



VIA Online Portal to Author & Senate Committee on Elections and Constitutional Amendments

The Honorable Steve Glazer
California State Senate
1021 O Street, Suite 7520
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: SCA 6 (Newman) - Elections: recall of state officers - SUPPORT

Dear Chair Glazer:

On behalf of California Common Cause and the League of Women Voters of California, we write to express our strong support of SCA-6 (Newman), which would ensure that state legislative recalls in California are democratic, fair, and not subject to political manipulation.

In 1911, California voters provided for the recall and removal of elected officials from office. The purpose of the recall instrument is to give voters the power to remove officeholders who betray the public trust or fail the people. While this intention is valid and important, refinements to the state's recall system are needed. Under current law, an off-cycle special election may be held for a recall, in which voters are presented with the question of whether an officer should be recalled and the question of who should replace the officeholder. This creates the danger of the state's most important officeholders being decided at low-turnout elections with non-representative electorates, and replacement officers elected with low plurality support, rather than a majority.

It is our belief that reforming the recall should advance democratic values towards making elections more representative, strengthen the integrity of our democratic institutions, and do so in a manner that makes responsible use of the time of voters and the resources of the state.

SCA 6 would improve California's present system for holding a recall election by requiring that in the event of a successful recall of a state legislative officer a replacement candidate is selected with majority support in a subsequent election. In the case of recall of the Governor, this measure would provide that the Lt. Governor temporarily succeeds the Governor, which aligns with the Lt. Governor's duties in other contexts, and a replacement candidate is selected with majority support at the next statewide election. Finally, should the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Controller, Treasurer, Attorney General, or a member of the State Board of Equalization be removed from office in a recall election, this measure would provide that the replacement candidate would be filled by appointment.

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Importantly, this measure retains access to the recall, but does so in a way that should help ensure that recall outcomes are democratic and broadly supported and should help eliminate recalls that are frivolous or degrade democratic legitimacy.

For all these reasons, California Common Cause and the League of Women Voters of California strongly support the constitutional amendment proposed by SCA 6, and urge that it be put before the voters.

Sincerely,



Pedro Hernandez
Legal and Policy Director
California Common Cause



Dora Rose
Deputy Director
League of Women Voters of California