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California Constitutional Convention Campaign Put On Hold

Without Significant New Funds by March 1. Reform Movement Must End

SAN FRANCISCO, February 12, 2009 — Today, Repair California, a group pushing for a Constitutional Convention, announced that they were putting the campaign on hold. Buoyed by widespread bi-partisan support in polling, a TV editorial support, excitement for change, and public disenchantment with California's government, the Convention is a political movement. While significant funds have been received, and more have been pledged, a lack of cash is a button. However, if significant new funds arrive by March 1, Repair California will continue the campaign.

"The work on the Constitutional Convention received tremendous praise, but praise doesn't put your measures in a box," said John Grubb, CEO of the Bay Area Council, the organization that started the Convention movement. "Despite the great need for reform, the Convention was the ultimate good government movement, which is always a hard sell, and unless an angel or two appear, I don't have a heart, I wish it wasn't so."

"More than anything else I have seen in a long time, the Constitutional Convention demonstrated the power of a grassroots movement," said John Grubb, Chair of the Repair California campaign. "Whether or not the Convention succeeds on this year's ballot, there is no stopping reform efforts in our state."

"The Convention movement focused public attention on the obvious need for reform in California," said Andrew Goldstein, who drafted the Convention ballot measures and provided other legal assistance on a pro bono basis. "My firm is happy to support the Constitutional Convention movement a political reality."

"We always knew this would be hard, and there is no question we gave it our best shot," said John Grubb, Campaign Chair. "We put their life on hold, opened their checkbook, contributed pro-bono time, argued for the Convention or otherwise. The movement on 'pause,' the need for reform remains. We will continue to fight to fix our state through the best means available. There is no reason to stop the push for a Convention on a future ballot."

"Special interests still have a stranglehold on Sacramento, and I continue to believe it will take a citizens' movement to bring about reform for Repair California. "If the opportunity to reignite this movement arises, it would be my honor to help out."

Repair California turned in ballot language to call the first Constitutional Convention in California in more than 110 years. The measures would call a limited Constitutional Convention to reform four areas of the constitution: the budget process, the balance of power between the state and local governments; and, creating new systems to improve government operations from proposing tax increases or from considering changes to social issues such as marriage, abortion, gambling, religion, immigration, or the death penalty. Voters would decide on calling the Convention on the November 2012 ballot. The proposed reforms would require voter approval in one of the three scheduled statewide elections in 2012.

In a poll of 1,000 registered California voters, conducted by EMC Research, with a margin of error of 3.1 percent, 73 percent of voters supported the measures to call the Convention. After explaining basic details of the proposal, such as who could serve as delegates, more than two-thirds of Californians (69 percent) would vote yes on "Proposition 1," which would allow the voter to call a limited Constitutional Convention by a supermajority of 71 percent would vote yes on "Proposition 2," which would immediately call a limited Constitutional Convention by a majority of 50 percent of voters to win on Election Day.

Support was strong among subgroups of California. The measures were supported by 70 percent of registered voters, a decline to state voters. Across different age groups, support was highest among 18-34 year-old voters with 73 percent. Those 55 years-old or higher would also approve the measures. Support for the Constitutional Convention was conducted September 8-13, 2009.

To draft the ballot measures, and ensure that they reflected the sentiments of the state, Repair California held a series of public hearings at sites in Los Angeles, San Diego, Alameda, San Francisco, Irvine, Santa Monica, Fresno, the Sierra Nevada,

heard from thousands of others through Web 2.0 technologies. Finally, Repair California consulted with experts who often offered their assistance pro bono.

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About Repair California

Repair California is a non-partisan, non-profit organization formed to fix California's broken state government. L

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Los Angeles Business from bizjournals - February 12, 2010
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Constitutional convention backers put reform effort on hold

Los Angeles Business from bizjournals

Short on money, organizers are putting on hold an effort to convene a constitutional convention aimed at fundamentally rewriting the rules of state government.

Repair California, an offshoot of the **Bay Area Council** business group, said Friday it will pause its effort to put two initiatives on the November ballot. One initiative would authorize calling a constitutional convention and a second lays out what the convention would do.

Repair California estimated it needed \$3.6 million to collect 1.4 million signatures to qualify for the fall ballot. The group said it collected a little more than \$352,000 as of Feb. 1. The two biggest financial backers were the California Tribal Business Alliance and Lenny Mendonca, director of the San Francisco office of McKinsey & Co. Each gave \$150,000.

Repair California estimates it collected slightly more than 100,000 signatures so far.

"Unless someone comes in with a large amount of money, (the effort) is dropped," said Jim Wunderman, director of the Bay Area Council who launched the convention effort with a 2008 newspaper editorial outlining how Sacramento lawmakers are failing their constituents.

If significant new funds arrive by March 1, Repair California said it will resume the campaign to place the Constitutional Convention on the November ballot.

The push for a constitutional convention gathered grass roots support as Wunderman and other supporters toured the state over the last year and a half.

Repair California coaxed longtime political operative Clint Reilly out of retirement to chart its political strategy.

Joint Venture: Silicon Valley CEO Russell Hancock called stalled constitutional convention effort "a shame," during a break in a conference in which his group warned of the negative economic impact on Silicon Valley from outside factors.

"One of the problems is Sacramento," Hancock said. "This (constitutional convention) is the approach we needed."

To raise money for this sort of campaign, "you need a few people who write million dollar checks," Hancock said. "This has been more of a grass roots effort."

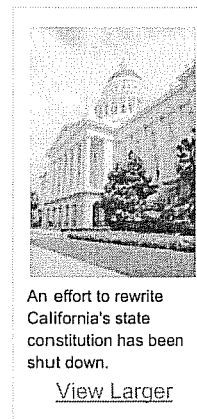
Carl Guardino, CEO of the Silicon Valley Leadership Group said the issue comes down to "a simple choice - do we seek reforms based on our heads or our hearts?" He backs the efforts of another group, California Forward, seeking reform through individual ballot initiatives rather than holding a convention.

"A constitutional convention was all about passion, while the work of California Forward and others is all about specific reforms selected in a comprehensive manner — appealing to our heads; our desire for specifics," Guardino said. "It is now time to take the passion of those calling for a convention and combine it with the precision of California Forward's specific set of reforms, adding up to comprehensive solutions good for all Californians."

Under Repair California's plan, more than 460 Californians — about half of them picked at random — would be delegates to a convention to rewrite the state's constitution. They would focus on how to improve the budget process, the election and initiative process, the balance of power between the state and local governments and the creation of new systems to improve government effectiveness.

Reports by the Silicon Valley / San Jose Business Journal and San Francisco Business Times were used in this story.

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An effort to rewrite California's state constitution has been shut down.

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