

# California Policy Issues Annual

## THE YEAR IN REVIEW



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CALIFORNIA POLICY ISSUES ANNUAL

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THE YEAR IN REVIEW

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The primary goal of our lecture series and annual statewide policy conference is to bring together leaders and experts from across the sectors to discuss, dialogue and debate leading public policy issues impacting California and its urban and suburban communities. Our chief goal in publishing the CPIA, which contains applied scholarly manuscripts and expert presentations made at the conference, is to have it serve as an expanded policy tool for state, regional and local legislators; public and private agencies; community leaders and policy centers.

The generosity and vision of our sponsors allow us to realize these goals while also exemplifying the public, private and community collaborations that were so central and vital to the broad theme of the 2005 California Agenda, Conference and this 2006 edition of CPIA: *The Year In Review*.

On behalf of the Pat Brown Institute and the many public policy, community and higher education readers of this journal, we would like to take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge the following sponsors: *The James Irvine Foundation, Union Bank of California, Kaiser Permanente, AT&T, Southern California Edison, The Walt Disney Company, The Boeing Company, California Faculty Association, California Federation of Teachers, Community Technology Foundation, Hilton Hotels Corporation, Pacific Federal, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Verizon, Center for California Studies, The Greenlining Institute and KABC TV.*

We are deeply appreciative.

Jaime A. Regalado, Ph.D.  
Executive Director

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Associate Director



# 13<sup>th</sup> Annual California Policy Issues Conference

JENNIFER KITSON  
Pat Brown Institute

## CONNECTING CALIFORNIA: BRIDGING THE DIGITAL AND GEOGRAPHIC DIVIDES

The Pat Brown Institute of Public Affairs' 13<sup>th</sup> Annual California Policy Issues Conference served as an opportune forum to further the discussion surrounding California's digital disparities. Because many existing patterns of inequality, whether social or economic, also apply to the ways technology is accessed and used, the digital divide is a component of the larger discourse of inequality in California. As we move into the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the role of technology has the ability to minimize existing divisions or perpetuate them. The opportunity exists, as the digital infrastructure is built, to ensure universal access to digital services. For this to happen, a dialogue must occur between both the private and public sectors in an effort to formulate public policy that will mitigate existing digital inequities and prevent future ones. It was the aim of the 13<sup>th</sup> Annual California Policy Issues Conference to facilitate this dialogue.

Here are summaries of the panels convened at the conference:

### **“The New Demography, the New Inequality, and the New Economy in California”**

*Keynote Presentation: Dr. Manuel Pastor, UC Santa Cruz*

In his keynote address, Dr. Manuel Pastor summarized the shifting demographic and economic trends in California and their larger equity implications. California's changing ethnic and age composition of the population, growing unequal wealth distribution, and varied regional economies were presented by Dr. Pastor as the new challenges facing the state. Dr. Pastor encouraged the development of long-term multifac-

eted solutions that include regionally appropriate economic growth, investment in educational and vocational opportunities, a reduction in the digital divide, and improved labor and community standards. He called for a singular narrative that will unite what have become disparate generations, economies, and dreams for California.

### **“Overcoming Disparities through Sustainability”**

*Moderator: Adrienne Alpert, KABC 7*

*Panel: Hon. Karen Bass, California State Assembly; Rick Cole, Ventura City Manager; Anita Gabrielian, AT&T; John Gamboa, Greenlining Institute*

The opening plenary panel explored ways of overcoming digital disparities through more sustainable practices. Inequalities, it was argued, in regards to income, wealth, and employment can be traced back to a failing education system which exasperates disparities of all kinds, including access to technology. Therefore, most agreed, the digital divide must be solved as a part of California’s larger social and economic inequities. California’s structural budgetary problem was identified as a barrier to long-term success in education and infrastructure. Several on the panel argued for increased revenues, possibly through a revision of the bill that set a cap on property taxes in California, Proposition 13. In addition to educational investment, a balance between competition within the telecommunications industry and government regulation was encouraged, in an effort to guarantee universal digital access.

