The Right Way to Redistrict

On Tuesday, May 15, 150 business people from the Los Angeles region will lobby the halls of our state capitol as part of the Chamber’s annual Access Sacramento trip. In addition to advocating for health care reform, a stronger business climate and our region’s share of infrastructure bond investments, we will also call upon state lawmakers to continue their push for fair, equitable redistricting.

Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez has proposed that a bipartisan state commission, the Little Hoover Commission, be given the responsibility for redrawing district lines for members of the state Legislature and Congress. We commend Speaker Núñez for his proposal—knowing that some in his party’s leadership do not agree with his plan.

Núñez’s proposal has not been well received by some democrats in Congress who want Congressional redistricting to be excluded from the plan. They fear it may threaten the slim majority of Democrats in the House, and therefore the status of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

Federal politics aide, the goal of redistricting should be to enact a fair plan for all Californians. Currently districts are drawn so that they overwhelmingly favor incumbents and discourage any real exchange of ideas or diversity in candidates. If done properly, Núñez’s proposal would create legislative and congressional districts that properly reflect the state’s population and political demographics—making it fair. Any other plan drawn by the Legislature will be suspect on the basis that it is politically motivated.

The stars are aligned to accomplish something in the political reform arena in California. We have a governor who clearly wants to move in this direction. Núñez has fought previous initiatives with a promise to propose a future solution and now has placed one on the table. And there is a strong desire on the part of the state Assembly and Senate to include term limit reform as part of the final package. We should be able to get everyone in the same room and develop a solution that works for California.

Please join us in Sacramento on May 15-16 to urge lawmakers and state officials to support this and other bipartisan solutions for the challenges facing our state. The time has come.

And that’s The Business Perspective.

The Chamber expresses its sympathy to the family and staff of Rep. Juanita Millender-McDonald who passed away over the weekend after a battle with cancer. The congresswoman was a tireless public servant on Carson City Council, in the California State Assembly, and as a member of Congress since 1996. The Chamber enjoyed our relationship with Rep. Millender-McDonald, including her leadership on goods movement issues. We will miss working with her.

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