



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

June 29, 2016

## **FPPC Announces Review of California Political Reform Act**

Sacramento, CA – The California Fair Political Practices Commission (FPPC), in partnership with the University of California and California Forward, has announced a [project to update California's venerable Political Reform Act \(PRA\)](#). The project will include two rounds of public participation over the course of several months, to ensure what the FPPC plans to be an inclusive and transparent process.

The Political Reform Act was passed in 1974 as a result of the Watergate scandal. It was hailed as a landmark law that cemented California as a national leader in regulating campaign finance and government ethics. It has been amended and expanded many times in the years since.

“While we have some of the toughest rules in the country for public officials and elected officials, the unintended consequence of those changes is a body of law that can be considered overly complex, cumbersome and, sometimes, inconsistent,” said Jodi Remke, FPPC Chair. “This process is designed to simplify and streamline the act without weakening it or losing any accountability.”

A webinar is scheduled for Thursday July 14 at 10 a.m. with Chair Remke and California Forward President & CEO Jim Mayer to discuss the work. Public comment will begin in mid-July. Individuals interested in participating or learning more about the project can sign-up at [www.cafwd.org/PRAtalk](http://www.cafwd.org/PRAtalk).

The FPPC, which was created when the Political Reform Act was passed, administers and enforces the ethics law – consisting of ethics, campaign finance and lobbying reporting – as well as assisting public officials, employees and candidates to comply with its provisions. It plans to use the significant public input it receives to prepare revisions to the law, submitting it for consideration by the Legislature in early 2017.

“Modernizing the act in plain English will mean there’ll be fewer technical violations and we can focus our efforts on the more substantive violations,” said Galena West, Chief of Enforcement for the FPPC. “It will be a great benefit and will let us focus our resources where they need to be.”

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The issue of technical violations is a big one. The FPPC estimates that it gets from 15,000-to-20,000 requests every year for technical and legal advice from candidates, elected officials and public officials regarding complying with the law.

“We are hoping for extensive contribution from those affected by the law, including filing officers, political attorneys, public officials and candidates and other good government groups interested in this issue,” Remke added.

Law students from the University of California (Berkeley and Davis) have completed a review of the law and documented issues, options and recommendations which the FPPC staff will include as it evolves the revisions. California Forward will lead a targeted and strategic communications campaign to encourage participation in two rounds of public comment in the coming months.

“We think through this process we will end up with a cleaner law that is easier to comply with and to enforce,” said Mayer. “We will all benefit from an ethics law that is smart, modern and understandable.”

The Political Reform Act Revision Project is supported by a grant from [The James Irvine Foundation](#).

#### **About the Fair Political Practices Commission**

*The [Fair Political Practices Commission](#) is a five-member independent, non-partisan commission that has primary responsibility for the impartial and effective administration of the Political Reform Act. The Act regulates campaign financing, conflicts of interest, lobbying, and governmental ethics. The Commission’s objectives are to ensure that public officials act in a fair and unbiased manner in the governmental decision-making process, to promote transparency in government, and to foster public trust in the political system.*

#### **About CA Fwd**

*[California Forward](#) (CA Fwd) is a nonpartisan and nonprofit organization, devoted to improving the performance of government in California. It believes that increased emphasis on accountability and transparency will create government that Californians deserve and expect. CA Fwd strongly advocates for confidence and trust in elected officials as being an essential ingredient to good government.*

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