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February 19, 1991


Lawrence M. Noble
Office of the General Counsel
Federal Election Commission
999 E Street, N. W.
Washington, D.C. 20463
Dear Mr. Noble:
The California Democratic Party (CDP) requests an advisory opinion on the allocation of administrative expenses and costs of generic voter dxives for the twoYear period beginning January 1, 1991. Under new 11 CFR 106.5(d), state and local party committees must allocate such expenses according to the "ballot composition method," which is

AOR
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based on the ratio of federal offices expected on the ballot to total federal and non-federal offices expected on the ballot in the next general election to be held in the committee's state or geographic area.

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The CDP is a voluntary organization made up of approximately six-and-a-half million registered voters. The CDP seeks to elect Democrats to a wide range of California state, local, and federal offices, and also actively campaigns for and against a number of statewide ballot measures. The CDP is a "state committee" within the meaning of the Federal Election Campaign Act. (2 USC 5 431(15): 11 CFR 100.14(a).)

The next California general election will occur in November, 1992. As it now appears, California voters will then cast votes for the following federal offices used in calculating the ballot composition ratio: president, fifty-two congressional seats, and elther one or two senate seats. $1 /$ California voters will also cast votes for the following non-federal offices: .twenty senate seats, eighty assembly seats, and several hundred (perhaps several thousand) local government

[^0]300 Capitol Mall, Sute 350 Sacramento, Califorrua 95814 TEIEPHONE (916) 442-2952 FAX (916) 442-1280

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seats. In addition, voters will decide an unknown number of statewide and local ballot measures.

## MAY CDP ATHOCATE ONE POLKT FOR LOCAL CANDIDATEES?

11 CFR 106.5(d)(ii) states that state party committees may count one point, and local party committees may count two points, "if any partisan local candidates are expected on the ballot in that election." We ask that you confirm that the CDP may include one point for local elections.

Article II, section $6(a)$ of the California Constitution states that "All judicial, school, county, and city offices shall be nonpartisan." Judicial interpretation of this section has made clear that the only limitation imposed by this section is that political parties cannot nominate a candidate for local and judicial offices; all other forms of political activity (including endorsing, supporting, or opposing local candidates) are permissible. As the California Supreme Court explained in a lengthy description of California's local election process:

Of the various alternatives open to the Legislature in promoting the principles of nompartisanship, it chose only to control the form of elections for nonpartisan office in various respects, and to impose a single restriction on the conduct of political parties. In the former category are provisions stating that declarations of candidacy and to other nomination papers for nonpartisan office may not refer to party affiliation (5 6401.5) [all citations are to the California Elections Code], the name of the party to which a nonpartisan candidate belongs may not appear on the ballot, a voter may cast his ballot for a candidate for such office without regard to party affiliation (SS 10200.5, 10214), and partisan and nompartisan offices are listed in separate columns of the ballot (S 10207). The only limitation on the conduct of political parties with respect to elections for nonpartisan office is that they may not nominate a candidate for such an office. Section 37 defines "nonpartisan office" as "an office for which no party may nominate a candidate"; conversely, section 36 defines a partisan office as one for which a party may nominate a candidate. Section 37 goes on to provide, in language almost identical to section 6, that "Judicial, school, county and municipal offices are nompartisan offices." since there is no other

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restriction on the participation of political parties
in elections for nonpartisan office, the inference is clear that no additional limitation was intended.
(Unger V. Superior Court (1984) 37 Cal.3d 612, 614-615 (emphasis added).)2/

On June 3, 1986, article II, section 6 (b) was added to the California Constitution:

No political party or party central committee may endorse, support, or oppose a candidate for nonpartisan office.

The Ninth Circuit recently ruled that article II, section 6 (b) violates the first and fourteenth amendments to the federal constitution. 3 /

It is just as clear that California political parties have for many years participated actively in local elections. The California Supreme Court has noted that "it has been customary for the governing bodies of political parties to endorse or assist candidates in elections for nompartisan office."4/ The San Francisco Democratic Central Comittee has endorsed and actively supported local candidates since 1967.5/ The Santa Clara County Democratic Committee has endorsed local candidates since 1972.6/ Within a five-year period, the Alameda County Democratic Central Committee endorsed over 100 candidates for nompartisan office.7/

CDP also actively participates in local elections. Over the last decade, the CDP has endorsed and supported hundreds of local

[^1]Lawrence M. Noble
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candidates. For example, during the 1990 general election the CDP invested more than $\$ 300,000$ in slate cards that endorsed local candidates for the following local offices:

> San_Francisco -- Board of Education, College Board, Assessor, Municipal Court, BART [Bay Area Rapid Transit] Board;

Los Angeles -- County Assessor;
Alpine -- Community College District:
El Monte -- County Assessor:
Mountain View -- Supervisor, College Board, Board of Education, Municipal Court, BART [Bay Area Rapid Transit] Board.8/

The CDP customarily participates in a wide-range of local elections. We therefore request that you confirm that the CDP can allocate one point for local races. EOW MaNY POINHE BEOUTD BE ALLOCATED FOR THE UPCOMIMG U.8. EEMARE ELECTIOM8?

