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CITY OF LOMITA

May 17, 2024

The Honorable Tina McKinnor
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Room 5520
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: AB 2911 (McKinnor) SUPPORT

Dear Assemblymember McKinnor:

On behalf of the Members of the City of Lomita, I am writing to express our strong support of AB 2911 (McKinnor). Campaign finance transparency is a pillar of a strong democracy. State and local campaign finance laws have evolved over the years to make campaign finance information easier to understand, reflect technological innovations and to increase basic transparency about who contributes to candidate and independent expenditure campaigns.

The arbitrarily low campaign contribution limit established in the 1982 Levine Act has made it difficult for state and local candidates to communicate directly with voters and has resulted in an increased use of non-candidate controlled independent expenditures financed with dark money. The Legislature has increased this threshold only once, in 1989, from “\$250 or more” to “more than \$250.” A study (Avis et al, “Money and Politics: The Effects of Campaign Spending Limits on Political Entry and Competition.” 2021) concluded that policies that set limits might “reduce the concentration of political power in the hands of richer individuals.” As a result, current law limits the ability of citizen candidates, including minority candidates from competitively participating in local elections.

AB 2911 would encourage campaign donors to contribute directly to a candidate, increase the transparency of those donations and discourage the use of dark money in state and local elections. By increasing the campaign finance donation limits to be in excess of \$1500, candidates will be able to better communicate directly with voters and reduce the need for dark money in local elections.

AB 2911 would also reduce the negative financial impacts that compliance with SB 1439 (Glazer, Ch. 848, 2022) has had on local governments. In just the past two years, compliance with SB 1439 has cost local governments millions of dollars, resources that would be better spent supporting local public safety programs, infrastructure or efforts to address California’s housing and homelessness crisis.

Thank you for your continued leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'BU' or 'BH' with a stylized flourish.

Bill Uphoff
Mayor

cc: Lomita City Council
Jeff Kiernan, Cal Cities Regional Public Affairs Manager via email jkiernan@calcities.org
League of California Cities, via email: cityletters@calcities.org
California Contract Cities Association, jorge@contractcities.org