### **“Digital Divides: Adding to Geographic Isolation?”**

*Moderator: Tessie Guillermo, Community Technology Foundation of California*

*Panel: Dr. Rebecca London, UC Santa Cruz; Dr. Bill Pitkin, United Way of Greater Los Angeles, Elva Lima, Verizon; Hon. Ed Reyes, Los Angeles City Council; Dixon Slingerland, Youth Policy Institute*

Recent research findings presented by several panelists illuminated the multiple ways in which technological inequalities have spatial manifestations. Future policy, expressed the panel, needs to be informed by research if future efforts to overcome geographical disparities of technology usage and access are to be successful. Innovative land-use plan-

ning and creative public/private partnerships were encouraged as ways to increase digital access in underserved or marginalized areas. Community technology centers, especially those partnered with schools, were shown to increase digital access for minority youth. Programs incorporating technological supervision and skill-training for students were shown to correlate with the development of employment skills, social networks, leadership abilities, and engagement in community activities. Community based approaches to digital infrastructure building and marketing were advocated for corporations as well.

### **“The Urban Struggle: Finding the Jobs, Housing, Transportation Balance”**

*Moderator: Kenneth Burt, California Federation of Teachers*

*Panel: Hon. Wendy Greuel, Los Angeles City Council; Grantland Johnson, Sacramento Central Labor Council; George Minter, Greer/Dailey/Minter; Brenda Shockley, Community Build*

The array of problems associated with changing development patterns, agreed the panel, can only be addressed by reconnecting employment, housing, and transportation through regional and state planning and regulation. Without large-scale management local constituencies will continue to reject mixed-use development and increased public transportation infrastructure, both necessary for increased employment. The knowledge of how to address much of the jobs, housing, and transportation balance is already known, it was argued, but the political leadership and public awareness required for the implementation of these changes is lacking. Barriers to long-term, strategic planning at the regional level were presented, including Proposition 13 and term limits. The challenge, proposed by the panel, is to increase awareness of attainable solutions to the housing and transportation crisis in an effort to gain support from policy makers and the public.

### **“Market Dynamics and Addressing the Digital Divide”**

*Introduction: Dr. Herman D. Lujan, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, California State University, Los Angeles*

*Luncheon Presentation: Michael Peevey, President of the California Public Utilities Commission*

Michael Peevey described several private sector efforts to address the increasing concern over the unequal distribution and access of digital services. One example given by Michael Peevey was the formation of a new non-profit corporation, the California Emerging Technology Fund (CET), which has the goal of achieving ubiquitous access to broadband and advanced communication services throughout the state. This organization will receive funding, an estimated \$60 million over the next few years, from the corporate mergers of SBC/ATT and Verizon/MCI. It is the goal of the Public Utilities Commission, Michael Peevey expressed, to support projects like the CET and other efforts to increase access and affordability. Michael Peevey articulated great confidence that the digital divide can be reduced within the right regulatory climate and with creative public-private partnerships.

**“A Policy Agenda for California”**

*Moderator: Dr. Roger Caves, San Diego State University*

*Panel: Mark Baldassare, Public Policy Institute of California; Hon. Richard Alarcon, California State Senate; Hon. Eric Garcetti, LA City Council, Mark Pisano, Southern California Association of Governments*

The concluding panel proposed several pertinent policy recommendations to address California’s pressing social, economic, and digital divides. Strategic regional economic development was advocated as a way to mediate long-standing social and structural deficiencies. Infrastructure investment should be a top priority with emphasis on transportation, housing, education and technology. The proposed infrastructure bond should be used to leverage private money while obtaining additional infrastructure funding through federal support and user-fees. In an effort to ensure an equitable digital infrastructure, internet access should be defined as an essential service. Finally, diverse, creative public/private partnerships should be employed to develop and fund digital infrastructure development.

# **Decline in Representative Government: Should We Care?**

BRUCE E. CAIN\*

University of California, Berkeley

As more policy is made at the ballot box and not in Sacramento, many of us worry about the state of representative government in California. Two prominent journalists, Peter Schrag and David Broder, have recently written books warning of the dangers of direct democracy supplanting representative government. Nonetheless, new measures continue to find their way onto the ballot with regularity. Moreover, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger seems to have added a new twist to California's direct democracy story. Frustrated by the slow pace of change in Sacramento, the Governor has warned the legislature that if they do not address the problems he regards as critical, then he will bypass them and take his proposals directly to the people. In effect, Governor Schwarzenegger is using the initiative process to get the upper hand over the legislature. What should we make of this? Does the Gubernatorial initiative erode or supplement representative government? Is it a good or bad thing for California?

