



April 11, 2011

Citizen's Redistricting Commission  
1130 K Street, Suite 101  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Members of the Citizens Redistricting Commission:

The California Independent Voter Project has been promoting the voting rights of independent and decline to state voters (DTS) in California since 2006. Through our extensive voter education program, CAIVP has successfully promoted increased independent voter participation in both primary and general elections.

In 2008, CAIVP began an effort to open California's political process by supporting a change to non-partisan open primary elections. We wrote the measure later adopted by the legislature and placed before the voters as Proposition 14. Among other reforms, this measure gives DTS voters the right to run for public office and to vote for candidates in primary elections. Proposition 14, passed by voters in June 2010, gives California's registered voters who choose not to affiliate with a political party the right to vote for candidates for legislative, constitutional and congressional offices without regard to party affiliation.

The next step in guaranteeing California's citizens fair and competitive elections is your work with the Citizens Redistricting Commission. As you are aware, the authors of Proposition 11 listed very specific criteria for redrawing legislative, constitutional and congressional districts for the next decade.

Quite intentionally, party membership was NOT one of these criteria. In fact, the language of Proposition 11 specifically excludes consideration of political party membership in Section 6 (d) (4):

“The geographic integrity of any city, county, city and county neighborhood or community of interest shall be respected to the extent possible without violating the requirements of any of the preceding subdivisions. **Communities of interest shall not include relationships with political parties, incumbents or political candidates (bold and emphasis added).**”

The language of the Initiative specifically excludes any criteria related to political party registration. There is therefore no reason for the Commission, its staff, or its consultants to access or otherwise make use of any data associated with partisan registration.

The most recent redistricting plans from 1990 and 2000 created districts designed to protect both incumbents and the two major political parties. Indeed, over the past decade there have been virtually no legislative or congressional districts in California that have changed the political party in control and nearly every incumbent office holder in a partisan seat has been re-elected.

In recent weeks there has been a considerable amount of controversy regarding the selection of consultants and law firms hired by the Commission. We take no issue with the Commission's decision or process in this regard. Rather, we are here to remind the Commission of its mandate and to suggest that such concerns should be easily satisfied as long as the Commission follows the law by ensuring that no partisan political data is made available to the Commission, its staff, its consultants, or the public until after the lines have been drawn, approved, and finalized.

We respectfully request that the Commission take formal action, in conformance with Proposition 11, to direct that no partisan political data be integrated into any data used in the preparation for and/or drawing of new political district boundaries and that, in the event that such data is a part of information already in the possession of staff, consultants, or others associated with the Commission, that all such data bases be purged of any and all partisan information.

Aside from the mandate itself, there is simply no reason to use party registration data to draw fair districts that comply with the guidelines specified in the redistricting initiative. The combination of fairly drawn districts and the Open Primary will, for the first time in decades, give the citizens of California a chance at elections that are not tainted by the intense partisan interests of entrenched political parties.

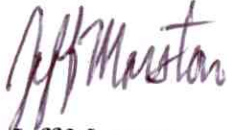
We respectfully request that you take this action on behalf of the more than 50% of California voters who identify themselves as "independent" or "non-partisan" regardless of how they are formally registered as well as the fastest growing portion of the California electorate – the approximately 20% who have formally chosen to "decline-to-state" a party preference.

Proposition 11 quite appropriately recognized that party affiliation is incidental to community of interest. In approving Proposition 14, the voters reinforced this mandate by doing away with partisan primaries altogether. In doing so, the voters of California have emphasized that there should be no hierarchy of voter privilege based upon political party membership.

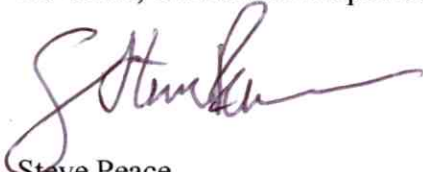
The common purpose of Proposition 11 and Proposition 14 is simply to put the individual voter at the top of the pyramid, to ensure that each and every voter enjoys the benefit of

equal and uncompromised access to the democratic process. The only way the Commission can ensure that this principle is upheld is to ensure that your work is done blind to the partisan implications of following the mandate of the law. And, the only way to do this is to simply make such information unavailable to anybody until after your work is completed.

Thank you for your consideration,



Jeff Marston  
Co-Chair, California Independent Voter Project



Steve Peace  
Co-Chair, California Independent Voter Project