



CITY OF MARTINEZ

**CITY COUNCIL AGENDA
September 4, 2013**

TO: Mayor and City Council
FROM: Mercy G. Cabral, Deputy City Clerk
SUBJECT: SB 594 (Hill) Limiting Ballot Advocacy by Local Government Organizations
DATE: August 28, 2013

RECOMMENDATION:

Discuss and consider authorizing the Mayor to sign a letter of opposition SB954 (Hill) Limiting Ballot Advocacy by Local Government Organizations.

BACKGROUND:

SB 594 restricts non-profit organizations that receive funds from public agencies like the League of California Cities from taking positions on ballot measures that impact their members. The stated purpose is to increase transparency regarding use of public funds in campaigns, but the real intent appears to be silencing the voice of public agencies in the ballot process (the bill is backed by large statewide union groups). The next step may be similar attempts to restrict legislative advocacy, leaving local government without a voice in public policymaking. For these reasons, the League of California Cities is requesting its members send letters of opposition to the Assembly Appropriations Committee to voice concern over this proposal.

FISCAL IMPACT:

No fiscal impact.

ACTION:

Motion authorizing the Mayor to sign a letter of opposition SB954 (Hill) Limiting Ballot Advocacy by Local Government Organizations.

Attachment: Letter of Opposition

APPROVED BY:


City Manager



City of Martinez

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September 4, 2013

Assembly Member Mike Gatto, Chair
Assembly Appropriations Committee
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Opposition to SB 594 (Hill): Measure would silence the voice of police, sheriffs, cities, counties, special districts, public safety, schools and others.

Dear Chairman Gatto:

On behalf of the City of Martinez, I am writing to express our strong opposition to Senate Bill 594 (Hill) as recently amended. This last-minute gut-and-amend legislation would silence the voice of nonprofit organizations representing local governments, police and sheriffs, schools, businesses and others by stopping these organizations from participating in state and local ballot initiative campaigns. In doing so, SB 594 would silence the voice of trusted organizations on matters of critical importance to the residents of California.

This last minute gut-and-amend is being promoted by a few special interests wishing to increase their influence by silencing important and engaged organizations that may not always agree with their political positions.

SB 594 is a solution in search of a problem. California already has strong laws on the books that prohibit the use of public funds in political campaigns and the organizations representing local governments take great care to ensure they do not expend public resources on campaigns.

Lastly, SB 594 creates vast new responsibilities for the Attorney General to conduct biennial audits of thousands of nonprofit organizations that receive more than 20 percent of their annual revenues from one or more local agencies. This would create a new and costly bureaucracy at the Attorney General's office, as well as time-consuming and costly audits for nonprofit organizations.

We are joining the broad coalition of sheriffs, police, cities, counties, special districts, schools and others in opposition to SB 594. We hope you will join us by rejecting this measure when it is heard in Assembly Appropriations.

Sincerely,

Rob Schroder
Mayor, City of Martinez

ROB SCHRODER, MAYOR

c: Assembly Member Diane L. Harkey, Vice Chair
Assembly Member Franklin E. Bigelow
Assembly Member Raul Bocanegra
Assembly Member Steven Bradford
Assembly Member Ian C. Calderon
Assembly Member Nora Campos
Assembly Member Tim Donnelly
Assembly Member Susan T. Eggman
Assembly Member Jimmy Gomez
Assembly Member Isadore Hall, III
Assembly Member Chris R. Holden
Assembly Member Eric Linder
Assembly Member Richard Pan
Assembly Member Bill Quirk
Assembly Member Donald P. Wagner
Assembly Member Shirley N. Weber