

January 29, 2021

The Honorable Alex Lee
Member of the California State Assembly
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814



Re: Support for AB 20 (Lee): Clean Money Act

Dear Assemblymember Lee:

Community Democracy Project is writing in strong support of AB 20, which will (1) prohibit business entities and corporations from contributing to any candidates running for office in California and (2) empower everyday Californians to run for elective office by establishing a statewide publicly financed electoral system. Current campaign finance laws allow for great potential to manipulate the interests and priorities of elected officials and candidates, such that they do not align with the will of their constituents or the people of California.

Each year, business entities contribute hundreds of millions of dollars to campaigns across California, polluting our democracy and prioritizing profits over people. Corporations are already barred from making direct contributions to candidates for federal office. However, the Clean Money Act would go a step further and prohibit business entities from contributing to any elected official's campaign. In turn, this would make candidates more accountable to their communities.

The Clean Money Act also provides real opportunities for everyday Californians to represent the communities they are a part of by establishing a statewide public financing electoral system. Currently, fourteen states provide some form of public financing option for campaigns. A publicly financed system would eliminate the need for candidates to incessantly fundraise, allowing candidates and officials to spend more time with their constituents and focus on the issues their communities are facing.

Further, publicly financed elections will break down systemic barriers of entry to running for public office, providing the opportunity for more nontraditional candidates like women and people of color to participate in the electoral process.

AB 20 empowers everyday Californians and challenges the growing influence corporations have long enjoyed in our elections by addressing systemic inequities in our political process. For all of these reasons, Community Democracy Project supports AB 20.

Sincerely,

Community Democracy Project

(Members: Alisen Boada, Blake Hihara, Christopher Chew, Devo O'Rourke, Emily Peterson, Kyle Donnelly, Neil Thapar, Patricia Moran, Shawn McDougal, Tia Katrina Taruc-Myers, Victoria Yu)