



Let the Redistricting Begin



Coming up at the Chamber

[View all upcoming events on our Web calendar.](#)

WED | Dec. 13
International Trade & Investments Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

THU | Dec. 14
Land Use, Construction & Housing Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

FRI | Jan. 12
Health Care Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

WED | Jan. 17
Business After Hours Mixer
Taste of the Chamber
[more info](#)

THU | Jan. 25
118th Annual Inaugural Dinner
[more info](#)

The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce is the voice of business in L.A. County. Founded in 1888, the Chamber promotes a prosperous economy and quality of life in the Los Angeles region. For more information, visit www.lachamber.org

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Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and the Legislature exhibited a rare form of bipartisanship on several issues last year to conclude one of the most successful sessions in recent memory. The voters of California agreed with this bipartisan approach by handily re-electing the governor and approving all of the infrastructure bonds on the November ballot. The governor and the Legislature now have the opportunity to begin the new session by focusing on some politically sensitive, yet important, initiatives in the area of political reform.

Last week the governor unveiled his proposal for redistricting reform. The proposal creates an independent Citizens Redistricting Commission—11 independent and politically balanced members—to develop a [process for redrawing California's political boundaries](#). The process would also allow the redistricting plan to be appealed to the California Supreme Court.

The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce has long advocated the need for redistricting reform. With the current districts gerrymandered, most are so overwhelmingly Democratic or Republican that the real election, if more than one candidate files, takes place at the primary balloting. This has perpetuated a system that protects incumbents and drives candidates to the extreme.

Moderate candidates do not get past the primaries because they don't attract support from the passionate activists in their party. The result is a body of elected officials who are often so far apart in their basic ideology that it is difficult to develop a consensus on how to move the state forward.

It is telling that the last election produced no change in party in any of California's senate and assembly districts. The current system has divided the pie of political representation before the voters have a chance to speak. Incumbents, both parties and their majorities in the districts they control are safe under the current system.

The goals of redistricting reform should be to inaugurate a new system that keeps communities together, does not gerrymander districts to produce specific majorities or protect incumbents, and complies with the [Voting Rights Act](#). That way we can open the election process to all potential candidates and seek out representatives who exhibit a greater sense of responsibility to the state than to their political party.

The proposal is an excellent start in developing a new and fair way to redistrict. We encourage the Legislature and governor to move this or a similar proposal forward.

And that's *The Business Perspective*.



Gary L. Toebben
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The Business Perspective is a weekly opinion piece by Gary Toebben, President & CEO of the Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, produced with the input of Senior Policy Advisor Rusty Hammer.

by Gary Toebben,
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L.A. Business THIS WEEK

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