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Getting Ahead of Change

Nonprofits know the value of getting to know policymakers once they take office. But what about getting ahead of changes to promote sound policies and working relationships? In California, that's exactly what nonprofits are doing.

Consider the situation in California in the aftermath of the presidential election. President Biden has selected California Attorney General Becerra to serve in his cabinet. If Becerra is confirmed as Secretary of Health and Human Services, California Governor Newsom will have the duty and opportunity to appoint a new AG to enforce all manner of state statutes, including the laws governing nonprofit corporations, solicitations, and operations. As the cop on the nonprofit beat, the AG can investigate, litigate, and shut down nonprofits in the state, and can promote policies that help make the sector transparent and vibrant, and build on partnerships that strengthen communities.

[CalNonprofits](#), the state association of nonprofits, decided it would make sure - rather than assume - the Governor appreciated the importance of the appointment to the health and wellbeing of nonprofits. They sent a [proactive letter](#) to Governor Newsom urging him to consider the impact and concerns of the nonprofit community, stressing that the "quality of leadership of the Attorney General matters deeply to the nonprofit community." The letter recommends five priorities for anyone appointed to serve as Attorney General:

1. Continue to be proactive and assertive in pursuit of scammers pretending to be nonprofits.
2. Support the development of new regulations to respond to the now-prevalent online donation industry.
3. Promote policies that protect and strengthen nonprofits as key service providers, employers, and economic drivers.
4. Support efforts to increase transparency and accountability of donor-advised funds (DAFs) and sponsors.
5. Continue to recognize the inequities in our state and seek opportunities to remedy those inequities.

In closing, the letter stresses, “we look forward to working with the new Attorney General to keep California’s nonprofit community strong as we continue to step up to serve Californians, provide jobs, and support economic recovery.”

The point of the closing sentence, and the whole letter, is that nonprofits and governments serve the public good. As a result, more often than not their interests are aligned. So it is imminently appropriate for nonprofits to advocate for partners who share common values and a commitment to high ideals.