You probably know that we are a major proponent of many elements of political reform in our state. We were one of the first earlier this year to call for re-examining term limits and for changing the way legislative districts are drawn.

We knew, at the time, that partisan politicians would applaud the first and oppose the second measure. But little did we know that they would use our own money and taxpayer resources to try to prevent us from voting on these measures.

Enter Attorney General Bill Lockyer.

Lockyer is going to court to prevent the redistricting measure from appearing on the ballot due to minor inconsistencies between the version that was submitted for signature and the version that was submitted to the Attorney General’s office for review. It may well be that the versions have minor discrepancies. But the versions are substantially identical in both their language and intent. It is unfortunate there exists a legal loophole for Lockyer to try threading, potentially thwarting the wishes of the 900,000 people who signed petitions to place this on the ballot.

I imagine those same people would have signed their name to a petition for either “version” – the one submitted for signature and the one to Lockyer – as the goal of both is the same. Really, even the language is so similar that I believe very few would even spot the differences between the two.

The only thing these petition signers know is that redistricting is broken in California and they would prefer a non-partisan, disinterested panel of judges to draw the lines rather than partisan legislators with turf and party to protect.

In this case, Lockyer clearly has the discretion to file suit – or to not. In doing so, he must consider whether he will side with the letter of the law or the intent of the law. Clearly, the voters of California want this matter to be on the ballot; we deserve the opportunity to vote the proposal up or down.

Let us not forget last year when we tried to enact an open primary to enfranchise more voters in the elections that really matter in each of the legislative and Congressional seats in California. After it qualified for the ballot the old fashioned way – with signatures – the legislature voted to place their own initiative on the ballot to protect the status quo — and to confuse the voters, which is what ultimately happened on election day.

A number of legal issues surrounded the way the legislature qualified its measure on the ballot. Lockyer’s office did not side with us. Instead, he sided with many of the same politicians calling for the exclusion of the reapportionment initiative.

The question now is whether Lockyer will rise above partisanship and relationships with the partisan forces that oppose this measure. Our hope is he’ll conclude it’s more important to give voters the chance to express their will than it is to split hairs over technicalities.

And that’s The Business Perspective.