



SB 90 (Stern) & AB 1416 (Santiago), the *Ballot DISCLOSE Act* FAQ

What will SB 90 & AB 1416 do?

SB 90 & AB 1416 add to each state measure on the ballot a short list of who signed the official argument for/against it in the voter information guide (using a maximum of 15 words each). Currently the ballot lists for each measure a 75-word summary title, summary, and fiscal analysis written in legalese that often confuses voters.

Why are SB 90 & AB 1416 necessary?

Big Money special interests gain an unfair advantage by spending millions while deceiving voters about who supports or opposes state ballot measures. The true supporters and opponents are in the voter guide, but many voters can't or don't find them buried in the often 100+ pages of dense text. SB 90 & AB 1416 provides this information on the ballot itself so voters see it when it matters most.

Do voters really want and need this information?

A 2019 Clean Money poll found that 79% of likely voters say it's important to them to know who supports and opposes ballot measures when they vote. But only 42% of voters say they know they can find supporters and opponents in the voter guide and it's quick and easy. The rest said it wasn't quick and easy, that they didn't know where to find them in the voter guide, or that they didn't even know they could find them there. 75% of likely voters favor "adding to the ballot a short list of the supporters and opponents of each ballot proposition" — exactly what SB 90 & AB 1416 do.

ENDORSERS of Previous Version (SB 636). 11,000+ petition Signers

- California Clean Money Campaign (sponsor)
 - Bob Stern, principal co-author of the Political Reform Act of 1974
 - California League of Conservation Voters
 - Consumer Watchdog
 - Courage California
 - Endangered Habitats League
 - GMO Free California
 - Indivisible CA: StateStrong
 - Maplight
 - Money Out Voters In
 - New Progressive Alliance
 - People Demanding Action
 - RootsAction
 - Voices for Progress
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- California Democratic Party
 - Los Angeles County Democratic Party
 - Peninsula Democratic Coalition
 - San Mateo County Democratic Party
 - Santa Clara County Democratic Party

Will SB 90 & AB 1416 substantially increase the length of the ballot?

No. The California Association of Clerks and Election Officials (CACEO) raised concerns about potential costs of the 2019 version (SB 636), saying "this bill appears to add eight lines of additional text to the average ballot label — one for each argument signer's name and title, one line for the word 'Supporters' and one line for the word 'Opponents'". SB 90 & AB 1416 clarify that it simply appends a maximum of 32 words to each ballot label's 75-word entry. This would require at most one extra piece of paper for the entire ballot, and in many cases no extra paper will be needed. Here's an example of how it Prop 26 from the 2010 ballot would look under SB 90 & AB 1416:

26	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.	132 YES → <input type="radio"/>
	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). Supporters: California Taxpayers' Association, California Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Action Committee, Nisei Farmers League. Opponents: League of Women Voters California, American Lung Association, Sierra Club California, California League Conservation Voters.	133 NO → <input type="radio"/>

Part added by SB 90



Shouldn't voters just read the voter guide?

Ideally, they would. But many people don't or can't read the entire 100+ pages of voter guides because they're overwhelmed by work and family. When they vote without knowing who really supports and opposes measures, or even worse when they're misled by deceptive ads from special interests, it hurts all of us.

Would SB 90 & AB 1416 complicate the ballot?

No. It would actually make it easier for voters to understand.

On each measure, the ballot currently uses 75 words of legalese for the summary and fiscal analysis that's often confusing and rarely gives the full picture. Adding 15 words of supporters and 15 words of opponents would provide easy to grasp information voters want and would help them put the legalese in context by knowing the positions of organizations they know and trust.

Would SB 90 & AB 1416 politicize the ballot?

The ballot is already political! You can't get any more political than the word "Democrat" or "Republican" next to candidates! Also, the ballot titles and summaries are written by a politician – the Attorney General. If anything, voters seeing that nonpartisan organizations they trust support or oppose an initiative would make the ballot less political.

Shouldn't voters make their own decisions?

Voters would still make their own decisions. SB 90 & AB 1416 would simply provide valuable information that voters want and need. Even if voters had time to read the full 100 page voter guide, the devil of initiatives is in the details. Regular voters don't have the time or expertise to read and understand every line of each initiative. But organizations who sign the ballot arguments do. Voters need to know when the organizations many people trust have a strong enough opinion to go on the record.

Is this the right information to add to the ballot?

Yes! Ballot labels already have a condensed version of the summary and fiscal analysis from the voter guide. SB 90 & AB 1416 add a condensed summary of the other crucial info in the pamphlet — who signed the official arguments for and against each measure. This is the most important info in the voter guide that's not on the ballot, and 79% of voters say it's important to them to know.

Will SB 90 & AB 1416 cause voter confusion?

No. CACEO expressed the concern that voters may be confused because SB 90 & AB 1416 applies to only state ballot measures, and not to county, municipal, or district measures. However, confusion is unlikely because state ballot measures are listed in a separate section on the ballot.

Who picks the listed supporters and opponents?

The maximum 15 words listing each state measure's supporters and 15 words listing the opponents will be submitted to the Secretary of State by those parties when they submit their official rebuttals for the voter guide. Only the signers of arguments or rebuttals are allowed. Because there are at most 6 supporting signers and 6 opposing signers, there would be at most 6 on the ballot with at most 15 words each for supporters and opponents.

Could the ballot list fake names?

SB 90 & AB 1416 will have protections against it. Planned amendments mirror SB 47 (Allen) the *Petition DISCLOSE Act*, to specify that endorsing corporations, non-profits, and committees can be listed only if (1) they've been active for at least two years and (2) either had one full-time employee or had at least 50 unique donors during the last two years. These amendments will make it harder for ballot campaigns to easily create sham organizations to list on the ballot.

Most important, voters will see real organizations that support or oppose each measure. If one side of a ballot campaign lists fake organizations but the other side lists real ones, voters will tend to believe the judgment of longstanding and respected organizations they trust over fake organizations with good-sounding names they've never heard of.

Are SB 90 & AB 1416 bipartisan?

Yes. 2019's version, SB 636, passed the Senate on an overwhelming bipartisan vote of 31-5 with 3 Republicans joining every Democrat to vote "Yes".

Who is behind SB 90 & AB 1416?

SB 90 & AB 1416 are sponsored by the California Clean Money Campaign, a grassroots non-profit organization with hundreds of volunteers and over 150,000 supporters across the state. CCMC is financed by small contributions from individuals and a small family foundation, and accepts no corporate or union contributions.

Is it worth the small extra printing cost?

Yes! At most, one more piece of printed paper ballot will be required, and in many cases none will be required. This is because the only additional printing for counties for each state ballot measure would be a maximum of 32 more words that they would receive from the Secretary of State to append to the current 75-word text they already receive from the Secretary of State with the title, summary, and fiscal analysis.

Billions of dollars are often at stake in ballot measures.

Spending an extremely small additional amount so voters have the information they want and need when they vote in order to make informed decisions will help stop the massive costs incurred by California when billionaires or other wealthy interests are able to deceive voters into passing bad initiatives or killing good ones.

For more information:

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