



Another View - Yes on Prop. 54: Let voters know what is going on

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It may seem outrageous that proposed state laws would be written or changed at the last minute and then voted on by state legislators within a matter of hours — giving no time for a concerned public to view or provide input on policy that impacts them. But that's what happens in California, and far too often.

The result of this practice at the State Capitol is the passage of bad public policy with unintended consequences for families, small businesses, seniors, taxpayers — all Californians. In addition, this practice creates a climate where powerful special interests can work to change legislation behind closed doors and get their wish lists pushed into law without anyone taking notice until all is said and done.

Fortunately, a solution to this problem can be found in Proposition 54, which appears on the November ballot. Prop. 54 will not only ensure adequate time for consideration of legislation, it will also provide increased access to the legislative process for those who cannot hire expensive lobbyists in Sacramento.

Proposition 54 will require the legislature to post online and distribute proposed laws in their final form for at least 72 hours before a floor vote in the Assembly or Senate. This common-sense requirement will give both legislators and voters time to actually read and analyze policy and give the public time to provide input.

Prop. 54 also requires the Legislature to post video recordings of every public legislative meeting online within 24 hours so the public — most of whom cannot take time out of their day to drive to Sacramento to attend hearings — can view what is going on and provide input if they wish. Prop. 54 also allows individuals to create and share their own recordings of legislative proceedings.

With passage of Prop. 54, the small business owners who can't take a day away from work can now follow and weigh in on policy that would impact their company and employees. Seniors can view legislative hearings right from their homes. Students can learn about the legislative process and understand that they not only have the right, but now the ability to participate in their government. Under Prop. 54, no longer will special interest legislation be jammed through in the dead of night, leaving voters in the dark.

The supporters of Prop. 54 include a broad and diverse coalition of groups and individuals who don't always agree on much, but they all agree that increased transparency at our State Capitol is good for California. Supporters include the League of Women Voters of California, the National Federation of Independent Business/CA, California Common Cause, the California NAACP, the Latin Business Association, the League of California Cities, the California Senior Advocates League, the California Chamber of Commerce, the Planning and Conservation League, and Democrats and Republicans, among many others.

City and county governments and state agencies already practice this type of transparency for voters, and it's time our state legislature follows suit. California voters deserve to know what's going on in Sacramento and how new laws might impact them. Vote Yes on Prop. 54.

The author is a Leadership Council Member, National Federation of Independent Business/California

Owner and a professional small business services in Vacaville. The National Federation of Independent Business represents 325,000 dues-paying small business members nationally, with 22,000 members in California. NFIB advocates in the Legislature and Congress for the right of their member to own, operate, and expand their small business.

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