Prop 15 levels playing field, will introduce state public financing

By Kendra Gonzales

If you are interested in taking corrupting corporate donations out of the campaigns of candidates running for office, then you should vote YES on Proposition 15 in the California June Primary.

The California Fair Elections Act would implement a pilot project to make voluntary public financing available to Secretary of State candidates in 2014 and 2018. It would also overturn a state constitutional law banning public financing for local office candidates.

This part of the ballot measure has not been highly publicized to not confuse voters, but is HUGE in the impact it could make on local campaigns and, in turn, local policy-making.

If Prop 15 passes, it would be just a start for public financing for California, but would open the door to the idea that public financing actually works.

Nearly 400 candidates from different backgrounds have been elected with this system in seven states. Eighty-five percent of Maine’s State Legislators have used public financing and 9 out of 11 State Constitutional offices were won in this manner in Arizona.

There is strong evidence that candidates who use public financing are much more inclined to advocate for and pass legislation that benefits the public and not corporate donors.

A good example of this is in North Carolina, where the publicly-financed candidate for Insurance Commissioner did an in-depth study of the insurance industry once in office, and ultimately froze rates and then lowered them by 9.5 percent, resulting in rebates to citizens totaling approximately $50 million.

Can you imagine any candidate ever doing this after accepting giant campaign contributions from the insurance industry? Why do you think universal health care funded by a single-payer system has never seriously been on the table? Obama’s campaign (among many others) was heavily funded by the insurance industry; that’s why.

Prop 14 takes away voters’ choices at ballot, gives more power to big corporations

By Ann Menasche

Proposition 14 would effectively eliminate the already limited electoral options for many American voters, preventing innovative ideas and solutions from entering the political debate.

Similar laws in Washington and Louisiana have not improved the partisan nature of elections or elected officials. Instead, these laws have made it far more difficult to challenge incumbents or change the direction of government.

Proposition 14 would deny independent and third party candidates and politicians in this country a chance to be heard, while further polarizing our districts and limiting voter choice — all at increased costs to taxpayers and candidates.

Consider a Democrat living in a district that is 60 percent Republican; it is likely that almost every general election will feature the two Republican candidates who get the highest votes in the “primary.” This person would effectively be disenfranchised, facing a choice of voting for a candidate s/he strongly opposes or not voting at all.

The 25 percent of Californians who are neither Democrats nor Republicans may never see an independent or third party candidate on the general ballot again.

Is Proposition 14 the best our democracy can hope for?

Not when there are real, viable solutions to our electoral problems that are easy to implement, and would increase voter participation and help revitalize our democracy:

1) Instant runoff voting (IRV) and proportional representation (PR) — these systems, which allow voters to rank candidates rather than just choosing one, would eliminate costly and poorly-attended primaries altogether.

2) Same day registration and paid time off on Election Day — ensure all Americans have access to vote.

3) Elimination of the two-thirds rule in California, allowing budgets to be approved and taxes raised by a simple majority vote, as is done in most states.

4) Public financing of campaigns — ensures all candidates have an equal voice in California, allowing budgets to be approved and paid for by candidates and their supporters.

MORE ON PROP 14
See Pages 4-5 Inside

GPCA ballot endorsements for June 8 election

The corrupting influence of corporations is especially evident on the June 8 ballot, and as a result the Green Party of California (GPCA) officially is endorsing only one of five propositions on the June 2010 ballot. County delegates from throughout the state at a party convention in San Jose voted these recommendations:

PROP. 13: NO POSITION.

This would allow a tax break for homeowners or commercial property owners for seismic retrofitting. While some delegates believed the proposition is a thinly-disguised attempt to benefit big business (as in the original Prop. 13), others believe it will save lives by encouraging property owners to make their buildings safer.

PROP. 14: OPPOSE.

The GPCA heavily criticized Prop. 14, the so-called “top two” measure, which would, if passed, only allow the top two winners in the primary to be on the ballot in the November general election. The result, said the Greens, would be fewer voter choices at a time when voters are dissatisfied with current choices; increased candidate spending; muzzled smaller parties and their messages; and increased influence by the same moneymed special interests bankrolling Prop. 14.

