

California 2020: A Look Ahead

According to Senator Darrell Steinberg, California is in the midst of interesting times facing an economic crisis and an opportunity to embrace change. Senator Steinberg referred to the work of former California Governor Edmund G “Pat” Brown and stated “if we could replicate the job of former California Governor Pat Brown, we would be fine, and as Californians we would.” Over the last five months, \$62 million in cuts have been made to the state budget due to the state’s current tax and finance system not generating the revenue required to address California’s challenges. Senator Steinberg pointed out there is wide spread belief amongst Californians that the political system is unable to sustain significant changes. In California, we should embrace change or irrational forces will make the system worse that it already is.

Senator Sternberg further reiterated, the Pat Brown era was not one of reform but on of result; tangible achievements that created jobs (ie) California Water System. None of these achievements were short-term but needed work and vision. There are obstacles, some intended other not, but California for example has the opportunity to become the leader in renewable energy. The passage of SB 375 in 2008 finally made the connection between the states physical infrastructure, land-use and transportation.

In AB 32, the climate change bill brought together a coalition of builders, engineers and environmentalists to help address not only their own interests but to build a consensus for state building. The problem is not just about term limits or public finance. Rather, we have built a system where stakeholders are able and ready to say no, but are unable or unwilling to say yes or compromise.

The most significant issue facing the state is whether we have the political skill to reach solutions to affect the myriad of problems it faces. We have kids that are unable to compete in the high wage world. This is because the educational system from K12 upwards needs to be overhauled. Education should not be a philanthropic add-on, instead partnerships sponsorships etc can be used to set up incentives that would ensure jobs or guarantee jobs to future kids.