



15 Important Points about Proposition 15

Proposition 15, the California Fair Elections Act, implements a pilot project to make voluntary public financing available to Secretary of State candidates in 2014 and 2018.

California needs Prop 15

- **The amount of money in politics is outrageous, and it is corrupting the system.** Since 2000, over \$1 billion dollars has been raised by California politicians. All this fundraising buys access for the special interests, but shuts out the rest of us. **We need to change the way we finance election campaigns** so politicians stay focused on the job we elect them to accomplish.
- **Politicians in California spend too much time raising money for their next re-election.** We have many serious problems to fix in California, from our schools to our budget crisis to our health care system, but our elected officials spend too much time in fundraisers and not enough time doing what they are elected to do. **We need to get politicians out of the fundraising game** so that they will focus on our priorities.

What Prop 15 does

- **Proposition 15 changes the way we finance election campaigns so politicians stay focused on the job we sent them to accomplish.** It implements a pilot project to make voluntary public financing available to Secretary of State candidates in 2014 and 2018.
- **Prop 15 ensures that only candidates who show broad support** and agree to strict spending limits would receive funding. Candidates have to get 7,500 five dollar contributions and signatures from California voters to qualify. They receive enough funding to run competitive campaigns.
- **Prop 15 imposes strict reporting requirements and prohibitions on campaign spending** for participating candidates. Violators would face fines, possible jail time, and prohibitions from running for office in the future.
- Participating candidates would be **prohibited from raising or spending money beyond the limited public financing**, and are **banned from raising money from lobbyists, their clients, or anybody else**.
- **Prop 15 removes the current ban on public financing of campaigns in California** so that the pilot project could be expanded to any office in California without having to go to the ballot again if the program is successful. It also would allow all cities and counties to have public financing if they choose to.
- **Prop 15 pays for itself**, primarily through registration fees on lobbyists, lobbying firms, and lobbyist employers. **No taxpayer dollars will go to candidates.** Currently lobbyists only pay \$12.50 per year in California, one of the lowest rates in the country.

Voters are ready for Fair Elections

- Demonstrating the widespread frustration with business as usual, **79% of likely voters** in a recent Public Policy Institute of California poll said that the state government is **"pretty much run by a few big interests looking out for themselves"** rather than **"for the benefit of all the people."**



- **Since 2000, over \$1 billion has been raised by California politicians**, buying special interests access but shutting out the rest of us. That's why nearly three out of four voters want to change the way elections in California are financed.
- **Voters are ready for elections that money can't buy.** In an October 2009 survey, likely June 2010 voters supported the California Fair Elections Act by a nearly 3-1 margin, with 63% saying they'd vote yes vs. only 22% saying they'd vote no. Support held strong across all political parties and geographic regions of California, with support of 65% among Latinos, 65% among Democrats, 65% among independents, and 58% among Republicans. After people heard both pro and con messages, support actually increased, to 69% saying they'd vote Yes vs. only 18% saying they'd vote no.

Fair Elections work

- **Nearly 400 candidates from different backgrounds have been elected with this system in eight states and two cities**— new people with new ideas from all walks of life, not the same old career politicians. Because they never take campaign contributions, they can speak their mind and work for the people, not the special interests.
- **Fair Elections create a more competitive playing field** that allows more women and candidates of diverse backgrounds to pursue elected office, even if they're not wealthy or don't know wealthy donors.
- **Fair Elections save voters money.** After 81% of Connecticut's legislature was elected with Fair Elections in 2008, it voted to expand their bottle recycling bill after being stopped by lobbyists for a decade. The bill *generated almost \$17 million in additional revenue annually for the state, more than paying for the entire Fair Elections system with that one bill*¹. North Carolina's Insurance Commissioner was elected with Fair Elections in 2008 and then not only reversed a 9.4% insurance rate increase and froze rates for two years, but *forced insurance companies to return \$50 million to overcharged ratepayers*².
- **Nearly 400 organizations and leaders endorse Proposition 15.** The **League of Women Voters of California, California Nurses Association, California Common Cause, and California Clean Money Campaign** are the co-chairs of the campaign for Prop 15. AARP, the American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), California Alliance for Retired Americans, California Church IMPACT, California Primary Care Association, California Physicians Alliance, Consumer Federation of California, Equal Justice Society, Sierra Club, and leaders like California Democratic Party Chairman John Burton are among the other endorsers.

¹ <http://www.bottlebill.org/news/articles/2009/CT-10-1-MixedFeelingsOnWater.htm>

² http://www.caclean.org/problem/propulse_2009-07-15.php