PROP. 15: SUPPORT.

This measure would experiment with public financing of some candidates in the 2014 and 2018 elections to avoid the corrupting influence of lobbyists. It would use fees paid by lobbyists to finance Secretary of State candidates. It means smaller parties could receive up to $1.3 million in public financing.

PROP. 16: OPPOSE.

This is a private utility-backed measure (PG&E, among others) that would protect big utilities by requiring a two-thirds majority vote of ratepayers before a public utility could be created. Not coincidentally, public utilities have lower rates for consumers than private utilities.

PROP. 17: OPPOSE.

If passed, this proposition would punish the poor and middle class. It would allow auto insurers to raise rates for those who, for whatever reason, had a gap in coverage. A corporate-backed measure.
Green Party Primary Election Candidates

Progressive candidates offer real promise to party voters on June 8; S. Deacon Alexander, Laura Wells in race for governor nomination

GOVERNOR:
S. DEACON ALEXANDER
DADCA@sbglobal.net
714-269-7225

“My ideas for a better society are from my father, a bricklayer and political activist. I’ve been a community advocate and organizer for over 40 years,” claims S. Deacon Alexander.

As a former Black Panther in the 1960s, he walked arm-in-arm with Angela Davis to fight those who sought to deny her rights, take her employment, and silence her voice. He was with Angela in 1972, when she was acquitted of all charges against her.

In 2005, he joined Latino immigrants to fight for LA’s South Central Farm. He affirms all California working people, and supports the rights of all California residents. Alexander is a prominent advocate for the homeless, in Los Angeles and throughout California. “As first act of my campaign, I was on LA’s Skid Row with the homeless, the disenfranchised, the down and out. They have been excluded, denied and rejected for far too long. I pledge to bring them into my campaign for Governor.”

“My California is one of my top priorities as Green Party California Governor’s primary candidate are: “We must educate, not incarcerate.” He is a strong advocate for abolition of prisons, and believes a continued reliance upon incarceration and prison construction is part of the problem, not a solution. He believes we must build schools, not prisons; we must convince students to go to college, not to jail.

“We must create affordable housing. As housing crisis worsens, Alexander believes we must house all Californians, and find ways to build local, sustainable private housing.“

GOVERNOR:
LAURA WELLS
www.laurawells.org
info@laurawells.org

“California has been a golden state of opportunities in education, health care, environment and jobs. But something has gone terribly wrong. Wealthy interests have rigged the game to enrich themselves while bankrupting the rest of us. It’s time to change the game. We must — and we can.” That’s Laura Wells, a candidate for the Green Party nomination for Governor, who says it is time for a campaign that delivers real solutions the other two parties won’t.

One of the most critical matters, she explains, is that “neither the Democrats nor the Republicans are talking about what really needs to be done. Both avoid tackling the parts of Prop 13 that give huge breaks to corporate landowners and keep the state’s finances tied up in knots. Neither offers a viable way to support our collapsing education system, re-vitalize the job market, to build a clean and green energy future.”

Wells, a professional systems manager, was the largest-ever Green vote getter in her run for state controller.

“We are presenting voters with viable solutions. The two ‘Titanic parties’ are now competing in a workable path to a positive future.”

“Our party is different. The ‘Titanic parties’ are mired in big-money influence. We’re building an independent, grassroots alternative increasing capable of taking them on. “Our campaign will show how we can invest in California’s infrastructure and its future.”

She says it is possible to build, together, solutions that work for all.

“The disparity between the super-rich and the rest of us is growing. While average Californians struggle to make ends meet in a climate of scarce jobs and decimated public services, the 1% of the state’s citizens get fat on the millions and billions they did 20 to 30 years ago.”

“Back in 1978, Proposition 13 was cleverly crafted to give some homeowners a break on property taxes while sneaking in huge benefits to giant corporate landowners and preventing the state from raising reasonable budgets. It was the first of many measures that have robbed our state of needed funding.”

Jim Castillo is the first Native American to run for the office of Lieutenant Governor in California.

