



**PEACE & FREEDOM PARTY
OF CALIFORNIA**

State Central Committee

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Senate Floor Alert

SCA 8 (Mendoza) – county government - redistricting - OPPOSE

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The Peace and Freedom Party of California opposes SCA 8 because it would prevent counties from electing their legislative bodies by proportional representation (PR). As strong advocates for PR, we believe that this (possibly unintended) side effect of SCA 8 is much more important than any possible advantages it might have.

SCA 8 would ask the voters to amend the State Constitution affecting the governance of California's counties in three ways. First, it would require counties with populations over 2,000,000 to have at least seven members on their boards of supervisors. Second, it would require all counties to elect their supervisors from single member districts beginning in 2021. Third, it would limit the growth of salaries, benefits and expenses of supervisors and their staff by a formula linking compensation to changes in the county's total budget.

We have no quarrel with the first provision. In the absence of PR, more (and smaller) single member districts are relatively more democratic than fewer (and larger) ones.

Our problem is with the second provision. Under the current State Constitution and Government Code, charter counties may adopt a system of proportional representation (such as the single transferable vote), or semi-proportional representation (such as cumulative voting) by amending their charters. General law counties may do so by adopting charters or through legislation along the lines of AB 1294 in the 2007-2008 session, which was vetoed by Governor Schwarzenegger.

All proportional and semi-proportional systems require that at least part of the legislative body be elected from multi-member districts. But SCA 8 would prohibit multi-member districts. We believe that it would even prevent the use of cumulative voting to resolve controversies under the California Voting Rights Act.

We strongly object to amending the State Constitution to eliminate the opportunity counties now have to adopt PR. This objection could be met by a proposal that would prohibit at-large elections using unrepresentative methods but give counties the flexibility to choose between PR and single-member districts.

Finally, although we are not prepared to argue that county supervisors are necessarily underpaid, we are against budgetary straightjackets like the one built in to SCA 8. Counties need the flexibility to adapt salary and expense budgets -- including for supervisors and their staff -- to changing circumstances.

We urge the Senate to vote No on SCA 8 as it stands, and urge Sen. Mendoza to return with a new measure that would not close the door to PR in county government.