## **THE GUBERNATORIAL INITIATIVE**

What is a Gubernatorial initiative? We have seen four basic types develop in California. The first is the idealized, grassroots measure. This is what the Populists and Progressives had in mind when they first introduced the popular initiative at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: citizens volunteering to collect signatures to put measures on the ballot to check the power of interest groups and the legislature. In the modern California era, the pure grassroots initiative is almost extinct. Almost none of the measures that make it to the ballot, let alone succeed, are purely

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\* Based on a lecture delivered for the Pat Brown Institute on January 31, 2005.

volunteer efforts. Attempts to return to this type of initiative by banning paid signature gatherers and regulating money spent on initiative measures have been rejected by the Supreme Court as an unjustified intrusion on first amendment rights of speech and association. At the same time, we cannot say for certain that it will never-re-emerge. The innovation of web based political organizations, digital signatures and increasing internet use portends the extension of initiative politics into cyberspace in the future. This may serve to decrease the cost of qualification and increase the usage of the initiative. But, for the moment, the digital divide and concerns about security have delayed that eventuality.

The second type of initiative, the professional, is the most common. Drafted by specialized lawyers, qualified by paid petition gatherers, and then managed by campaign professionals, the professional initiative has sparked much controversy over the past two decades in California. Has it become a tool of the special, monied interests? Does it deprive the state of fiscal flexibility? Has it weakened representative government? Academic criticisms abound, and there have been many suggestions for reforming the process—bringing back the indirect initiative, limiting constitutional initiatives to the November ballot, prohibiting anti-amendment clauses on statutory initiatives, more subject matter restrictions, etc.—but nothing has come of all these discussions. In the end, the initiative process is still popular, and the prospects for reform, let alone restrictions, are dim. California has one of the most user-friendly initiative systems in the world, and that seems to be the way we like it.

The third type of initiative is the candidate measure. This is a measure put on the ballot explicitly for the purpose of promoting a candidate's electoral prospects. The best, and perhaps first, example is John Van de Kamp's ultimately unsuccessful 1990 bid to win the Democratic Gubernatorial nomination. His ever-inventive political consultant, Richie Ross, conceived the idea of putting political reforms measure on the ballot under the rubric of draining the swamp—the swamp being the legislature filled with the muck of special interest money. The idea was that these measures would help identify the candidate as a reformer, inspiring lots of volunteers to work both on his cause (i.e. clean politics) and his candidacy. In the end, it did neither, and ended up an unwanted

financial drain on his campaign coffers. The idea of candidate initiatives seemed to be stillborn until 1994 when Pete Wilson, facing a seemingly tough re-election, co-opted Proposition 187. The identification with cracking down on undocumented immigrants proved to be a popular, even if unconstitutional idea, and is widely credited with helping Pete Wilson defeat Kathleen Brown. The third type is still relatively rare, but existent. Most recently, Arnold Schwarzenegger before the 2003 recall and Rob Reiner since have sponsored child related measures intended to boost their political profiles and prospects.

This brings us to the fourth category: the Gubernatorial initiative. In this instance, the Governor threatens to take bills that he cannot get through the legislature or reforms they resist to the people directly. At a minimum, if the threat is credible, it enhances his bargaining power vis a vis the legislature. And if the Governor's ideas are truly closer to the median voter, then the measure passes and the legislature loses completely. The advantages for the Governor are clear, assuming that the measure can pass and the Governor can obtain the resources to mount a successful campaign. This type of initiative is more like the European referendum, in which European executives appeal over the heads of the legislature when issues are held up by internal divisions. A good example is French President Chiriac's May 2005 referendum on the EU constitution.