He is a respected Native American spiritual leader whose tribal ancestry is Tongva, the original people of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino counties, and Acjachemen, the original people of the South Orange and North San Diego counties.

Issues of great interest to Castillo as a Green Party candidate are the creation of “a greater awareness of the rights of all indigenous peoples worldwide, and the support of full self-government on all Indian reservations.” The candidate also lists as a priority, “reform of the criminal justice system.”

As a mentor for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation at the Herman G. Stark Youth Correctional Facility, Castillo has acquired useful knowledge of the criminal justice system. His extensive experience with the process of mentoring and counseling has increased with his association with the Southeast Area Counseling Center in Santa Fe Springs, California, where he also functioned as a member of the Board of Directors.

Castillo still donates a great deal of time to UCLA’s annual Graduation Powwow and Youth Leadership Conference and the UCLA Native American Student Association.

Other important issues of concern to Castillo include establishment of more affordable and accessible education; assurance that California residents are provided a clean, safe supply of drinking water and that our existing surface and groundwater are protected from pollution; preservation of our oceans with their enormous diversity of life and function; and protection of children’s rights; and maintenance and implementation of a standard of excellence in public land management to ensure the future quality of the environment.

Born and raised in Whittier, California, Castillo, 67, is a Pipe Keeper and Sun Dancer for the People, member of the statewide Bear Clan Society, and actively helps plan and staff UCLA’s Graduation Powwow and Youth Leadership Conference.

Ann Menasche, who has devoted most of her life to working for economic and social justice, civil rights, environmental sanity and peace, has 30 years of litigation experience in civil rights and public interest law and is a longtime activist in the peace, disability rights, and gay rights movements.

“I am running for Secretary of State because I have witnessed how corporate domination of elections has increasingly undermined the hopes and dreams of ordinary Californians (but I firmly believe that we the people can take the state back by faxing the way we run elections),” said Menasche.

“We can institute publicly funded elections, free equal media access for all candidates, free candidate statements in Voter Handbooks, instant runoff voting (IRV), proportional representation and other democratic reforms that allow the voices of non-corporate and third-party candidates to be heard,” she added.

Menasche said she will “insist on corporate accountability and crack down on corporate crime.”

She would significantly reduce significant contributions for initiatives and require signatures be obtained by volunteer signature gatherers.

Menasche would institute instant runoff voting (IRV) for single seat elections, proportional representation for electing state legislators to allow representation of the full range of views of voters, same day registration, paid time off work to vote, full access to people with disabilities to vote independently and ensuring every vote counts – any technology utilized must be fully auditable and accessible to the public.

Finally, Menasche would crack down on corporate crime, from banks to the sub-prime mortgage lenders.

“Large corporations have defrauded consumers, endangered health and safety, despoiled the environment and violated the law with impunity. Big business must be held accountable for their actions.”

Menasche, a key organizer of large pro-choice demonstrations in San Francisco, is an attorney advocating and litigating for disability rights.

Peter Allen, Green Party candidate for California Attorney General, has extensive experience in energy and environmental law, and has been a prosecutor, administrative law judge and consumer advocate.

Allen wants to maintain moratoriums on new nuclear power plants and offshore oil drilling.

Elimination of the death penalty is also very essential for Allen. “The cost to California of its labyrinthine efforts to kill some citizens is far too high,” he says. “Neither our wails nor our souls can afford to keep paying for this wasteful and pointless process,” he said.

He also supports the legalization of drugs, particularly marijuana, noting: “Prohibition of alcohol was a dismal failure; it led to the rise of organized crime in the U.S.”

He favors protection against government encroachment into private matters, including “one’s choice of (consenting adult) marriage partners, abortion (consistent with Roe v. Wade’s approach), and one’s home, data, and body.”

Allen has worked major securities and environmental litigation, including cases relating to the savings and loan crisis and the Exxon Valdez oil spill. He worked in the San Diego City Attorney’s office as a prosecutor, and representing the City and its residents on utility issues before the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC).

Allen was a staff attorney with TURN, representing residential and small business utility ratepayers. He joined the CPUC as a staff attorney and administrative law judge, working on energy, telecommunications, and environmental issues, including the California energy crisis.

