

# AB 1416, the *Ballot DISCLOSE Act*

## *Let Voters Know Who Supports and Opposes Ballot Measures — on the Ballot Itself*

AB 1416 (Santiago), sponsored by the California Clean Money Campaign, will ensure voters know who supports and opposes ballot measures. It passed the Assembly on a bipartisan vote of 57-19 and will have its Senate vote this summer.

### **Why California Needs the *Ballot DISCLOSE Act***

- **Every election, Californians vote on ballot propositions that bring drastic changes to our lives.** But we vote using ballots that don't list some of the information voters care about most: who supports and who opposes.
- **Over \$750 million was spent on CA ballot measures in 2020**, much of it by donors hiding behind vacuous and misleading names like "*Californians for Equal Rights*" and "*Californians to Protect Affordable Housing*".
- **Campaigns supported by organizations people trust are too often drowned out by Big Money** so voters don't know who really supports and opposes good or bad ballot measures.

### **No Information is More Important to Voters Than Who Really Supports & Opposes**

- **79% of voters say it's important to know who really supports and opposes** ballot measures when they vote.
- **But only 21% of voters** are "very confident" they know the important supporters and opponents when they vote.
- **Supporters and opponents of ballot measures are in the official arguments for and against them ballot pamphlet, but it's often over 100 pages long.** Only 42% of voters say it's "quick and easy" to find supporters and opponents in the ballot pamphlet and 22% didn't even know they could find them there or where to find them.
- **75% of likely voters favor** "adding to the ballot a short list of supporters and opponents of each ballot proposition".

### **What the *Ballot DISCLOSE Act* Will Do**

- **AB 1416 will add a short list of the supporters and opponents (125 characters apiece) of each state ballot measure** to the current 75-word title and summary so people know who supports and opposes them. Counties may also choose to include supporters and opponents for all local ballot measures, but are not required to.
- **Supporters and opponents are taken from the official ballot pamphlet arguments** for and against each ballot measure — helping voters who don't remember or read all details of the 100+ page pamphlet.

### **Example of *Ballot DISCLOSE Act* on the Ballot and the Effect it Will Have**

- **BEFORE:** In 2010, despite near-universal opposition from editorial boards and trailing badly in the polls, Proposition 26 passed — after \$18 million in ads by "*Stop Hidden Taxes*". Since then, Prop 26 has had huge effects by preventing state and local governments from raising fees, even on polluters, without a 2/3 vote.
- **AFTER:** With the *Ballot DISCLOSE Act*, voters would have clearly seen that Prop 26 was opposed by trusted organizations like the League of Women Voters, American Lung Association, Sierra Club California, and California League of Conservation Voters.

**Prop 26 passed with 52.5% of the vote. Might 3% have voted differently had they known who opposed it?**

### *Example Supporters and Opponents Added to the Title and Summary on the Ballot:*

<b>26</b>	<b>REQUIRES THAT CERTAIN STATE AND LOCAL FEES BE APPROVED BY TWO-THIRDS VOTE. FEES INCLUDE THOSE THAT ADDRESS ADVERSE IMPACTS ON SOCIETY OR THE ENVIRONMENT CAUSED BY THE FEE-PAYER'S BUSINESS. INITIATIVE CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT.</b> Fiscal Impact: Depending on decisions by governing bodies and voters, decreased state and local government revenues and spending (up to billions of dollars annually). Increased transportation spending and state General Fund costs (\$1 billion annually). <b>Supporters:</b> California Taxpayers' Association, California Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Action Committee, Nisei Farmers League. <b>Opponents:</b> League of Women Voters California, American Lung Association, Sierra Club California, California League Conservation Voters..	132 YES → ○
		133 NO → ○

Part added by AB 1416

## Recent Ballot Measures Many Voters Didn't Know Who Supported or Opposed

**Prop 15 (2020), the Tax on Commercial and Industrial Properties for Education and Local Government Funding Initiative, fell just short of winning with 48% of the vote** despite leading in early polls. It lost after over \$144 million in conflicting ads, with more spent against it than for it. AB 1416 would have shown voters it was supported by the [League of Women Voters](#), [California Teachers Association](#), & [Latino Community Foundation](#).