What are the problems with this approach? First, the Governor cannot control the ballot so nothing prevents interest groups or the legislature from countering with their own measures. If the Governor is close to the median voter on his measures, but not on their measures, the net effects for the Governor might not be positive. Secondly, the presence of more emotional measures dealing with race or abortion can cast a long shadow on the Governor's priorities. Thirdly, qualifying and passing measures costs a great deal of money, and money raised for these measures might be money that could be saved for re-election—essentially, the Van de Kamp problem. Lastly, the inflexibility of the initiative process in many senses creates potential political problems. Governor Schwarzenegger had to abandon his pension reform when the drafting omission of a clause protecting death benefits for police and fireman widows caused a tremendous political backlash. Had it been a law he

was introducing to the legislature, he could have amended it and submitted the new version. But once an initiative measure has begun circulating for signatures, there is no possibility of fixing language and drafting problems. And if the measure is constitutional, there is no way to fix a constitutional measure except by going back through the initiative process again.

The fear that initiatives diminish representative government, a key concern with the professional initiative, is not quite so strong here. Rather, it potentially shifts political advantage from the legislative to the executive branch. Fluctuations in legislative and executive power are not unusual in California's history. Power has circulated across the branches in periodic intervals. The legislature was initially dominant in the 1879 constitution, but executive power was consolidated beginning in the Progressive era in response to fears that the legislature was captured by corrupt special interests (a charge that Governor Schwarzenegger repeats in the modern era). The professionalization of the legislature in the early 1970s rebalanced institutional power towards the legislature once again, but that era ended with the passage of comparatively severe term limitations in 1990. Term limits has greatly weakened the legislature's expertise and leadership, which in turn has lessened its power relative to the Governor and executive branch. This power shift is manifest in the decline of legislative oversight activities and budget scrutiny (Cain and Kousser, 1994). If the Governor can routinely ignore the legislature and take measures to the people, then this clearly strengthens the Governor's hand. In other words, it is a shift of power within representative government.

But I do not want to suggest that it has no implications for representative government. It does in two senses. First, policy placed in the constitution or statutory measures that restrict the legislature's ability to change laws after they pass constrain representative government as a whole from making mid-course corrections. Secondly, given the different constituencies represented by the legislature and the governor, the Gubernatorial initiative, if successful, might advantage the statewide voting constituency over the population based legislative one. The division of power and checks/balances of the state government provides some Madisonian compromise between the district based population

and statewide registered voter constituencies. Moving away from that structure can skew policies away from that compromised balance. As I suggested in other writings, it is ironic that California has trended towards eliminating at large elections where they produce potential bias in its local communities, but has come to rely on what is in essence an at large election for state-wide policy-making.

Of course, in the end, the Gubernatorial initiative may follow the path of the candidate one: that is, it might be used relatively infrequently. The Governor may not prove to be successful, or even if he does, it may prove to be something only a famous movie star can pull off, which will limit how much it can be imitated in the future. But if the past is any guide, it is likely that some form of the Gubernatorial initiative will find a permanent place in the arsenal of political warfare.

# **COALITIONS IN THE NEW LOS ANGELES: Lessons from the 2005 Mayoral Election**

RAPHAEL J. SONENSHEIN\*  
California State University, Fullerton

There was a time, not so long ago, in Los Angeles politics when coalition politics was a rather simple thing. Not simple, as in easy, but simple as in made up of consistent, spare parts. The structure of politics in Los Angeles, as it was in most cities with racially diverse populations, was divided into two feuding groups: African Americans and their white liberal allies, often joined by Latinos on the one hand, and white conservatives, especially Republicans, on the other. Tom Bradley led the first coalition, and first Sam Yorty, and then Police Chief Daryl Gates led the opposing group.

These coalitions fought on the terrains of race and ideology, black versus white, liberal versus conservative. Ideology itself was “racialized”, in that liberals tended to be liberal on race, and conservatives were the opposite. These divisions shaped most local debates, whether on tax measures on the ballot, opinions on police reform, voting in partisan state and federal elections, and certainly in battles for city office. If you went away to a foreign country for a year or two, you could expect to come back to largely the same political system. You would recognize it, and you would know that if you liked Tom Bradley you were in one camp, and if you disliked him, you were with the conservatives.

Despite all this stability, there were crucial changes happening under the surface of Los Angeles, as in a number of major cities. Politics had become extremely stable, if highly intense around racial issues. But the city’s daily life was being drastically reshaped by massive waves of immigration from Mexico and Central America, and from Asia. Forgetting

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\* Based on a lecture delivered for the Pat Brown Institute on February 24, 2005.

politics for a moment, and just thinking about life as lived in the city, immigration was literally creating a new city that was profoundly different from Tom Bradley's Los Angeles.

