



Coalition Member Testimonials

“As longtime advocates for open government, the League of Women Voters supports the California Legislature Transparency Act. The League believes that our democracy is stronger when more people participate, that in order to have meaningful participation, we need to have adequate notice of actions, open meetings, and access to public records. Having advance notice of the content of bills slated for legislative action and recordings of legislative proceedings available in a timely fashion greatly enhances active public participation.”

Helen Hutchinson, President, League of Women Voters of California

“The California Legislature Transparency Act helps further the mission of Common Cause by creating a more open, honest, and accountable government. It will empower the public to participate and have their voices heard in our political process.”

Kathay Feng, Executive Director, California Common Cause

“Giving legislators, their staff, and the public time to review last-minute changes in legislation is a common-sense practice that will improve governance in California.”

James P. Mayer, President/CEO, California Forward

“When legislation that affects jobs and the economy is decided upon by only a select few and passed in the dead of night, it can create significant obstacles for business growth which impacts real people. CalChamber supports the California Legislature Transparency Act, which will create transparency in the legislative process.”

Allan Zaremborg, President/CEO, California Chamber of Commerce

“Giving all people the opportunity to review, debate, and contribute to laws that impact us is our goal – a goal that will be furthered by passage of the California Legislature Transparency Act.”

Alice Huffman, President, California State Conference of the NAACP

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“Qualification of the California Legislature Transparency Act finally gives voters the opportunity to improve the way business is done at our State Capitol, helping ensure lawmakers and the public have ample time to review bills before they are signed into law.”

Ruben Guerra, Chairman of the Latin Business Association

“The public has every right to know what’s in a bill before it’s signed into law. The voter-supported California Legislature Transparency Act will ensure that right becomes a reality, and Hispanic 100 gladly supports it.”

Mario Rodriguez, Chairman, Hispanic 100

“Every single day small businesses face the threat of additional legislation and regulation from Sacramento which often add to the cost of doing business in California. Greater transparency in the Legislature is necessary to help level the playing field and protect small business.”

Tom Scott, State Director, National Federation of Independent Business-California

“The California Legislature Transparency Act will help ensure taxpayers are protected against costly, ill-advised legislation that is all too often rushed through the process without proper vetting and debate. This measure will bring every new proposal into the light of day so the public, and not just the special interests, have a chance to weigh in.”

Jon Coupal, President, Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association

“With this initiative, voters finally have a chance to stop the political games that have allowed many flawed anti-taxpayer proposals to be approved in near-secrecy, with no regard for public input and no video archive that could be used to hold the politicians accountable. This measure will reform our state government, bring the lawmaking process out of the shadows, and put the politicians’ actions on the Internet for all the world to see.”

Teresa Casazza, President and CEO of the California Taxpayers Association

“The Los Angeles business community relies on our elected lawmakers to represent our best interests at the State Capitol. Too often, major changes happen last minute, taking away the public’s ability for thorough review. The California Legislature Transparency Act will shed daylight on the legislative process and allow everyone an equal opportunity to weigh in before legislation gets passed.”

Gary Toebben, President/CEO, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

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“Too often legislation that impacts jobs, our economy, and families is passed with little to no chance for public input or discussion, which can lead to negative consequences. The California Legislature Transparency Act will help ensure all Californians have access to our legislative process, which will ultimately lead to better policies for our state.”

Nathan Ahle, President/CEO, Fresno Chamber of Commerce

“The California Legislature Transparency Act is a simple but critically important reform. It mandates that the public can actually read proposed laws before they are voted on. This will help ensure good public policy for all Californians.”

Rob Lapsley, President, California Business Roundtable

“The First Amendment Coalition has long opposed the California Legislature’s practice of voting on bills, submitted or materially amended at the last minute, before members have had a chance to read and understand them, and without any opportunity for the press and public to weigh in. Such practices, effectively substituting secret lawmaking for an open legislative process, make a mockery of democracy. The California Legislature Transparency Act would curb these abuses by requiring that all bills, in their final form, be published in full text on the internet for at least 72 hours before the Legislature can vote on them.”

