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January 26, 2011

Fair Political Practices Commission
428 J Street, Suite 800
Sacramento, CA 95814

To Commissioners,

We at California Common Cause would like to thank the Chairman and the members of the Political Reform Act Task Force for their hard work on the reform proposals. As a 40 year old reform organization, we know it's tough and we appreciate what they have done.

First, the proposal for an electronic filing system should be highlighted as a key reform and also one that will need all of our support to realize. Right now, if a California resident goes online to find information on a candidate running in their district, it is very time consuming and difficult to sift through hundreds of pdf documents to learn the nature of the race. We already have laws on the books requiring information be disclosed so that we may hold our candidates, ballot measure committees and special interest groups accountable for their actions when we go to the polls. Now we need this information to be available in a format that everyone can use and understand. One should not have to be a math whiz, political analyst or have the time to learn both skills in order to be an informed citizen.

Second, we are concerned about the proposals to increase the disclosure threshold for committee qualification from \$1,000 to \$2,000 and the 24 hour contribution reporting threshold from \$1,000 to \$2,500. In a time when citizens are finding it difficult to keep track of how much money is being spent, and by whom, to influence elections, we should not be letting more contributions slip into the shadows. We need more information, not less. The Task Force's proposal requesting the commission to evaluate the need to regulate "bundling" is an example of a pattern we would not have found without access to low level contribution information.

Sincerely,

Katie Fleming
Policy Advocate