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State Auditor Making Good Progress – New Redistricting Commission Applicants Representative of State’s Diversity

Sacramento – Public interest organizations that have been advocating for the successful implementation of a citizens redistricting commission applauded Thursday the efforts of the Bureau of State Audits to develop a qualified, diverse pool of candidates. The Bureau of State Audits has just finished narrowing the original pool of over 30,000 applicants for the new citizens redistricting commission to 120 individuals. The work was done by a three-member Applicant Review Panel (ARP) within the Auditor’s office. The public interest organizations issued the following statements:

“The State Auditor is demonstrating a sincere commitment to select a diverse pool of applicants who show relevant analytical skills, an ability to appreciate diversity, and impartiality. We are confident that the ARP will create a pool of 60 finalists that fulfills the mandates approved by the voters in 2008.” – Jim Mayer, Executive Director, California Forward

“When 30,000 people initially applied to serve on the Citizens Redistricting Commission, we were all excited with the overwhelming citizen response. Now that the Applicant Review Panel has narrowed the applicants to 120 individuals to bring in for interviews, we are pleased that the racial diversity is very close to that of the state’s population: 12% are Black, 30% are of Latino heritage, 14% are Asian and/or Pacific Islander, and 5% are American Indian. This is a very important development in securing the public’s trust.” – Alice Huffman, President, California State Conference of the NAACP

“At each step, the Applicant Review Panel has been attentive to diversity, including gender and geographic diversity. The 120 applicants now consist of 48% women and people hailing from every part of the state. The ARP has a difficult job of reducing the pool to 60 finalists that truly reflect the state’s diversity and talent, but we believe their track record suggests they are up to the task.” – Kathay Feng, Executive Director, California Common Cause

“We monitored the Applicant Review Panel’s process of choosing 120 applicants from thousands of interested Californians. They found talented individuals from all walks of life – from a truck driver to law professors, from teachers to soccer moms. The citizen interest in applying for the commission shows that we really can build public involvement when government is opened up.” – David Pacheco, California State President, AARP

“We commend the Applicant Review Panel’s commitment to transparency – every meeting was videotaped and available for real-time viewing over the web. As the ARP moves into the interview stage, the public will be able to watch the interviews in person or over the web.” – Janis R. Hirohama, President, League of Women Voters of California

The Applicant Review Panel will be inviting the 120 applicants to an in-person interview to choose 60 finalists who will move on to the next stage of the selection process, in which the legislature will review the names and strike up to 24 names. The video of the selection process can be viewed at www.wedrawthelines.ca.gov.

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