Allen will protect the environment and fight the frivolous use of renewable energy sources, reducing greenhouse gases and other pollutants, supporting usable and affordable public transit; encouraging healthy and sustainable agricultural practices; ensuring that California’s tax structure and corporate laws are consistent with California’s values and policy goals; supporting affordable and high quality public education and protecting Californians against street and white-collar crime.
Charles “Kit” Crittenden would be an “activist” treasurer.

“I would support the investing in renewable energy sources rather than oil and gas. California is the only one of the 22 major oil-producing states not to levy an oil severance tax,” he said.

“Such a tax could be a major source of revenue in this recession and used to promote renewable energy by state funding of enterprises developing solar and wind power,” said Crittenden.

He also would insist corporations should be required to pay their fair share of taxes to subsidize crucial state services.

“This simple act would also help prevent the accumulation of massive concentrations of wealth which enable rich corporations and individuals to dominate government and undermine democracy,” he said.

Crittenden said he supports single-payer health care because it would promote social justice.

“Non-violence and respect for diversity would be advanced by investing in organizations that promote peace and justice... these values also dictate divestment from nations and groups that practice intolerance and violence. Police programs teaching respect for all races, ethnicities, and sexual preferences could be a major factor in reducing police brutality,” he noted.

“Of particular concern to me as a longtime CSU professor is adequately funding education,” he said.

“A democratic citizenry must be informed, and schooling teaches respect for all traditions, democratic values, and the capacity to think critically.”

“Supporting prisons instead of schools is exactly backwards: inequately funding education,” he said.

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Mentioned in the article above are Frankel, Crittenden, Balderston, Robertson, Wolman, and several others. They are mentioned in context of their political stances, policies, and proposals. For example, Frankel supports single-payer health care, Crittenden advocates changing era property tax laws, and Balderston supports single-payer health care. Wolman is mentioned as a supporter of the New Broom Coalition and as a co-founder of Impeach Bush-Cheney, an organization that Advocates for Social Responsibility. Wolman is also a founder of the Center for Social Responsibility.

VOTE GREEN. Support REAL progressive candidates. www.cagreens.org
Proposition 14 is an Incumbent Protection Plan

In California's current party primary system, winning the stakes of the June primary, Prop 14 would put more emphasis on early fundraising, increasing the corrupting influence of big money and making it harder for grassroots candidates and movements to survive, let alone win with the resources they need. As a result, the only seats that would be subject to serious competition would be those held by third-party, non-incumbent candidates. As a result, there would be intense pressure on a party to drop out, lest they ‘split the vote’ and/or non-frontrunners of the same party to drop out, lest they ‘split the vote’ and/or non-frontrunners of the same

3) Eliminating party primaries under Proposition 14

 Candidates

in California’s current party primary system, candidates would be on the ballot if they met the signature requirement. Under Prop 14, minor party primaries would be on the general election ballot for statewide offices so, they can’t retain party status that way. The other method is to have a certain threshold number of voter registrations. But if this were the only method today, both the Libertarians and the Peace and Freedom Party would already be off the ballot and the Green Party would be threat- ened with the same.

The Green Party has been on the ballot for 18 consecutive years, the Libertarians 30 and Peace and Freedom for 41 of the last 42. Had the Prop 14’s authors intended to honor California’s political diversity, they would’ve reduced the registration threshold so these kinds of parties could reasonably stay on the ballot. By leaving the threshold unchanged, Prop 14’s sponsors are going for the jugular to entirely eliminate minor parties in California.

6) Forces prop 14's California's growing numeric voting needs

Prop 14 does not require candidates to disclose any registered political party affiliation

Prop 14 is a frontal attack on democracy, designed to institutionalize the already deeply flawed election scheme in our constitution. There should be no doubt that Prop 14 would make it very difficult for small parties to stay on the ballot. In fact, it would take a party to stay on the ballot if they meet the signature threshold. This is one of the major negatives of Prop 14. The closest California came to a Top Two primary was in 1998 and 2000, before the courts there was no Top Two primary. Until November 2000, the full state legislature was elected via this method (the Assembly elected every two years, the Senate every fourth) and that 2000-2002 legislature was one of the most contentious in recent memory. The threat of multimillion dollar surplus to major budget defects in the campaign finance system, ultimately helped lead to the recall of Governor Gray Davis.

