citizen Schools after school class of middle schoolers to learn about redistricting. The project's

website is www.meetgerry.com.



Election reform: CCC worked on the Election Protection Hotline that fielded 1,200 calls from California voters. Kathay Feng consulted on outreach, and when the Double Bubble problem was identified, worked with the LA Registrar of Voters to find a solution and rescue 47,000 votes which otherwise would have been tossed. We provided testimony on behalf of the EP Hotline to the California Senate and Assembly Elections Committees and the Secretary of State addressing the many problems that were raised from the calls and providing a comprehensive list of recommendations. CCC plans to anchor similar efforts in California for the November 2008 elections.

Media Reform: Members of the Los Angeles Media Group headed by Jim Rhyne and Jon Bartholomew planned a successful Southern California Media Summit featuring FCC Commissioner Adelstein, Congresswoman Hilda Solis, Blogger Brad Friedman, Kathay Feng and Bob Edgar as speakers and workshops on important issues. The Sacramento Media Group continues its outreach to community groups and is writing their report after interviewing TV station managers and monitoring the news.



State Legislation: we are following over 30 bills addressing CCC's policy areas, including a number of bills we opposed dealing with ID requirements for voting (all of which failed to pass). Current bills we are supporting through the Legislative process include a bill to better inform Decline-to-State votes which partisan ballots they can vote on, two bills to allow electronic filing for local campaign donations and candidates' Statement of Economic Interest, a bill to tighten lobbyist employer gift restrictions, and two bills to increase economic disclosure requirements for campaign ads (one of which CCC is sponsoring).

Public financing: we presented the "Clean Elections" initiative to the San Diego City Ethics Commission as part of our campaign to put this measure on the ballot.

Recent Public Events in California (Sample)

- Pinole: JFuller organized local candidates debate, 1/10.
- San Diego: Member event on "Effects of Media Consolidation on Our Democracy."
- Oakland: Member cultivation event and book signing with Derek Cressman at Head Royce School.
- Sacramento, Sonoma: Member events for Jim Hightower's book drawing several hundred attendees. 4/8, 4/11
- Los Angeles: So. Cal. Media Summit, drawing over 150 people, featuring FCC Commr. Adelstein. 3/29.
- Orange County: Redistricting Petition signing for members at "The Great Write-In" in Orange County. 4/5
- Sacramento: Redistricting Petition signing at Earth Day and Picnic Day at UC Davis. 4/19, 4/20

California Fundraising Activities

1. Spring Appeal Donations to CCC: \$22,123.40 (Second Appeal letter is still out; SNAFU with National sending appeal during our window. Budgeted income from Spring Appeal: \$60,000)
2. Donations CCC Redistricting Reform Fund: \$50,000. (This is from newsletters, part of Spring Appeal, and payments from CAV1 for services rendered).
3. Donations to c3 Education Fund for CCC work:
 - \$100,000 - Irvine Foundation – Election Reform research and advocacy work
 - \$55,000 - DiPaola Family Foundation – Democracy Matters
 - \$5,000 - Wyss Foundation
 - \$3,500 – Munger Tolles Olson Foundation – Citizen Schools Project
 - \$800 – Individual member donors
4. Hightower Event: Over \$3,000.
5. CCC submitted a proposal to SSRC for a \$30,000 grant. Pending.

Recent California Media Coverage (Sample)

- **050708. San Francisco Chronicle: Initiative on redistricting closer to ballot.** "Supporters of a ballot initiative to change how legislative district lines in California are drawn submitted an estimated 1.2 million signatures to county election offices Tuesday in an effort to qualify the measure for the November ballot. The plan, backed by a coalition that includes California Common Cause, AARP and the League of Women Voters as well as Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, would create a 14-member commission to draw lines for state Senate, Assembly and Board of Equalization districts.... Proponents of the redistricting ballot initiative wondered at the timing of Núñez's announcement. "Núñez's proposal is politics as usual, the timing of it and the content of it," said Kathay Feng, executive director of California Common Cause."
- **030408. Pasadena Star News: Pasadena to endorse redistricting plan.** "The City Council is aiming to be the first in the state to endorse a plan to change the way state assembly and senate districts are drawn up. The council, at the prompting of Councilman Chris Holden, voted unanimously Monday to draft a resolution in support of the California Voters' First initiative. The initiative, sponsored by the government watchdog group California Common Cause, would take redistricting power away from the legislature and put it into the hands of an independent, 14-member citizens' commission. Kathay Feng, California Common Cause's executive director, said the initiative would prevent incumbent legislators from meeting behind closed doors to draw up district lines that would be favorable to them come election time."
- **021408. AP, Independent expenditure use skyrockets to skirt donation limits.** Derek Cressman, government watchdog director of Common Cause, said that at some point California should try to put limits on donations to independent expenditure committees, but he said now might not be the best time because of the current makeup of the U.S. Supreme Court. Cressman was one of five witnesses who testified at a nearly two-hour hearing held by the FPPC to look at ways it could respond to the flood of independent expenditures.
- **012508. Los Angeles Times, Stricter rules on political gifts considered: The Fair Political Practices Commission wants to tighten disclosure requirements and could ban many contributions altogether.** California Common Cause's policy advocate, Christina Lokke, said a crackdown on gifts is overdue. "Any time the governor or another statewide officer receives a gift from any entity, you have to wonder what the motivation is," she said.
- **011808. Sacramento Bee, Prop 93 Term Limits, Common Cause: Thumbs up to Prop. 93.** "Common Cause has long believed that term limits arbitrarily limit the right of voters to elect their representatives from among the most qualified candidates, while at the same time giving more power and influence to special interest lobbyists," Roy Ulrich, the group's vice chairman, said in a written statement. Kathay Feng, director of California Common Cause, said there is dissatisfaction among some members about Proposition 93's benefits for incumbents, its heavy funding by special-interest groups, and by the failure of legislative leaders to place a companion measure on the ballot to alter the way political districts are drawn, a process called redistricting. "But there were a lot of people who felt a long-term policy decision like this should not be based on short-term politics," Feng said. Proposition 93, by slowing turnover, could allow lawmakers to gain greater expertise and focus on issues long term, Feng said."
- **010708. Pasadena Star News Oped, Jim Rhyne, Public suffers under media conglomerates.** "Last year, I co-authored a report on local TV news coverage in Los Angeles in conjunction with California Common Cause. Among the more troubling trends we noticed is the ease of which big media share news."