

March 31, 2008

The Honorable Curren Price, Chair

Assembly Committee on Elections and Redistricting

State Capitol, Room 2179

Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Assembly Bill 2607 (Davis), related to the Political Reform Act of 1974, electronic filing

California Association of Clerks and Election Officials...Co-SPONSOR

Dear Assemblymember Price:

The California Association of Clerks and Election Officials (CACEO) is co-sponsoring Assembly Bill 2607 (Davis), which is scheduled to be heard in your Assembly Committee on Elections and Redistricting on Tuesday, April 8, 2008. The measure will create a pilot program in the counties of Los Angeles, Orange and Ventura to allow filing officers to accept electronically filed Form 700 statements of economic interest.

Current law requires certain public officials and candidates for certain elective offices to file a Statement of Economic Interest (Form 700) disclosing their financial interests that may be affected by their actions as public officials. These Statements of Economic Interest are manually completed, signed and mailed to a local filing officer by the appropriate individuals. The paper copies are then sorted, reviewed for errors and stored as public documents. In many counties, the information is electronically scanned page by page into a database.

AB 2607 would allow three counties to develop a pilot program to provide local filers of the Form 700 with the option of completing and submitting the document electronically. The filing officer would be required to utilize a system that would include appropriate firewalls, data encryption, secure authentication, all necessary hardware and software and industry best practices to ensure that the security and integrity of the data contained in the statement is not jeopardized or compromised. A paper copy of an official's statement of economic interests would still be available to the public through the existing public document request procedure. The information would be stored internally in encrypted and password protected databases, and not available or accessible on the internet.

The electronic filing option would be tested as a three-year pilot program in these interested counties. The program would sunset on January 1, 2012. The counties in the pilot program would report to the Legislature on July 1, 2011 detailing the safety, security and effectiveness of the pilot.

The electronic filing option would benefit the filer, the filing officer, the counties involved and the public. Filers would be provided more specific filing requirements and receive timely notifications along with a convenient copy of their prior year statement. Filers would use an electronic "smart form" that would enable them to complete their form without errors. They would also save time and money on postage. Filing officers would, like the filers, benefit from working with a "smart form" that will increase the accuracy of the document and will ensure that it has been filled out completely. The option of electronic filing will also significantly reduce the number of paper copy forms submitted to the filing officer for review and scanning. Currently in Los Angeles County, these documents number in the tens of thousands. The pilot counties will benefit financially through fewer filer errors, faster processing

time, less need to follow up with filers to obtain corrected forms, and reductions in postage costs through mass electronic communications. And finally, the public would benefit from AB 2607 because as a result of the bill, due to greater and more timely compliance with the Political Reform Act's economic disclosure laws, and because the information contained in the public documents would be more accurate, detailed, updated, and therefore more useful.

CACEO respectfully requests your support for AB 2607.

Sincerely,

Matt Siverling

Legislative Advocate

CC: Each Member and Consultant, Assembly Committee on Elections and Redistricting

The Honorable Mike Davis