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CITY OF LOMITA

May 29, 2024

The Honorable Senator Catherine Blakespear
Chair, Senate Elections and Constitutional Amendments Committee
1021 N Street, Room 533
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 1243 (Dood) Campaign Contributions: Agency Officers
Notice of Support

Dear Senator Blakespear,

On behalf of the members of the City of Lomita, I am writing to express our support for SB 1243 (Dodd), which is a commonsense measure that would raise the threshold for contributions regulated by the Levine Act from \$250 to \$1,000. The measure would also extend the time allowed to cure certain violations by returning a contribution from 14 days to 30 days.

In 1982, the Legislature passed, and Governor Brown signed the Levine Act, which applied to state and local bodies in which the members were not directly elected by the voters. This meant that the Act did not apply to legislative bodies, such as city councils, county boards of supervisors, and the Legislature. In 2022, the Legislature passed, and the Governor signed SB 1439 (Glazer), Chapter 848, Statutes of 2022, which expanded the Levine Act to include local legislative bodies in which the members were directly elected by the voters. It also expanded the timeframe prohibiting specific contributions following an official's action from three months to 12 months.

Importantly, the Levine Act and SB 1439 do not contain an inflation index, meaning the \$250 contribution limit set in 1982 has not been adjusted for 42 years. Increasing the cap to account for inflation and the expansion of the law is logical and in line with the intent of the original Levine act and SB 1439. Additionally, SB 1243 respects local control by allowing cities to have lower contribution limits should the city choose to do so.

SB 1439 also included an opportunity for a local official to cure an unintentional violation. If a local official receives a contribution which would require disqualification, they have 30 days from the time they know, or should have known, about the contribution and the proceeding to return the contribution. However, if a local official accepts a contribution of more than \$250 during the 12 months after the final decision is rendered, the local official only has 14 days to cure the violation.

The time in which a local official can cure should be uniform and allow for enough time to identify and correct a contribution without being penalized. That is why we support extending the time an officer has to cure certain violations by returning a contribution from 14 days of accepting, soliciting, or receiving the contribution to 30 days.

We are committed to working with interested parties to update the outdated contribution limit and assist local elected officials with complying with the law. For these reasons, Cal Cities supports SB 1243 (Dodd).

Thank you for your attention to this important 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