



Formerly The Foundation for Taxpayer & Consumer Rights

1750 Ocean Park Boulevard, #200, Santa Monica, CA 90405-4938 • Tel: 310-392-0522 • Fax: 310-392-8874 • www.consumerwatchdog.org

September 19, 2008

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

Consumer Watchdog urges you to sign AB 583 (Hancock), the Fair Elections Act.

AB 583 enacts a program of voluntary publicly financed elections for California Secretary of State. The Secretary of State, who guards the integrity of our elections system, is a particularly apt test office for public financing of elections in California.

California voters have repeatedly expressed the desire to limit the influence of money in politics since approving Prop 9 and enacting the Political Reform Act more than thirty years ago. Campaign reform measures have limited donation amounts, regulated the expenditure and disclosure of contributions and barred lobbyists from making political donations and giving gifts. Yet the power of private donors in California politics just seems to increase. Loopholes emerge in new campaign reforms before the ink is dry and nothing has reined in political spending.

Public financing of elections can free candidates from the pernicious cycle of special interest fundraising, and neutralize the corrosive impact of private money on California's political process.

You swept into office five years ago on the votes of reform-minded Californians who were tired of politics-as-usual in Sacramento. This bill is your opportunity to enact a fundamental change to our broken system of campaign financing.

AB 583's voluntary public financing program would begin in 2014. Only those candidates who forgo private donations (except for a small number of initial contributions) could participate, giving them the ability, and an incentive, to break loose from the political money chase. The bill is a critical first step toward bringing public financing of all elections to California, a reform Consumer Watchdog has long supported.

We urge you to sign AB 583 into law.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carmen Balber".

Carmen Balber

(910) 392-0522 ext. 324