

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 16, 2008

Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor, State of California
1st Floor State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

We write to express our strong opposition to Proposition 11, the state redistricting initiative that you are spearheading. We oppose this measure because it will trample constitutional safeguards designed to protect minority voting rights.


In April of this year, the Mexican American Legal Defense Fund (MALDEF), NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund (LDF), National Association Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) Education Fund, and William C. Velasquez Institute (WCVI) came together to denounce this initiative as “a fundamentally flawed attempt at reform” and noted that it “fails to protect the interests of minority voters.” These are very serious concerns coming from four nationally-recognized and well-respected civil rights organizations.

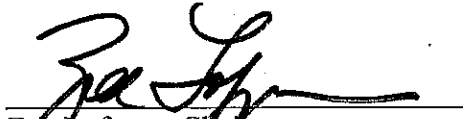
Proposition 11 will create, arguably, the most powerful political commission in the State of California. Unfortunately, this initiative does not in any way ensure that the 14 members of this powerful new commission will reflect the gender, racial, or geographic diversity of the state’s 36 million people.


There is a need for reform of the redistricting process in this country. Many of our members have cosponsored legislation in Congress that will set national redistricting standards so that no party will gain an advantage in the Congressional redistricting process. However, we oppose Proposition 11 because it is a vehicle to increase Republican influence in state government at a time when the Republican Party is losing influence with the general electorate.


As the most ethnically diverse state delegation in Congress, and as members of Congressional organizations that promote the rights of African American, Latino, and Asian American and Pacific Islander citizens, we cannot sit by and allow the Republican Party to maximize its political influence at the expense of minority voting rights.

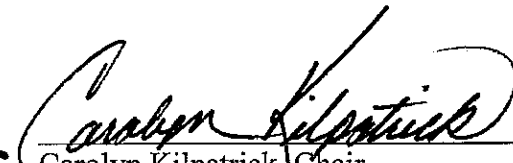
Sincerely,


Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House


Zoe Lofgren, Chair
California Democratic Congressional Delegation


Joe Baca, Chair
Congressional Hispanic Caucus


Mike Honda, Chair
Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus


Carolyn Kilpatrick, Chair
Congressional Black Caucus