



June 25, 2015

Assembly Member Evan Low
State Capitol, Room 2175
Sacramento, CA 94249-0028

Assembly Member Richard Bloom
State Capitol, Room 2003
Sacramento, CA 94249-0050

RE: Withdraw AB 1100 (Low and Bloom) Ballot initiatives: filing fees.

Dear Assemblymembers Low and Bloom,

Consumer Watchdog urges you to withdraw AB 1100 after a Sacramento Superior Court on Tuesday proved that there are myriad backstops to curtail reviled initiatives without financially burdening the public's ability to access the initiative process. With a court deciding that a "patently unconstitutional" initiative can be halted, at least in the absence of objection from its proponent, your bill is now moot.

It's outrageous that the state that birthed direct democracy would charge its citizens an initiative filing fee that is five times greater than the next highest state – Mississippi. A review of 26 states that have initiatives found just five states, including California, have a filing fee. The fee for Mississippi is \$500; California, \$200; Alaska, \$100; Ohio, \$25; and Washington, \$5. Every other state charges nothing.

AB 1100 would create another hurdle for citizen initiatives. This is especially true because groups that are serious about initiatives typically submit multiple versions of the same measure before moving forward with the one with the best chance for success. This means that legitimate initiatives are likely to pay not \$2,500 but double or triple that in practice. The bill will continue the ever-growing dominance of a handful of moneyed interests seeking to buy more power for themselves and their companies. You should be encouraging direct democracy, not discouraging it.

While we have reservations about how the court short-circuited the process, its decision made the bill irrelevant. And, unlike the courts, AB 1100 won't guarantee an end to similar initiatives. But it will stop legitimate citizen initiatives. We ask that you take the recent decision into account and withdraw AB 1100.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carmen Balber".

Carmen Balber
Executive Director