



Los Angeles Area
Chamber of Commerce



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**Politician Power Grab Denounced by
League of Women Voters of California, AARP, California Common Cause,
California Forward Action Fund and Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce**

Groups Vow to Fight Politicians’ Scheme to Gut Voter-Approved Redistricting Reforms

Sacramento - The League of Women Voters of California, AARP, California Common Cause, California Forward Action Fund and the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce announced today that they will vigorously campaign against a measure sponsored by incumbent politicians to overturn voter-approved Proposition 11. The organizations, who were all proponents of Prop. 11, say the politicians’ measure, which qualified for the November ballot, will take power from voters and give it to legislators.

“In sponsoring what can only be described as a power grab, the politicians behind the effort to overturn Prop. 11 are further demonstrating their disdain for voters and their refusal to be held accountable,” said Jeannine English, AARP national board member.

Voters passed Prop. 11 in 2008 to end the practice of legislators drawing their own districts to ensure their own reelection. The measure created the independent Citizens Redistricting Commission, which must draw districts in a fair and completely open and transparent manner. Over 30,000 Californians applied for the 14-member commission which will draw legislative and Board of Equalization district lines beginning in 2011.

“Rather than raising millions in special interest money to fight the voters’ will to create an independent redistricting process, these politicians should be focused on serving the public’s interest – not their

own,” said Kathay Feng, executive director of California Common Cause, the good government group that helped draft Prop. 11.

Several news reports have revealed that Congressman Howard Berman is the real sponsor of the initiative, as is his brother, a redistricting consultant who has made millions drawing election districts to protect incumbent politicians. Campaign finance reports show that most of the measure’s funders are legislators and congressional representatives. They were joined by a businessman with a long history of political contributions to Berman and others, who poured \$2 million into the committee to overturn Prop. 11.

“The fact that politicians and their hired guns are trying to gut this reform before it’s even started is just one of the reasons voters give our elected officials the lowest approval ratings in recorded history,” said Zabrae Valentine, executive director of the California Forward Action Fund. “This is exactly the behavior that spurs voters to further bind the hands of lawmakers they don’t trust.”

Polling on the measure to repeal Prop. 11 demonstrates that voters are not willing to give power back to the politicians they believe are failing them. A statewide survey among likely voters found that only 35 percent of voters would support the Berman initiative. After hearing a short description of the measure, support plummeted to 20 percent and opposition grew to 71 percent.

“Gutting Prop. 11 would be a giant step in the wrong direction for our state. We are confident that voters will see this cynical effort for what it is and reject this deceptive scheme at the polls,” said Janis R. Hirohama, president of the League of Women Voters of California.

“This effort is a slap in the face to more than 6 million Californians that voted for Prop. 11 in 2008,” said Gary Toebben, president of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce. “We welcome the opportunity to reaffirm that in our democracy it’s voters who choose their elected officials rather than the other way around.”

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