

Initiative to split Calif. in 6 not on the ballot

By Josh Richman, San Jose Mercury News

Silicon Valley venture capitalist Tim Draper has missed a key step in his audacious plan to break up California into six states: He failed to gather enough signatures to qualify his initiative for the November 2016 ballot, the Secretary of State's Office reported Friday.

The slipup seemed like the punch line to what had mushroomed into a national joke, with TV talking heads and late-night comedians taking potshots at the Golden State's latest political weirdness.

Political experts expressed amazement Friday that Draper's \$5.2 million personal investment in the proposed ballot measure didn't do the trick.

Thad Kousser, a UC San Diego political expert, said that the effort's failure doesn't say anything about the merits of the proposal. Instead, he said, "I think it says everything about a lack of organizational savvy by its proponents."

The Secretary of State's Office reported that county registrars did a random check of about 54,000 of the more than 1.1 million petition signatures that Draper's campaign collected. Based on that sampling, officials estimated that only 752,685 signatures would be valid – far less than the 807,615 needed to qualify.

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