

**Californians for an Effective Legislature
1029 H Street, Suite 401
Sacramento, California 95814**

**PART-TIME LEGISLATURE INITIATIVE
DRAWS OPPOSITION**

SACRAMENTO --“Californians for an Effective Legislature” filed paperwork today with the Secretary of State’s office to oppose a proposed initiative that would make California’s legislature part-time.

Co-chairing the effort will be three well-respected former legislators: Democrats John Laird of Santa Cruz and Dario Frommer of Burbank and Republican Bob Naylor of Sacramento.

“While we understand that many Californians are frustrated with their government, turning back the clock and making the legislature part-time will make matters worse,” said Laird, former chair of the Assembly Budget Committee. “The seventh largest economy in the world with a \$131 billion budget needs committed legislators, not amateurs who will have only 90 days a year on the job before they make decisions affecting millions of Californians.”

“This initiative will be a wrecking ball to the carefully crafted balance of powers between the governor and the legislature, and will give special interests more power than ever,” says Naylor, former chairman of the California Republican Party. “It makes little sense to expect our legislature to be more effective if we say to lawmakers: ‘take less time to study and tackle California’s complex problems.’”

“Even though last week’s PPIC poll found that only 23 percent of Californians favor a part-time legislature, it’s important to get ahead of the curve on this and ensure voters know the negative effect it would have on public policy,” said Frommer, the former Democratic Majority Leader. “This initiative would seriously hamper the ability for the legislature to tackle the challenges it faces because legislators would have less time-on-the-job and the public would have less input on legislation.”

The initiative, which is circulating for qualification for the November 2010 ballot, would limit the legislature to meet for 30 days every January, and then only 60 days additional days beginning in May each year.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, only six rural states have part-time legislatures similar to what are proposed in the initiative: Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah and Wyoming. Nearly every other state the size of California, including New York, Pennsylvania, and Michigan, have full-time legislatures similar to the Golden State's.

Studies have shown that part-time legislatures have substantial drawbacks including:

- Inherent conflicts of interest by legislators because of their other major sources of income;
- Legislators that are less diverse and wealthier than the voters they represent;
- Empowered lobbyists, staff, and special interests that have more expertise than legislators who spend less than 90 days of the year on legislative duties; and
- Giving the executive branch greater powers than the legislature.

Laird, who was termed out last year after serving as chair of the Assembly's Budget Committee, is a nationally recognized civil rights pioneer, and has been an active member of the Santa Cruz community for over three decades. Laird was a founder of the Santa Cruz Community Credit Union and three-year board member of the Santa Cruz Area Chamber of Commerce. He served years on the Cabrillo College Board of Trustees and was on the staff of Congressman Jerome Waldie, author of the full-time legislature amendment. He served as Mayor of Santa Cruz, and on the City Council before being elected to the Assembly.

Bob Naylor served in the California Legislature as a member of the Assembly for eight years, and as Assembly Minority Leader for three years. He also served as chairman of the California Republican Party for two years. He is a partner in the Sacramento law firm, Nielsen, Merksammer, Parrinello, Mueller and Naylor.

Dario Frommer is an attorney with the Los Angeles-based law firm Mayer Brown. He served as Majority Leader of the California State Assembly and Chaired the Assembly Health Committee. Frommer has also held a variety of high-level government posts including: Appointment Secretary to Governor Gray Davis, Deputy State Controller, and Chief of Staff to California State Senator Art Torres. He also is a member of the California Transportation Commission.

Steven Maviglio will serve as the committee's executive director. He served as a part-time legislator in New Hampshire for three terms, as well as a legislative staff member, before moving to California.

"The notion of a citizen legislature is quaint, but California is a big state with big problems," says Maviglio. "This initiative is another product of the right-wing crazy initiative factory. I am confident that when voters learn about this initiative – including who's behind it and its inherent flaws – it will be rejected."

The PPIC poll released last week found “residents’ negative views of their full-time legislature do not mean they see a shift to a part-time legislature as a solution: 44 percent say it would be a bad thing, 23 percent a good thing, and 27 percent say it would make no difference.”

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