



NEWS RELEASE

CALIFORNIA SECRETARY OF STATE **BRUCE McPHERSON**

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Secretary of State Bruce McPherson Announces Support for Voices of Reform Redistricting Proposal

SACRAMENTO, CA - Today Secretary of State Bruce McPherson sent the following letter, expressing his support for the Voices of Reform Project's redistricting proposal:

August 8, 2006

Zabrae Valentine, Project Director
Voices of Reform
The Commonwealth Club
595 Market Street, 2nd Floor
San Francisco, CA 94105

Dear Ms. Valentine:

I am writing to you to express my support for the Voices of Reform Project's redistricting proposal.

The current process of drawing legislative boundaries is a system full of inherent conflict of interest resulting in legislators directly determining the shape of districts for which they or members of their party will run for office. This system allows for politicians to give themselves and their parties job security, and allows politicians to choose their voters instead of the other way around.

One only needs to compare redistricting in the 1990's with 2001 to understand the need for reform. Of the 153 legislative districts in California, nearly 50 were competitive in the 1990's when court-appointed Special Masters drew Legislative boundaries. Thirty of those seats actually changed partisan hands during the decade.

After the last redistricting, when district boundaries were artfully drawn by the politicians in the Legislature, there were only seven competitive districts and none changed partisan representation in the 2004 election.

I believe the system can and should be better. A reasonable solution to this problem should focus on core principles of fairness, balance, simplicity and transparency. It should maintain geographic integrity and reflect the equality and growth of minority populations. Your proposal is consistent with these principles and I applaud you for your comprehensive plan.

As California's Chief Elections Officer, I am very focused on encouraging greater participation in our electoral process. When people believe their vote counts, when the rules of the game force both sides to compete fairly for votes and when there's a chance it could go either way, people pay attention and they participate.

I am encouraged by your efforts and look forward to the day when a system that operates for the benefit of the people of California and democracy can be implemented.

Sincerely,

BRUCE McPHERSON
California Secretary of State

cc: The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Members of the California Legislature
Fred Keeley, Co-Chair, Voices of Reform Project
Dan Schnur, Co-Chair, Voices of Reform Project