



717 K Street
Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95814
909.260.9836

Free Markets. Real Solutions.
www.rstreet.org

June 21, 2017

**State Assemblyman Raul Bocanegra
State Capitol, Room 2175
Sacramento, CA 95814**

Re: Assembly Bill 1455 (Bocanegra)

Dear Assemblyman Bocanegra,

The R Street Institute must regretfully oppose your bill, A.B. 1455. R Street is a Washington, D.C.-based think tank with offices in Sacramento. R Street is focused on many areas of public policy, including the promotion of government transparency. California taxpayers have a right to know what contracts are being pursued by government and be able to engage on those deals well before they are enacted.

A.B. 1455 exempts from required disclosure under the California Public Records Act the records of local agencies related to collective bargaining, as long as those records detail such items as recommendations, work products, theories or strategies. Collective bargaining negotiations between labor unions and public agencies need to be made available to the public because decisions are being made that could cost taxpayers millions of dollars. If A.B. 1455 were to become law, the only time the public would see negotiations is when the contract is in its final form. By then, it often is too late to make changes and get the word out to taxpayers. Votes on final contracts frequently occur within 72 hours of their being made public, which provides too little time for the public to have meaningful input.

Taxpayers need to have full access to nonconfidential information that can be obtained through Public Records Act requests. This is especially true in the case of collective bargaining negotiations, because public-sector unions often give campaign contributions to the same elected officials they lobby for better pensions and other benefits. R Street has no opinion as to appropriate benefit levels, but believes that taxpayers have a right to know how their dollars are spent and how those decisions might affect government programs and services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads 'David Wolfe'.

David Wolfe
Legislative Adviser