**Prop 16 (2020), to end California's Prop 209 ban on affirmative action, lost with 43% of the vote despite broad support from organizations most Californians trust — but may not have known supported it.** AB 1416 would have shown voters it was supported by the [League of Women Voters of California](#), [California Teachers Association](#), and the [Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund](#).

**Prop 22 (2020), the “Uber and Lyft” initiative to treat drivers as contractors instead of employees, won after drowning voters with \$205 million in often deceptive ads**, outspending opponents over 10 to 1. With AB 1416 in place, voters could have seen Prop 22 was opposed by trusted groups like [ACLU of Southern California](#), [California League of Conservation Voters](#), [California Teachers Association](#), and [California Professional Firefighters](#).

## AB 1416 is Reasonable and Needed

**Adds at most 273 characters — 125 each for supporters and opponents, plus labels —** to the 75-word ballot label for each state measure. Amendments ensure that it takes minimal extra space, including allowing counties to make the font size smaller if needed. This will add minimal space to ballot and often won't add any ballot pages at all.

**Does not clutter the ballot or slow voters down.** Clearly showing “**Supporters**” and “**Opponents**” that people recognize will make it easier for people to put the legalese of the 75-word titles and summaries in better context. Our simulation of voting on ballots with 15 propositions found no drop-off in the number of people voting “Yes” overall.

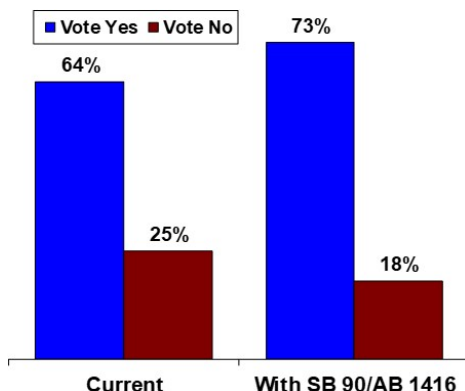
**Sham organizations and sham businesses will be barred from appearing** by listing only non-profit organizations and businesses that have existed for at least four years. During that time, they must have continuously had at least one full-time staffer, or in the case of a non-profit have received contributions from at least 500 donors.

**Political parties barred from being listed as supporters and opponents on ballot** to avoid politicization of ballot.

## The Ballot DISCLOSE Act Will Have a Major Positive Impact

A California Clean Money Campaign poll in 2019 showed that **the Ballot DISCLOSE Act will have a major positive impact on ballot measures supported by organizations that Californians trust.**

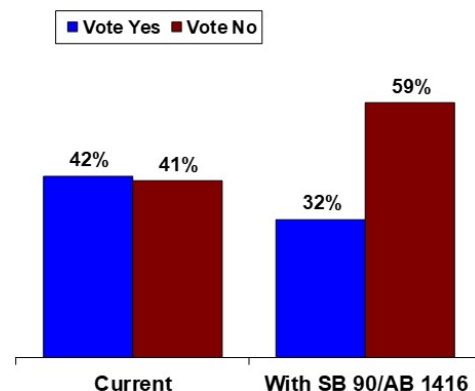
When Ballot Measures are **Supported** by One or More Organizations a Voter Trusts



When likely voters didn't know a proposition was supported by one or more organizations they trust (the current ballot format), 64% said they'd vote “Yes”.

**The percentage who said they'd vote “Yes” leapt 9% when the ballot showed supporters & opponents.**

When Ballot Measures are **Opposed** by One or More Organizations a Voter Trusts



When voters didn't know a proposition was opposed by one or more organizations they trust (the current ballot format), 42% said they'd vote “Yes”.

**The percentage who said they'd vote “Yes” fell 10% when the ballot showed supporters & opponents.**

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For more information:  
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