



Green Party of California

PO Box 160, Station A, Richmond, CA 94808 www.cagreens.org (916) 448-3437

December 10, 2015

Dear State Senator Ben Allen

I can not be present with you at your December 11th hearing in Los Angeles on Campaign Finance Reform. Therefore on behalf of the Green Party of California, I would like to offer the following comments in writing.

While Greens appreciate the efforts of yourself and others to make the best of a bad situation in terms of the undue influence of big money in politics. you are trying to fix the headlights when the engine of our democracy is broken.

The Green Party believes that as long as we continue with single-seat, winner-take-all districts, especially with their large size in California, we will never be able to meaningfully address money in politics, because the threshold to receive representation is so high and so many voters have to be reached.

The malignant Two Top system has even made this worse, by increasing the universe of voters that a candidate must communicate with in the primary election, and hence the early cost of elections, which also favors sitting moneyed interests, by raising and front-loading the cost of getting into a race.

The Green Party believes your committee should investigate reform of California's elections from the current system, to one of multi-seat districts with proportional representation. Systems of proportional representation lower the cost of election by lowering the threshold to be elected, which also makes public financing schemes more viable. Systems of proportional representation also have many other advantages over our current system, because they promote much fuller representation of the diversity in our state, compared to our current system.

We fear that unless California's winner-take-all elections are abandoned in favor of a proportional representation system, we will find ourselves in the same place ten year and twenty years from now, complaining about the undue influence of money in politics.

There are many kinds of systems of proportional representation summarized in our Green Party platform, which you can find here www.cagreens.org/platform.

You may also wish to examine the specific Mixed Member Proportional system proposed for California by members of the New America Foundation, patterned after national systems in use in Germany and New Zealand, but modified for California's reality as a nation-state with regions. It includes smaller single-seat legislative districts and proportional regionally-based multi-seat districts ([summary](#), [full version](#)).

We would be happy to arrange a briefing for your Elections Committee staff and/or committee on this topic and bring in experts from across California.

Sincerely,

Michael Feinstein
Spokesperson, Green Party of California