Localism is often cited as a reason for a Top Two primary in place since 1975 and is hardly a model of government for California to emulate.

8 & 9) Prop 14 eliminates general election independence

Under Prop 14, all avenues to the November General Election ballot are shut down by mid-March. Currently if something significant happens in public policy during the course of the campaign that merits a new voice in the race, an independent candidate can qualify after the primary. Prop 14 would eliminate this check-and-balance of democracy, along with the right of voters to cast their votes for someone who is a genuine alternative.

10) Prop 14 does not require candidates to disclose any registered political party affiliation

In yet another move away from accepted standards of democracy, Prop 14 would do away with basic transparency by not requiring a candidate to disclose their political party affiliation

Rather than the ‘competitive environment’ Prop 14 promises, California’s (and the U.S.) political and governmental system is characterized by a lack of accountability, transparency and public trust. By contrast, Prop 14 was born outside of public debate, and in recent years has not been subject to the scrutiny of professional journalists. And, if under Prop 14 candidates chose to run as independent under an alias, they would not appear on the ballot, which is another way Prop 14’s sponsors are going for the jugular to entirely eliminate minor parties in California.

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The Ten Key Values of the Green Party

Grassroots Democracy—Develop participatory ways to control the decisions which affect our lives.

Social Justice—Create a system which promotes equality and dignity for all.

Nonviolence—Develop attitudes to current and historic instances of violence.

Eco-Wisdom—Operate our human society knowing we are a part of a nature, and live in harmony with the ecological and resource limits of the planet.

Decentralization—Move power and responsibility away from larger and more distant institutions toward people and communities, with the goal of a decentralized, democratized society.

Community-Based Economics—Redesign work to encourage employee ownership and workplace democracy, and create new community-based economic systems for all, ensuring an equal distribution of wealth and income.

Honor—Replace the ethic of dominance and control with cooperative ways of relating to each other.

Respect for Diversity—Honor cultural, ethnic, racial, sexual, religious and spiritual diversity, reaffirming our country’s shared ideals—the dignity of the individual, democratic participation and liberty and justice for all.

Personal and Global Responsibility—Learn from and be responsible to grassroots groups in all parts of the world.

Sustainability—Act not for the short range but in the interests of the group of our time and future people but for the collective future of the entire planet.
Cynthia Santiago, 25, is a young law student and Green Party member who first registered to vote. Santiago has a strong background in raising youth activism through mentoring and leadership programs, prisoner education and resource programs, and environmental justice for low income communities.

“This election gives us a chance to show younger people that getting involved in Green politics is a natural extension of their activism. I've been a Green ever since I first registered to vote, and was a Green when elected Associated Student Body President at Santa Monica High School in 2002. Soon afterward, I was included in a Los Angeles Weekly cover story on young Vietnamese Americans.

Cynthia Santiago

cynthia.santiago@gmail.com

Lisa Green, 45, is a member of the Green Party of California and the Los Angeles County-facilitator of the LA Greens.

She resigned from a 20-year corporate budgeting and finance career in 2008 to pursue her own artistic “organic and green” business. She is frequently found walking on Venice Beach boardwalk.

Lisa's former corporate career has given her a firm foundation to be an effective legislator for AD53.

She has spent 20 years in a variety of chaotic, fast-paced, challenging environments and has consistently found ways to build productive, healthy relationships, as well as developing methods that have measurable and attainable goals.

Green current creative and artistic endeavors use messages that educate, advocate and liberate through the examination of issues others are not addressing.

Green environment.

Her platform is about balance, healthy relationships, as well as developing methods that have measurable and attainable goals.

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Green current creative and artistic endeavors use messages that educate, advocate and liberate through the examination of issues others are not addressing.
An appeal to support the best candidates on the ballot

Spring, 2010

Dear Voter:

Green Party of California candidates continue to be true to their values – they don’t take corporate money from the same people bailed out with our tax dollars, they oppose the wars (unlike Democrat and GOP lawmakers who continue to support war), they fight for social justice and the working class, and they support saving our planet.

