



Dear Friends,

Sometimes you have to go sideways to find a way forward. It has become clear to us that in order to achieve health care reform, California needs electoral reform. The power of big money in California is simply too strong; it distorts our democracy.

Good news! We now have a real chance for publicly financed elections in California with AB583, the California Clean Money and Fair Elections Act. It passed the Assembly in January - AMAZING!

The UU Legislative Ministry has joined a coalition of over 100 groups, including the League of Women Voters to support this legislation - you can find a lot more info, including testimonies from Maine and Arizona where similar legislation is working, at www.cacleanmoney.org

On Wednesday morning, April 19th, at 9:30am, AB583 will be heard by the Senate Elections, Reapportionment, and Constitutional Amendment Committee (chaired by our smart and supportive UU State Senator, Debra Bowen). If you are in town and want to come to the hearing, let me know. You can also try watching on-line through the Legislative Center on our website www.uulmca.org. (Select the top menu item, "Legislative Center," and click "Watch CA Assembly Hearings.")

As momentum builds to pass this legislation, entrenched interests will be weighing in.

Legislators NEED to hear from the VOTERS in their districts.

Please sign the petition of support for AB583 at <http://www.CAclean.org/petition> (*Please sign it now even if you've signed before.*) Your petition will immediately be emailed to your legislators and Governor Schwarzenegger - see a list below of co-authors.

If your Senator is on the Elections Committee, please give him or her a call to encourage his or her support (see list below).

There are now nurses on the street collecting signatures for a different "Clean Money" ballot measure that goes beyond AB583. It is my hope that public financing of elections can be won legislatively, as it is likely to result in better public policy that is fair to all parties (including third parties), and has a minimum of unintended consequences. However, I have to admit that amazing and well organized nurses in the streets can serve as an external push to the legislative process.

While the previous vote in the Assembly was along party lines (most Democrats in favor) a former Arizona legislator (Republican) gave a ringing endorsement of Clean Money - see the July 16, 2004 SF Chronicle article by Mark Spitzer

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/chronicle/archive/2004/07/16/EDGAE7LG811.DTL>

More recent editorials in California's major metropolitan newspapers are also endorsing AB583.

Feels like history is moving on this one, and people of all political parties are interested in reclaiming our democracy. Please help out by signing the petition. Public financing of elections is an important part of the journey toward health care reform in California.

<http://www.CAclean.org/petition>

Thanks,

Rev. Lindi Ramsden, UU Legislative Ministry Action Network, CA

Senate Elections, Reapportionment, and Constitutional Elections Committee Members (for calling)

Senator Debra Bowen (D) (916) 651- 4028 or (310) 318-6994 (Redondo Beach office) (she is a co-author)

Senator Jim Battin (R) (916) 651-4037 or (760)568-0408 (Palm Desert office)

Senator Kevin Murray (D) (916) 651-4026 or (310)641-4391 (Culver City office)

Senator Gloria Romero (D) (916) 651-4024 or (323)881-0100 (Los Angeles office)

Senator Charles Poochigian (R) (916) 651-4014 or (559)253-7122 (Fresno office)

Sample message : "I am calling to ask Senator _____ to actively support A.B. 583, the California Clean Money and Fair Election Act, and to do everything he/she can to institute a Clean Money system of public financing for California statewide and legislative races. AB 583 is based on the successful Clean Money systems already working in Arizona and Maine. In these states, Clean Money has lead to higher voter turnout, more women and minorities running for office, and, since elected officials do not have to fundraise for their reelection, more time to focus on the needs and concerns of their constituents. "

Coauthors of AB583

INTRODUCED BY Assembly Member Loni Hancock
(Principal coauthors: Senators Alquist and Simitian) (Coauthors: Assembly Members Bass, Berg, Canciamilla, Chan, Evans, Goldberg, Jones, Klehs, Koretz, Laird, Leno, Lieber, Lieu, Montanez, Mullin, Nation, Nava, Oropeza, Pavley, Saldana, Torrico, Wolk, and Yee)(Coauthors: Senators Alarcon, Bowen, Chesbro, Figueroa, Kuehl, Lowenthal, Ortiz, Speier, and Torlakson)

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