Immigration shattered the stability of Los Angeles coalition politics. It did so by bringing a new force of population into the equation, one neither black nor white. If the Bradley era was a type of atom, with a nucleus of ideology and race, and with elections and protons held in place, immigration blew into town like a wild neutron breaking apart the atom, and scattering its parts apparently to the wind. But eventually, these pieces of the coalition world came back to the middle where they were to form and reform coalitions.

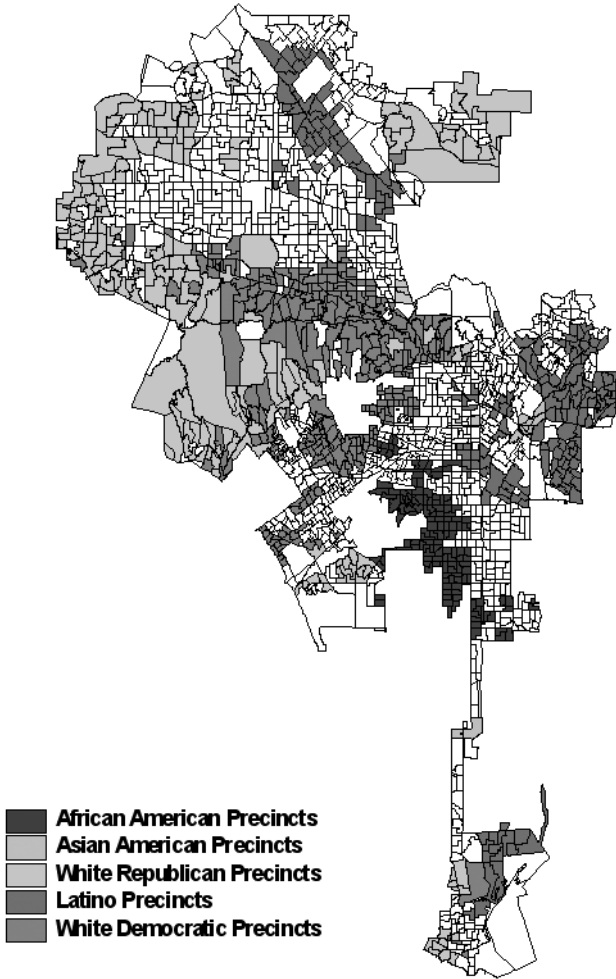
At first, the presence of immigrants operated as a goad to reaction among white voters, and also to some blacks. Proposition 187 in 1994 generated huge support among white conservatives, and divided African Americans. Soon enough, the pressure of Proposition 187 and the 1996 cuts in programs to legal immigrants by the Republican Congress spurred a major upsurge in Latino citizenship and registration. Roughly a million new Latino voters joined the state's electorate in the 1990's.

Little by little, the Latino (and to a lesser degree Asian American) presence grew in Los Angeles politics. From 8% of the vote in 1993, Latinos emerged with 22% of the vote in 2001. As Latinos grew, Republicans (mostly white) declined. From 30% of the vote in 1993, they fell to 20% in 2001. Jews remained a strong force in the electorate. Mostly Democrats, Jews went from 19% of the vote in 1993 to...19% of the vote in 2001. Asian Americans grew slightly in the electorate. But the fundamental fact was this: Latinos had replaced white Republicans. As a result, Los Angeles became a truly Democratic city, just as California was becoming a truly Democratic state. In 2001, for the first time, the mayoral runoff candidates were two labor supported Democrats.

The new map of Los Angeles politics comprises Latinos, in the eastside and in the San Fernando Valley, Jews and other white Democrats on the Westside and the Valley, African Americans in southeast L.A., and white Republicans around the rim of the city from Brentwood to the northwest Valley to the far east Valley. And we also saw the emergence of the Valleys (not a misspelling). This was not the homo-

Figure 1.

### Ethnic - Political Blocs City of Los Angeles



geneous Valley of earlier times. This was the three-part Valley of Latinos, Jews, and white Republicans (and few African Americans). The Valley was a non-black big city, with three groups contending ultimately for political control (Figure 1).

