



April 16, 2021

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

The Honorable Ben Allen
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 4076
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 459 (Allen) – Political Reform Act of 1974: lobbying – SUPPORT

Dear Senator Allen:

The League of Women Voters of California writes in strong support of SB 459 (Allen), which offers greater transparency and more timely information about the millions of dollars spent every year to lobby the legislature and influence legislation.

California's current system requires lobbying reports to be filed on a quarterly basis, often resulting in concealment of information as to who is spending large amounts to influence legislation until after legislation has been decided. This is especially concerning in the third quarter of the year when lobbying expenditures are greatest (over \$100 million in each of the third quarters of 2019 and 2020) in tandem with final legislative votes being held and the Governor determining which bills to sign or veto.

SB 459 would increase the frequency of reporting for major lobbyists, requiring monthly reporting for lobbying firms and interest groups that report more than \$15,000 in lobbying activity in a month. In addition, lobbying groups that report more than \$45,000 in lobbying activity in a quarter would be required to report monthly for the next 12 months. During the 60-day period before the deadline for passage of bills, a report would need to be filed within 24 hours of retaining a lobbying firm hired to influence legislative action. **The careful parsing of fiscal triggers ensures visibility into the influence of the wealthiest, most powerful interests while safeguarding small non-profits from costly reporting requirements.**

SB 459 would also expand transparency by requiring: lobbyists to disclose the public positions they are taking on bills; 72-hour reporting of issue ads buys over a specified amount; and interest groups to put their names on their ads, thereby eliminating anonymous pressure campaigns.

The League of Women Voters of California strongly supports SB 459 because Californians deserve to know who is spending millions of dollars to influence legislation being made in their names.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Carol Moon Goldberg".

Carol Moon Goldberg
President