



CA Alternative Parties: Statement of Support for Proportional Representation

California's electoral system isn't working for most people. Despite our state's sheer size and significant diversity, our winner-take-all elections have flattened our politics in a way that limits political representation for nearly everyone—including members of the two major parties.

While Republicans in the state are locked out of governing in Sacramento, Democratic voters face a lack of choice that stifles real accountability. Those outside the major parties—and those who might like to be—are left with even less recourse. Because California uses a top-two primary—in which the top performing candidates in a primary go on to the general election regardless of party—the most political diversity California voters can hope for on their ballot is a choice between a Democrat and a Republican. Quite often, the electoral choices in our increasingly polarized districts are between a Democrat and a Democrat, or a Republican and a Republican.

Although anyone is free to vote for another option—provided there is one—how that vote is counted makes it very unlikely that their preference will result in electoral success. Instead of voting with their conscience, voters must choose from the “lesser of two evils.” This has left many apathetic and uninspired by our state's politics, particularly California's already disadvantaged communities, which consistently feel that our two major parties do not, and will not, truly represent their interests.

In contrast, our alternative parties—the Greens, Libertarians, Peace & Freedom, and a variety of other non-ballot qualified parties—have worked tirelessly for decades to elevate the voices and political power of those who do not feel represented by our two-party system.

The members of these parties are motivated by the values their parties uphold rather than fear of the alternatives. They do this work within an electoral system designed to prevent them from representing like-minded voters because the alternative is to leave these voters without a voice for their real interests.

These parties should provide an alternative for people who feel underrepresented, unheard, or dissatisfied by the Democratic and Republican party. Instead, winner-take-all, single-member districts and top-two primaries make it impossible for these parties—and the authentic interests they represent—to get a seat at the table. Shouldn't our state government represent the diversity, the pluralism, and the complex tapestry of voices that make our state so great?

The alternative parties and the 475,000 voters registered with them, say yes, and they've known for a long time that the way to get there is by changing how we vote.

An electoral system that would reward rather than punish our differences, and more fairly represent California's many diverse communities, is proportional representation. Used by most advanced democracies around the world, proportional representation is an electoral system that distributes legislative seats to parties in proportion to the number of votes they receive in elections. So if Party A receives about 30% of the popular vote in an election, they then receive roughly 30% of the seats in the legislature. Of the many important impacts the system has on governing, perhaps most notable is that proportional representation reliably produces multiparty legislatures. While there are many different forms of proportional representation, all of them do a much better job capturing voters' preferences than our current winner-take-all elections, resulting in more accurate, fairer and diverse representation.

That is why we, the Peace & Freedom Party, the Green Party of California, and the Libertarian Party of CA, have joined together with the ProRep Coalition in support of adopting proportional representation in California's state legislature.

"The Green Party of California is committed to proportional representation because it diversifies our legislature to more closely reflect the composition of the actual population and their political perspectives. It extends representation to voters from alternative parties, increases voter participation, eliminates gerrymandering, and reduces the percentage of votes needed to win, thereby acting as a campaign finance reform," - Green Party of California.

*“The Libertarian Party of California is pleased to join a coalition aimed at bringing multi-party democracy to the Golden State. One-party supermajority rule in Sacramento has visibly failed our state, as political debate and open competition wither. A broader, truly inclusive spectrum of opinion in the legislature will help restore sanity to our politics and reclaim the California dream.” - **Libertarian Party of California.***

*“The Peace and Freedom Party understands the purpose of any legislative body is to represent people, and a democratic legislative body is to represent its different constituencies. In California, electoral constituencies are organized into parties. By using single-member districts only the winning constituency in each district is represented. While by using multi-member districts different constituencies in each district are represented, and by using proportional representation they will be represented in proportion to the number of votes received.” -**Peace & Freedom Party of California***

If our democracy is a government by and for the people, elections determine how our government is representative of the people. For decades, parties have served as our foundations of political representation. We need more, and the only way to get more is by reforming our electoral system. It won't be easy, but history has consistently proven that democracies evolve. The time for reform is now. Joins us as we work together to make California the first multiparty US State.

You can learn more about how adopting proportional representation will lead to multiparty democracy in California by reading ProRep Coalition's vision statement, [Representing the Golden State.](#)