With these pieces of the atom floating around and forming and reforming coalitions, what do we have? In the post-Bradley era of immigration politics, we find groups cross-pressured and often ambivalent. African Americans, long the bulwark of Los Angeles liberalism, are torn by the Latino rise. Will blacks be left behind? Equally suspicious of white Republicans like Riordan who was eager to privatize the city services that provided the lifeblood of the employment prospects for blacks, African Americans feel politically besieged in the new city.

Blacks are still overwhelmingly Democratic and liberal, but are trying on new roles. Support for Bernard C. Parks, who as police chief was as resistant to civilian oversight as most of the previous chiefs and was the close ally of Riordan, one of the least favorite politicians of black voters, symbolized the crackup of the old liberal consensus on police reform.

Jewish voters, once pillars of the Bradley coalition, are now “in play”, generally joining forces with the forces of reform and inclusion, but nervous about too much change. White Republicans find themselves in the odd position of being too few in number to field winning citywide candidates, but are discovering that they represent a balance of power among contending Democratic politicians.

The result of all these changes has been the generation of “mix and match” coalitions, with ideological and racial lines shifting and uncertain. Today’s electoral coalition may endure, or it may last for only one election. Those of us who study local elections will have to work hard to separate out the enduring from the temporary.

Along with my geography colleague Mark Drayse, I have been examining various elections in Los Angeles looking for new patterns of coalitions, or the resurgence of old ones. The oddities abound. In 1999, a new city charter drew its greatest support from Jewish voters (Figure 2), then from white Republicans, two groups rarely allied. On the same ballot, measures to expand the size of the city council went down to 2-1 defeats. Here the alliance emerged between white Demo-

Figure 2.

### Vote for Charter Reform, 1999

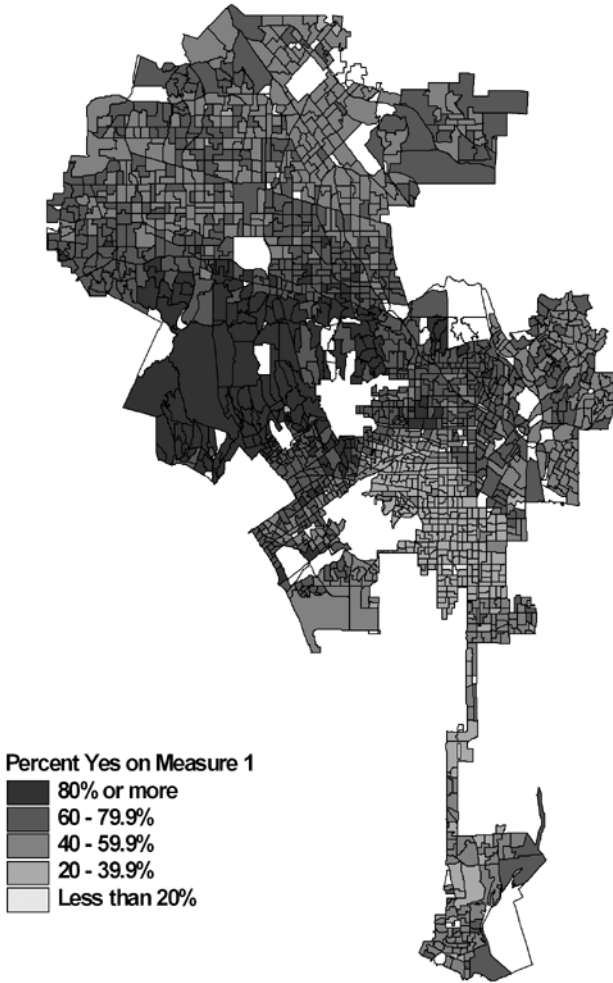


Figure 3.