In the normal course of events, Californians would elect one United States Senator in 1992, but due to an unusual chain of events it now appears that there will be two senatorial elections in 1992.

Senator Alan Cranston was last elected in 1986; his seat will be contested again in 1992. Pete Wilson won California's other senate seat at the 1988 election; ordinarily that seat would not be contested until 1994. However, Mr. Wilson was elected Governor at the 1990 general election. He then resigned his senate seat and, after being sworn in as Governor, appointed John Seymour to fill the vacant senate seat.

The federal constitution states that a governor "shall issue writs of election to fill [senate] vacancies," and also permits a governor to fill a vacancy by appointment if so authorized by the

[^2]Lawrence M. Noble
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state legislature.2/ California law empowers the governor to fill a senate vacancy by appointment, but requires an election to fill the vacancy "at the general election next succeeding the occurrence of the vacancy or at any special election."10/

The result of all this is that there will be an election to contest Senator Seymour's seat at either the 1992 general election or at a special election. Thus during the two-year election cycle beginning January 1, 1991, there will be two federal senatorial elections in California.

11 CFR 106.5(d)(ii) states that
In calculating a ballot composition ratio, a state or local party comittee shall count the federal offices of President, United States Senator, and United States Representative, if expected on the ballot in the next general election, as one federal office each.

Our question is whether the CDP should count the two senatorial

[^3]Lawrence M. Noble
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elections as one point or two points in the ballot composition ratio.

We believe that two issues must be resolved to answer this question. The first issue concerns the definition of the word "office." The plain language of 11 CFR 106.5(d)(ii) states that the "offices" of "President, United States Senator, and United States Representative" shall count "as one federal office each." This language suggests that the "office" of United States Senator counts as one point regardless of whether one seat or two seats are on the ballot. This reading is supported by FEC Schedule H1, which instructs committees to

CHECK ALL OFFICES APPEARING ON THE NEXI GENERAL ELECTION BALIOT:
2. U.S. Senate . . . . . . (1 POINT)

This reading is further supported by the instructions for preparing Schedule Hl, which state that

> In calculating this ratio committees may count only one federal or non-federal office for each candidate category 1 isted in lines 1 through 9 of the schedule. with the following exceptions: (1) All state and local party committees may count a maximum of two non-federal offices for the category of "Other Statewide Candidates" if more than one such office is expected on the ballot in the next general election. (2) A local party committee may count a maximum of two non-federal offices for the category of "Local Candidates" if more than one such office is expected ont he ballot in that committee's district int the next general election.

(Emphasis added.) Thus there are two exceptions from the general rule that comittees may only count one point for each listed candidate category. Neither exception includes the situation where two senatorial candidates may appear on the ballot. The clear inference is that only one point should be counted for senatorial races.

The second issue concerns the meaning of the phrase "expected on the ballot in the next general election." In all likelihood the election to fill the vacant seat will be held at the November 1992 general election, but it may not. There could

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be a special election.11/ No one knows for sure.
We ask that you consider the fact that if the CDP must count two federal points for the upcoming senatorial elections, the result will be that elther 57\% or $67 \%$ of CDP's administrative for the current election cycle must come from federal hard money. 12/ The latter figure is higher than the percentage used by national party committees.13/ Both figures greatly overestimate the proportion of CDP's federal activity over any two-year period.

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Furthermore, if you look at the slate cards attached as Exhibit B, you will see that a significant portion of the party's resources goes to supporting or opposing statewide ballot initiatives. Fully 50\% of the slate cards are devoted to ballot measures. In the last two-year election cycle, 45 statewide ballot measures appeared on the ballot, 17 in the 1990 primary and 28 in the 1990 general election.14/ This is a situation unique to California. Yet the ballot composition method, evidently designed for nationwide application, makes no allowance for resources invested in ballot measures, and thus greatly overestimates the federal share of CDP's overhead.

PAYMENT OF EXPENBES IETCURRED PRIOR TO JANOARY 1. 1991

We also seek advice on the treatment of debts incurred before January 1, 1991 but paid after that date. For example, the CDP incurred attorneys' fees as an administrative expense during 1990 have not yet been paid. When these fees are paid, which federal/state allocation should be used: The ratio in effect at the time the expenses were incurred, or the ratio in effect at the time the expenses are paid? Also, when such bills are paid, should payment be made from the non-federal account with reimbursement from the federal account (system used until January 1), or should payment be made from the federal account with reimbursement from the non-federal account (system in place from January 1 on)? How should this be reported?

