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**Citizens' Bond Oversight
Committee:
Introduction to the Brown Act**

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PART I

RALPH M. BROWN ACT OVERVIEW

I. **BROWN ACT OVERVIEW**

- A. The Ralph M. Brown Act, commonly known as the "Brown Act," is codified at Government Code Sections 54950-54963.
- B. The purpose of the Brown Act is to ensure an open and transparent decision-making process and meaningful public access through public meetings of legislative bodies of local agencies.
- C. Open decision making means more than a public vote. The Brown Act requires that all of the "deliberative" processes, including discussion, debate and the acquisition of information, be open and available for public scrutiny, subject only to specific statutory exceptions.

D. **Who is subject to the Brown Act?**

1. Legislative Bodies.

- (a) This includes school boards and their members.
- (b) Newly Elected Members – Any person who has been elected to serve as a member of a legislative body, even though he/she has not yet assumed office, must conform his/her conduct to the requirements of the Brown Act.

2. Committees.

The Brown Act also defines "legislative body" to include any commission, committee, board, or other body of a local agency, whether permanent or temporary, decision-making or advisory, that has been created by charter, ordinance, resolution, or formal action of a legislative body.

- (a) Education Code section 15280 provides that Citizens' Oversight Committee proceedings "shall be open to the public and notice to the public shall be provided in the same manner as the proceedings of the governing board of the district."

E. **When Does the Brown Act Apply?**

- 1. The Brown Act applies to "*meetings*" of the legislative body.
- 2. See, Part II.

F. **Who Monitors Compliance with the Brown Act?**

- 1. The District Attorney, Grand Jury, and the public regulate Brown Act compliance.