

# Berkeley Residents Rally Against Recall, Proposition 54

Citizens Go Door to Door in Lobbying Efforts

By **KATHY LEE**

Contributing Writer, The Daily Californian

Monday, September 8, 2003

About 80 people gathered at Washington Elementary School Saturday to participate in a rally against the recall and Proposition 54.

After the rally, several student activists, community members and city councilmembers went door to door in Berkeley neighborhoods in an attempt to persuade and register voters for the Oct. 7 election.

This was just one of a series of actions organized by some city and community leaders in an attempt to mobilize the residents against Proposition 54, which would prohibit the collection of data on race, ethnicity, color and national origin by public agencies. The event kicked off with a series of speakers including Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates, Assemblymember Loni Hancock, **Alameda County Supervisor Keith Carson**, and Steve Phillips, executive committee member of NO on 54.

At the rally, Carson discussed the consequences that Proposition 54 could have on the future of California.

Carson emphasized the need to collect data in order to understand current conditions surrounding health care, education and housing in order to make improvements. Not all voters are against Proposition 54, however.

According to Andrea Irvin, president of the Berkeley College Republicans, supporters of the proposition will hold events supporting Proposition 54 and the initiative's author UC Regent Ward Connerly as the election gets closer.

"In order to completely erase racial discrimination from the state, we need to get rid of the recognition of racial categories by the state," said Ben Barron, a contributing editor for the California Patriot and a former assistant news editor at The Daily Californian.

**But Carson stated that if Proposition 54 passes, society will be left blind to the inequities that exist in the state of California**—a view shared by Berkeley Mayor Tom Bates.

"Proposition 54 is unbelievably bad because it claims to create a colorblind society, but actually makes us not see," Bates said.

High school students Tiara Ragsdale, 16, and Skylar Tillotson, 16, voiced their opinions on Proposition 54 with poetry and speech.

"At first it sounded like a good thing, but then we realized that we would have no face," said Tillotson.

Hancock expressed her concerns with the recall, characterizing it as a plot hatched by a few millionaires.

"We will simply be the land of the perpetual election," Hancock said.