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May 6, 1999

Hon. Bill Lockyer
Attorney General
1300 I Street, 17th Floor
Sacramento, California 95814

Attention: Ms. Connie Lemus
Initiative Coordinator

Dear Attorney General Lockyer:

Pursuant to Elections Code Section 9005, we have reviewed the proposed initiative cited as "The Political Reform Act of 2000" (File No. SA 1999 RF 0011).

Currently, the California Constitution requires the Legislature to adjust the boundaries of districts for the State Senate and Assembly, Board of Equalization, and U.S. House of Representatives for California in the year following the national census. This measure would transfer that authority to three "Citizen Masters" appointed by the Judicial Council. The measure requires that the Citizen Masters be retired justices of the Supreme Court or courts of appeal, or retired superior court judges, and have certain specified qualifications.

The measure requires that each State Senate district consist of two contiguous Assembly districts and each Board of Equalization district consist of ten contiguous Senate districts. It specifies that (1) only California population data as reported by the U.S. Census Bureau may be used to construct district boundaries and (2) the use of any data or programs which profile voting patterns, registered voters, or residence address of incumbent officeholders, is forbidden.

The measure also specifies a number of other procedural steps that the Citizen Masters must use to adjust the boundaries and provides that the California Supreme Court shall have exclusive authority to hear a petition challenging the final adjustments. The measure requires the Legislature to appropriate funds as may be reasonably necessary to implement the provisions of the measure.

Fiscal Effect

Presumably, the costs for the new process for establishing district boundaries for the Legislature, Board of Equalization, and U.S. House of Representatives from California, would be incurred only once every decade following the decennial census. The measure could result in net costs or savings depending on the cost of the work by the new Citizen Masters in comparison to the costs for work by the Legislature under the current requirements. The net fiscal effect is unknown, but probably not significant.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth G. Hill
Legislative Analyst

B. Timothy Gage
Director of Finance