A similar question arises with reference to fund-raising. The CDP conducts ongoing fundraising campaigns. Frequently checks are received well after a solicitation is made. Our question concerns a situation where a solicitation is made in 1990, but donations in response to that solicitation do not

[^5]```
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arrive until 1991. Which ratio (old or new) should be used in apportioning these contributions? How should this be reported?

Very truly yours,
OLSON, CONNELLY, HAGEL, FONG \& LEIDIGH

IÂNCE H. OLSON'
LHO/kl
**Please Note
The full opinion of the
CA Supreme Court 15 not being circulated with the AOR because of its limited relevance and length. (32 pages) A full copy is available from OGC Docket upon request.
;
[S F No 24659 Dec 27, 1984]
SAMUEL UNGER et al , Petitioners, v THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO, Respondent, REPUBLICAN PARTY OF CALIFORNIA et al, Real Parties in Interest

## Summary

Two registered voters who had filed a petition for a writ of mandate in the superior court seeking to restraun a political party, its state central and executive committees, and two individuals, from endorsing or otherwise supporting a campaign not to confirm justices of the Supreme Court at a fortheoming general election, filed a pettion for a writ of mandate in the Supreme Court after the supenior court sustained a demurrer to the petition and entered an order of dismissal The Supreme Court demed the writ The court held that a politucal party and its central committee were not prohibited by Cal Const, art II, \& 6 (providing "Judicial, school, county, and city offices shall be nonpartisan") from endorsing or otherwise supporting a campaign not to confirm justices of the Supreme Court at a general election, or otherwise endorsing, supportung, or opposing candidates for nonpartisan office (Opinion by Mosk, J , with Files, J ,* and Janes, J ,t concurring Separate concurring opimion by Grodin, Actung C. J. Separate concurning opinion by Lucas, J Separate dissentung opinion by Sums, J , $\dagger$ with Potter, J, $\dagger$ concurring )

## Headnotes

Classtied to Calhforma Digest of Official Reports, 3d Senes
(1a-1d) Elections \& 1-Nonpartisan Ofices-Confirmation of Supreme - Court Justices-Participation by Political Parties.-A political party and its central committee were not prohibited by Cal Const , art II, § 6 (providing "Judicial, school, county, and city offices shall be non-

- partisan") from endorsung or otherwise supporting a campaign not to

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confirm justuces of the Supreme Court at a general election The Legislature has not prohibited political parties from contunung their practuce of endorsing and supportung candidates for nonpartisan office, and an analysis of the hustory of 86 demonstrates that it was not designed to place any greater restrictions on the conduct of political parties than those which were in existence pfior to its enactment in 1972, 1 e., a prohibition agaunst partusan nomunation of candidates for nonpartisan office. Accordingly, \& 6 does not prohibit parties from endorsing, supportung, or opposing candidates for nonpartisan office (Disapproving Unger v Superior Court (1980) 102 Cal.App 3d 681 [162 Cal Rptr 611], insofar as it held that Cal. Const., art. II, \& 6, prohibited the county central committee of a political party from supporting or opposing candidates to the nonpartisan office of the governing board of a community college district)
[See Cal.Jur.3d, Elections, \& 63 et seq ; Am.Jur.2d, Elections, $\$ 116$ et seq]
(2a-2c) Elections 8 1-Political Parties and Their Governing Bodies.Although the Elections Code contans numerous provisions concernung the organization and obligations of poltical partues and their governing bodies (Elec Code, $\$ 8000$ et seq ), such entrues are not agencies of the state for all purposes and then governing bodies reman free to act on behalf of the party without specific legislative authorization

## Counsel

## Lymu S. Carman and George Beavin for Petutioners

No appearance for Respondent
John A Slezak for Real Parties in Interest
Arlo Hale Smith as Amicus Curiae on behalf of Real Parties in Interest

## Opinion

MOSK, J.-Under California law, a vacancy in the office of a justice of the Supreme Court is filled by appountment of the Governor Thereafter, at a general election in which the appointee runs unopposed, the voter is asked




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## AND VOTER INFORMATION

## GENERAL ELECTION NOVEMBER 6, 1990

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AND CLOSE AT APM
POUNG PLACE IS SHOWN ON BACK COVER

PLEASE TAKE THIS PAMPHLET
WITH YOU TO THE POLLS
Ballot Type: 120

COMPMED AND DISTREUTED EY EMCRAMANIO COUNTY REGLSTRAA OF VOTEAS TELEPMONE NUMBCR SPe-2061

For hearing and speech impared only (IDD) 440-7646

# INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS 

## PUNCH OUT BALLOT CARD ONLY WITH PUNCHING DEVIGE ATTACHED TO VOTE RECORDER; NEVER WITH PEN OR PENCIL.

To vote for a candidate for Chiof Justice of Cellifornla; Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Presiding Justice, Court of Appeal; or Assoctate Justice, Court of Appeal, punch the ballot card in the hole at the polit of the arrow after the word "YE8." To vote against the candidate, punch in the hole at the pount of the arrow after the word "NO."