And, Greens have been rewarded. Greens continue to thrive with nearly 40 city council, school board and other local elected officeholders, including an elected mayor in Richmond, appointed mayors in other cities and a majority on the Fairfax city council.

Here’s how Green Party member Sandy Siasnni puts it:

“...I’m impressed by each of the eight California Green Party state wide constitutional, U.S. Senate, five Congressional, and five State Assembly candidates.

"...Thank you Laura Wells, for once again demonstrating to be Green is to put it out there. Thank you Deacon Alexander, for your spunky, upbeat campaign, and bold, activist challenge to the Green Party. Thank you Jimi Castillo for your Lt. Governor bid, and showing us, when one door closes, another opens.

"...Thank you Ann Menasche of San Diego, for your Secretary of State campaign. Thank you Ross Frankel, for not giving up, and trying this time for Controller. Thank you Kit Critenden, for coming out of retirement to run for Treasurer. Thank you Peter Allen, for your passionate, intelligent Attorney General campaign. Thank you William Balderston for your run as Insurance Commissioner.

“...Thank you Duane Roberts, for stepping from behind the Orange Curtain to run for U.S. Senate. Thank you Carol Wolman, for your courageous, principled run in Congressional District 1. Thank you Ben Emery and Dave Heller for your runs in Congressional Districts 2 and 9. Thank you Jeremy Cloward for your stick-to-it-iveness in your repeated runs for Congressional District 10. Thank you Eric Curtain to run for U.S. Senate. Thank you Carol Wolman, for your passionate, intelligent Attorney General campaign. Thank you William Balderston for your run as Insurance Commissioner.

Peterson for your Congressional District 17 campaign. Thank you Jack Lindblad, for your relentless, never-say-die, repeated run at Assembly District 39. Thank you Lisa Green, Linda Piera-Avila and Cynthia Santiago, for your first-time offensives upon Assembly Districts 53, 41 and 51. Thank you Jane Rands for your continued harrying and insightful attack (in) Assembly District 72.”

Sandy goes on to say we’re “lucky to have each of these 18 Green Party candidates running for statewide, federal office, and hundreds who actively support them...Behind this loyal band of brothers and sisters are thousands of Green Party members.”

He’s right. But it’s not just members of the Green Party who should support real candidates, with real beliefs (against war, for the environment and not “bought and paid for” by corporations.)

It’s every voter. No matter what party.

Because these candidates won’t take the blood money from corporations, and they’ve earned and deserve our support to run strong campaigns for freedom and open government.

That’s why we’re encouraging Greens, and other voters, to support these candidates with financial contributions, and volunteerism.

Help us, the Green Party of California, to bolster these campaigns. Greens candidates do win. But they still need a little bit of help.

Please, send what you can TODAY to support truly progressive candidate campaigns across the state. Complete the form below and return the remit envelope enclosed in this news magazine.

And, if you’re not registered Green, re-register today. If you are a Green already ask a friend or relative to join you. Thank you.

Peace,

The Green Party of California

□ YES! I want to help Green candidates. Enclosed is a contribution for:
☐ $500 ☐ $250 ☐ $100 ☐ $50 ☐ Other ______

(please make checks payable to GPCA, PO Box 485, San Francisco, CA 94104)

□ YES! I’d like to become a sustainer of the Green Party of California.
☐ I will contribute $_______ per month.
☐ I will contribute $_______ per quarter.

(please include credit card information below)

□ YES! I would like to volunteer. Please pass my information on to local organizers!

The law requires we use our best efforts to collect and report the name, street address, occupation and name of employer of contributors. Contributions of $100 or more must be returned if we do not have the above information on file. Contributions are not tax deductible. Other restrictions on the size and source of contributions may apply. Thank you for your cooperation. R 2010

Name_________________________
Street address (if contribution $100 or more)______________________________
City_________________________ State______ Zip________
Home Phone ( )________________ Work Phone ( )________________
Email________________________
Occupation___________________ Employer_________________________
Credit Card #____________________ Expires_______
Signature______________________