



May 26, 2016

Honorable Members of the California State Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

SUBJECT: SB 816 (Hill) State Board of Equalization: Member: Contributions - OPPOSE

Dear State Assemblymember,

The Valley Industry and Commerce Association (VICA) strongly opposes Senate Bill 816, which would reduce the existing contribution limitation for State Board of Equalization Members from \$250 to \$100.

The Kopp Act of 1990 currently limits contributions for a Board Member to \$250. Contributors and Board Members are required to report donations in order to ensure the compliance. If a contributor or Board Member knowingly or intentionally fails to report a financial liability, they are subject to a fine of \$10,000 and could be guilty of a misdemeanor.

SB 816 places a significant burden on reporting and potentially violates existing law. This bill would require that small amounts contributed from a business or firm and their agents must be combined and not exceed \$100. If the amount of combined contributions equals \$100 or more, then the Board Member is disqualified from considering tax matters that involve that business or its agents, witnesses or representatives.

This bill discriminates against small businesses and small contributors with limited funds and public access to the political process. The contribution limit in this measure would be the lowest in the nation and have substantial negative impacts on contributors. SB 816 is inconsistent with regulations for other elected officials who receive contributions. Regulations for contributions to elected officials should be consistent to ensure an equal playing field.

This bill poses constitutional, fairness and equity concerns. It places limitations on contributions that are unnecessary and impedes on the ability of small contributors to participate in the political process. We urge you to oppose this harmful legislation.

Sincerely,

Kevin Tamaki
VICA Chairman

Stuart Waldman
VICA President