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Source: Yes on Prop. 77 Campaign

New Study Reinforces Existing Redistricting System Is Rigged

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Study Finds Prop. 77 Would Result in Fair, Competitive Voting Districts and Could Lead to Two More Latino Representatives of Congress

SACRAMENTO, Calif., Sept. 26 /PRNewswire/ -- The Yes on Prop. 77 Campaign called on all voters to approve Prop. 77 today upon the release of a new study, which highlighted the abuses in the current redistricting system that allows unfair, uncompetitive gerrymandered political districts. The study also found that, in addition to creating fair, competitive political districts, Prop. 77 would likely result in Latinos picking up two new congressional seats in California, one in the San Fernando Valley and the other in San Diego.

The new study by the Rose Institute, a think tank at Claremont McKenna College which has analyzed redistricting for 30 years, reviewed the impacts of Proposition 77, the Voter Empowerment Act in its new study "Restoring the Competitive Edge, California's Need for Redistricting Reform and the Likely Impact of Proposition 77." The full report can be downloaded by going to: <http://rose.research.claremontmckenna.edu/redistricting/redistricting.asp>

"Today we have a system where the self-interest of politicians is put ahead of the best interests of voters," said Steve Poizner, chair of the Yes on Prop. 77 campaign. "The data in this report reinforces that the current system is broken, and it's rigged to protect the incumbent politicians. The system must be reformed, and Prop 77 is that fair fix."

The Rose Institute tested the likely district modifications if lines are drawn under the rules of Prop. 77. The Rose Institute also used the methodology used by previous retired judges who have drawn lines in the past when the courts have intervened in 1973 and in 1991.

Using these parameters, the Rose Institute found that under Prop. 77, three Congressional Districts are likely to see significant changes in their ethnic population densities, likely resulting in Latinos gaining two seats in Congress and Asian-Americans maintaining a seat in the Bay Area.

- Los Angeles/San Fernando Valley: Congressional District 28 is likely to increase its Latino voting population from 49% to 66%. This seat is currently held by U.S. Representative Howard Berman.
- San Diego: Congressional District 51 is likely to increase its Latino voting population from 49% to 56%. This seat is currently held by U.S. Representative Bob Filner.
- San Francisco Bay Area: Congressional District 13 is likely to increase its Asian voting population from 30% to 35%. U.S. Representative Mike Honda currently holds this seat.

Under Prop. 77, Special Masters selected to draw lines must follow geographic and political boundaries. No more "gerrymandered" districts with bizarre boundary lines that zigzag all over the state. Also, Prop 77 requires the special masters to minimize the splitting up of counties and cities into multiple districts and requires districts to be as contiguous and compact as possible. Of course, all Federal laws and Voting Rights Act requirements must be followed. The result would be more fair, competitive, and regionally aligned political districts.

According to authors of the report, "districts drawn according to Prop. 77 are likely to split many fewer communities, create more districts likely to elect ethnic minority representatives, and create significantly more competitive districts."

The Rose Institute found that districts drawn according to Prop. 77 will result in a major increase in competitive Congressional, Assembly and State Senate districts because districts could no longer be drawn to give a voter registration edge to one party or another, like the current system. The report finds that Prop 77 will likely create:

- Ten new competitive Congressional districts; an increase from zero in the 2001 redistricting scheme.
- Seven competitive seats in the Assembly; an increase from three in the 2001 redistricting scheme.
- Eight competitive seats in the state Senate; an increase from one in the 2001 redistricting scheme.

The Rose Institute also points out that, in the 1970s and the 1990s, the California Supreme Court appointed panels of retired judges called Special Masters to draw district boundaries because of a standoff between the legislature and Governor. In both instances, the Special Masters drew lines that were much more competitive than the plans drawn by the Legislature in the 1980s and in 2001. For instance:

- 1970s redistricting was drawn by retired judges, and resulted in 40 competitive districts
- 1980s (Legislature) resulted in only 19 competitive districts
- 1990s (retired judges); number of competitive districts increased to 48
- 2001 (Legislature): the number of competitive districts plummeted to only 5

The Rose study also identified egregious examples of gerrymandered districts in California, including the well-known "Ribbon of Shame," Congressional District 22 which stretches along the Central Coast of California which is only 100 yards wide at one point and only 500 yards wide in another.

Concluded Poizner, "The results of this independent analysis prove what we already know to be true: It is a blatant conflict of interest to have partisan politicians draw their own district lines. The system must be changed. Voters should pass Prop. 77 in November."

Source: Yes on Prop. 77 Campaign

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