To vote for a candidate whose name appears on the ballot, punch the ballot card in the hole at the point of the arrow opposite the candidate's name. Where two or more candildates for the same office are to be elected, punch the ballot card in the hole at the point of the arrow opposte the names of all candidates for the office for whom you destre to vote, not to exceed, however, the number of candidates to be elected.

To vote for a qualified write-in candidate, withe the name of the office and the person's name on the llines provided on the ballot card.

To vote on any measure, punch the ballot card in the hole at the point of the arrow opposite the word "YES" or opposite the word "NO."

All distungusihing marks or erasures are forbrdden and make the ballot vord.

If you wrongly punch, tear or deface the ballot card, return the ballot to the precinct board member and obtain another.

TO START YOUR VOTING
GO TO NEXT PAGE


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## MEMBER OF THE STATE ASSEMBLY

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## JUDICIAL





## COUNTY OF SACRAMENTO

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[^0]:    ${ }^{1}$ As will appear more fully below, one of California's two United States Senators was recently elected Governor. He then vacated his senate seat midterm.

[^1]:    ${ }^{2}$ A copy of the Unger decision is attached to this letter as Exhibit A.
    ${ }^{3}$ Geary Y. Renne, 911 F.2d 280 ( 9 th Cir. 1990) (en banc), cert. granted 59 U.S.L.W. 3481 (1991).
    "Unger, gupra, 37 Cal.3d at 616.
    SUnger V. Superior Court (1980) 102 Cal.App.3d 681, 684, fn. 4.
    ${ }^{6}$ Ibid.
    ${ }^{7}$ Ibid.

[^2]:    ${ }^{\delta_{\text {This }}}$ is a representative selection, not a comprehensive list. Examples of the slate cards are attached as Exhibit B.

[^3]:    ${ }^{9}$ The seventeenth amendment to the federal constitution states in its entirety:

    Election of Senators.
    The Senate of the United States shall be composed of two Senators from each State, elected by the people thereof, for six years; and'each Senator shall have one vote. The electors in each State shall have the qualifications requisite for electors of the most numerous branch of the state legislatures.

    When vacancies happen in the representation of any State in the Senate, the executive authority of such State shall issue writs of election to fill such vacancies: Provided, That the legislature of any state may empower the executive thereof to make temporary appointment until the people fill the vacancies by election as the legislature may direct.

    This amendment shall not be so construed as to affect the election or term of any Senator chosen before it becomes valid as part of the constitution.
    ${ }^{10}$ Elections Code § 25001.

[^4]:    ${ }^{\text {H }}$ Cal. Election Code $\$ 25001$.
    ${ }^{12}$ If the CDP can count one point for local elections, its federal allocation ratio for the upcoming election cycle will be 57\%:

    President . . . . . . . . . . 1 point
    U.S. Senate . . . . . . . . . 2 points
    U.S. Congress . . . . . . . . 1 point

    Federal aubtotal . . . 4 points
    State Representative . . . . 1 point
    State Senate . . . . . . . . 1 point
    Local Candidates . . . . . . 1 point
    Mon-federal subtotal . . 3 points
    Federal allocation (4/7) . . 57 percent
    If the CDP cannot count one point for local elections, its federal allocation ratio will be 67\%:

    President . . . . . . . . . . 1 point
    U.S. Senate . . . . . . . . . 2 points
    U.S. Congress . . . . . . . . 1 point

    Federal aubtotal . . . 4 points
    State Representative . . . . 1 point
    State Senate . . . . . . . . 1 point
    Mon-federal subtotal . . 2 points
    Federal allocation (4/6) . . 67 percent
    ${ }^{13}$ See 11 CFR 106.5(b); 11 CFR 106.5 (c).

[^5]:    ${ }^{14}$ I have also attached as Exhibit $C$ a copy of a Sacramento County Official Sample Ballot for the 1990 general election. The Sample Ballot further demonstrates that in California a considerable amount of political activity is devoted to noncandidate, non-federal elections.

[^6]:    *Retired Presiding Justice of the Court of Appeal situing under assignment by the Acting Charperson of the Judicial Council
    $\dagger$ Refured Associate Jusuce of the Court of Appeal stung under assignment by the Actung Charperson of the Judicial Council

