



April 14, 2023

Members Senate Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee
Senator Steven M. Glazer, Chair

SB: 409

OPPOSE

Members of the Committee,

Election Integrity Project[®] *California*, Inc. (EIPCa) **Opposes SB 409** as written and amended as of the date of this letter.

SB 409 would appear to inconvenience at best and significantly impede at worst individuals wishing to communicate their ideas and qualifications through the Voter Guide.

In this age of digital dominance, there appears to be no logic to requiring the Candidate Statement to be written in person, without aid of materials and desired talking points. Whom could that possibly benefit?

Candidate statements in the Voter Guide are a vital resource for voters. Few voters can meet or assess all of the candidates in person, and must rely on information in the Voter Guide to help them cast an informed and well-considered vote.

Therefore, candidates should be able to provide the best statement they possibly can.

There is no downside to allowing candidates to create their statement on their own time and turf, with whatever assistance necessary, and then upload the final draft electronically to the appropriate portal.

It is difficult, exhausting, financially draining and all-consuming to run for office. The State should do all it can to encourage and incentivize fresh, courageous people to step up and seek civil leadership roles. Putting such unnecessary and illogical road blocks in their path is counter-productive to that end.

Even more so, such a requirement would add to the almost insurmountable advantage of the incumbent candidates who can rely on their position and their name recognition to carry them through the campaign. Incumbents have deep coffers to produce and distribute campaign material and thus have much less need to jump through any hoops to produce a candidate statement.

Budding leaders generally have far scarcer funds with which to spread their message, making the campaign statement in the Voter Guide the most important part of their run. The monetary cost for inclusion in the Voter Guide is daunting to such first-timers, and eats enormous holes in their meager bank accounts. The requirements of SB 409 would add unjustified insult to the injury of the huge fee they currently pay for that privilege. (This is a burden that should be legislatively lifted entirely—a free space in the Voter Guide should be a state-provided benefit for all candidates who have proven their viability).

EIPCa urges a NO vote on SB 409.

Sincerely,

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