

News from the FPPC



California Fair Political Practices Commission
428 J Street, Suite 620, Sacramento, CA 95814
www.fppc.ca.gov

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Contact: Tara Stock at (916) 322-7761

****Media Advisory****

Commission Chair Ann Ravel and Assemblyman Rich Gordon to Host Press Conference on Measure Enacted to Require More Transparency of Independent Expenditure Committees

California voters will now have more insight into special interests behind political advertisements. On Monday, October 15, 2012, Chair Ravel and Assemblyman Rich Gordon (Menlo Park) will host a joint press conference detailing a measure that was recently signed by the Governor to improve accountability and increase levels of disclosure required of independent expenditure committees.

More and more, voters receive political literature, hear radio, or view television advertisements funded by independent expenditure committees. An independent expenditure is made by an individual or group that is not affiliated with the candidate or ballot measure. While independent expenditures are on the rise in the California political arena at both state and local levels, current law has not always kept up with their expansion.

“With independent expenditures, it can be especially difficult for voters to track the true source of spending on a candidate or ballot measure, because frequently contributions are made to other independent expenditure committees, obscuring the identities of the original donors,” said Commission Chair Ann Ravel. “Disclosure is the best tool available to make the voting public aware of these practices.”

In 2010, the Commission estimated \$127 million had been spent by special interests on independent expenditures since 2000. Additionally, the 2010 Supreme Court decision in *Citizens United v. FEC* and the subsequent rise of Super PACs has only increased funding and donations towards independent expenditures throughout California.

As of today, nearly \$3.5 million has been spent on independent expenditures to support or oppose State legislative candidates on the November 6, 2012, ballot.

“The growth of independent expenditures makes appropriate disclosure all the more necessary,” said Assemblyman Rich Gordon. “In order for voters to make fully informed decisions, it is important they know who, if not the candidate or ballot measure campaign, is paying for political messaging and in what amounts.”

AB 481, carried by Assemblyman Gordon and signed by Governor Brown, enhances accountability and transparency by requiring immediate disclosure of major independent expenditures before an election, disclosing top donors on all advertisements by independent expenditure committees, making the independent expenditure committee principal officers liable for ethics violations, and requiring a written filing with the Commission by the committee that they did not coordinate with other campaigns or launder funds.

WHAT: Press Conference on AB 481, requiring more transparency of independent expenditure committees

WHEN: 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. – Monday, October 15, 2012

WHERE: Alquist State Building, Main Courtyard
100 Paseo de San Antonio
San Jose, CA 94113

WHO: Ann Ravel, FPPC Chair
Assemblyman Rich Gordon (Bill Author)
Helen Grieco, Common Cause (Bill Supporter)
Steve Westly, former California State Controller (invited)

Additional information: Metered street parking is available in the vicinity, in addition to multiple paid parking lots within a two block radius of the building. The San Antonio Light Rail stop drops off directly at the Alquist Building Courtyard.

Rain Plan: Should the weather not be conducive for an outdoor event, the press conference will be held in the main Auditorium on the first level of Alquist Building.

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