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Oakland City Hall
1 Frank H. Ogawa Plaza
Oakland, 94612.

April 5, 2011

CC: Councilmembers Nadel, Kernighan, Kaplan, Schaaf, de la Fuente, Brooks and Brunner

Dear Council President Reid:

California Common Cause supports Ranked Choice Voting (RCV), and believes that Oakland strongly benefited from its 2006 ballot decision to implement a more participatory as well as fiscally smart voting system.

California Common Cause emphasizes the importance of a representative government and backs accurate elections that ensure voter turnout. Our extensive work on RCV and Election Day research has demonstrated that voting processes can be barriers to voter participation. RCV enabled Oakland to break previous barriers and provide a more efficient method for voters.

Due to RCV, Oakland had a 40% increase in voter turnout for the 2010 mayoral November election compared with the previous election, savings by not holding a second runoff election, more coalition building, less negative campaigning, and a fair election. Fundraising ability was not the decisive factor; the winner of the 2010 mayoral election was not the individual who raised the most money during their candidacy. Statistics indicate that most voters understood the system: 99.7% of the population cast valid ballots, AND 72% ranked three candidates.

Common Cause sees introduction of RCV as positive progress in Oakland. A RCV system produces accurate selection of the candidate preferred by the majority without requiring two separate elections. The money saved in Oakland, the amount due to increase in subsequent elections as less money needs to be spent on voter education, could be put toward improving city programs and the financing of elections.

Our organization looks forward to the city's continued use of this cost effective and democratic election system.

Please feel free to contact me with any further questions at hgrieco@commoncause.org.

Sincerely,
Helen Grieco Northern California Organizer