“The California Legislature Transparency Act strengthens voters’ ability to hold their elected representatives accountable. Our state governing body is now one step closer to becoming more open and transparent to voters.”

Peter Scheer, First Amendment Coalition

"These changes will transform public awareness of and participation in California’s legislative process in three modest but long overdue ways. The 72-hour sunshine rule will end the majority’s ability to rush a pig in a poke to the Governor’s desk at the end of the legislative year, with many if not most lawmakers and the entire public unaware of what’s being voted on. The electronic recording and archiving of all committee and floor proceedings will add unprecedented context to the record of how bills were understood and intended at the time of passage—an often key issue for the courts that must interpret them—as well as opening the public’s window on every hearing and debate, not just those the leadership wants to showcase. And the new citizen spectators' right to make their own video and audio recording of these hearings and debates will subject lawmakers to the same eyewitness exposure they’ve imposed on state and local bodies for decades under the Brown Act.”

Terry Francke, Founder, Californians Aware

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“Republican activist Charles T. Munger Jr. and Sam Blakeslee, a former state senator, are the primary sponsors of the California Legislature Transparency Act, which would change the state constitution to require that all bills be available for public and legislative review at least 72 hours before they’re voted on; that all open proceedings of the Legislature must be recorded by the Legislature and those recordings be made available to the public, and that members of the public be allowed to record and broadcast or post on the internet recordings of any open Legislative proceeding.

It would squeeze much of the secrecy out of the Legislature, especially those bills that have their contents replaced wholesale by something unrelated to the original subject – an insidious process known as “gut-and-amend” – and then get voted on before the public, or even legislators, can react.

The idea that bills should be available for study for three days before they’re put to a vote in either house is one this Editorial Board has long advocated.”

Orange County Register Editorial Board

“California legislators keep showing us why they can’t be trusted to reform their wayward practices. Let there be no doubt: If voters want greater transparency and accountability out of Sacramento, they need to do it themselves through the initiative process.

It’s important to note that the initiative [California Legislature Transparency Act] has no ideological or partisan bent. It has the support of the usual groups involved in good-government issues, including Common Cause, the League of Women Voters and California Forward.

...

Reforms passed by politicians are weak, and are subject to repeal the moment they become inconvenient. This is a job for voters.”

John Diaz, San Francisco Chronicle

“Legislators should know better than to try to deny Californians their fair share of sunshine. We’ve grown accustomed to basking in the light of public disclosure. We like it. And after Nov. 8, denying us that sunshine could be illegal.

After gathering more than 1 million signatures, it is a virtual certainty the California Legislative Transparency Act will be on the Nov. 8 ballot.

...

This year, Common Cause, the League of Women Voters, and a new group called Hold Politicians Accountable came forward to write the Transparency Act.

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The initiative [requires] all open legislative meetings to be recorded and posted online within 24 hours. It also removes rules against citizens taking their own videos. As it is, you can't even take a picture from the Capitol galleries.

People who care about actual transparency – like the League, Common Cause, California Forward, the First Amendment Coalition, the California Business Roundtable, five different chambers of commerce, the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association and many more – could see through such a move. So can we.”

Fresno Bee Editorial Board

“Any red-blooded, flag-waving politician would declare that the public has a right to know how government works and that transparency is vital to a functioning democracy. ... One of the promising proposals is the California Legislature Transparency Act.”

Sacramento Bee Editorial Board

“This measure would seriously shake up the Capitol. Requiring 72-hours notice would give the media and public time to digest what's being proposed. It gives supporters and opponents time to make their case. It provides a disincentive for legislators to try to sneak through funding for bizarre things given the likelihood that someone will discover the language. The recording requirements will assure that public hearings are available to the public before it's too late to do anything about it.”

Steven Greenhut, San Diego Union-Tribune