### Vote for a Larger City Council, 1999

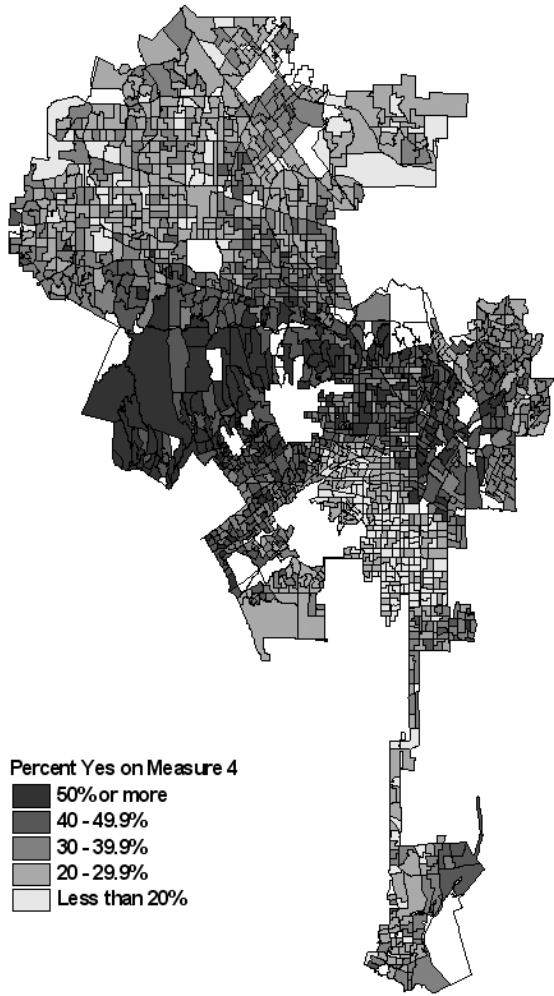
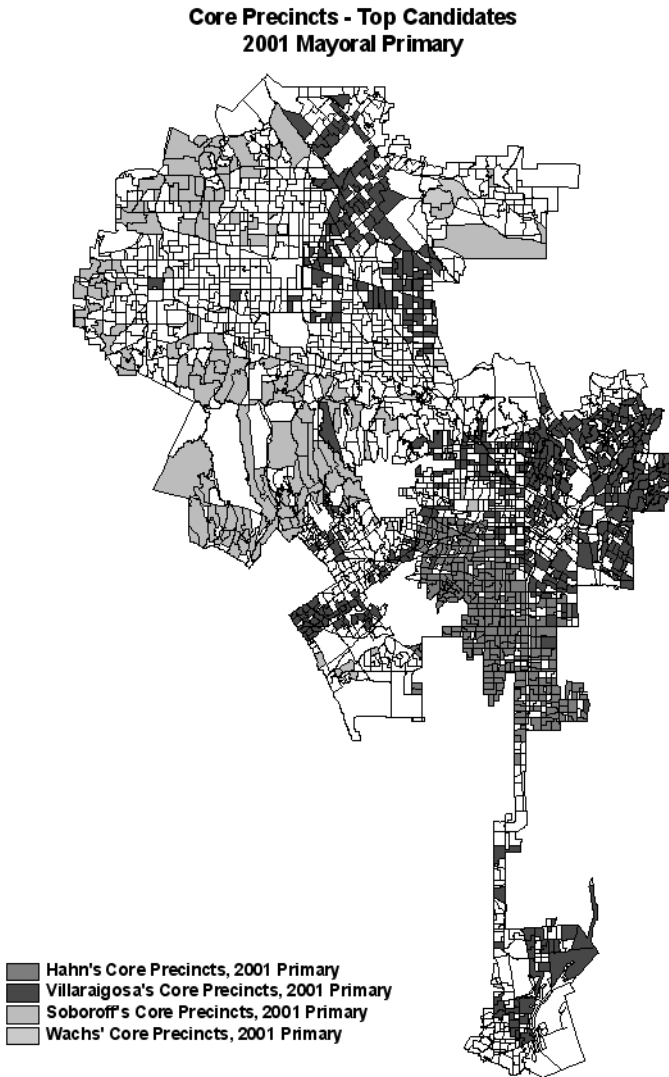


Figure 4.



crats and Latino voters on the eastside. Valley voters and blacks were against it (Figure 3).

It began to seem as if the old Bradley coalition would never emerge again. And then it did. In the 2002 secession election, minority and white liberal voters joined forces to defeat the conservative-backed secession measure for the San Fernando Valley (Figure 4).

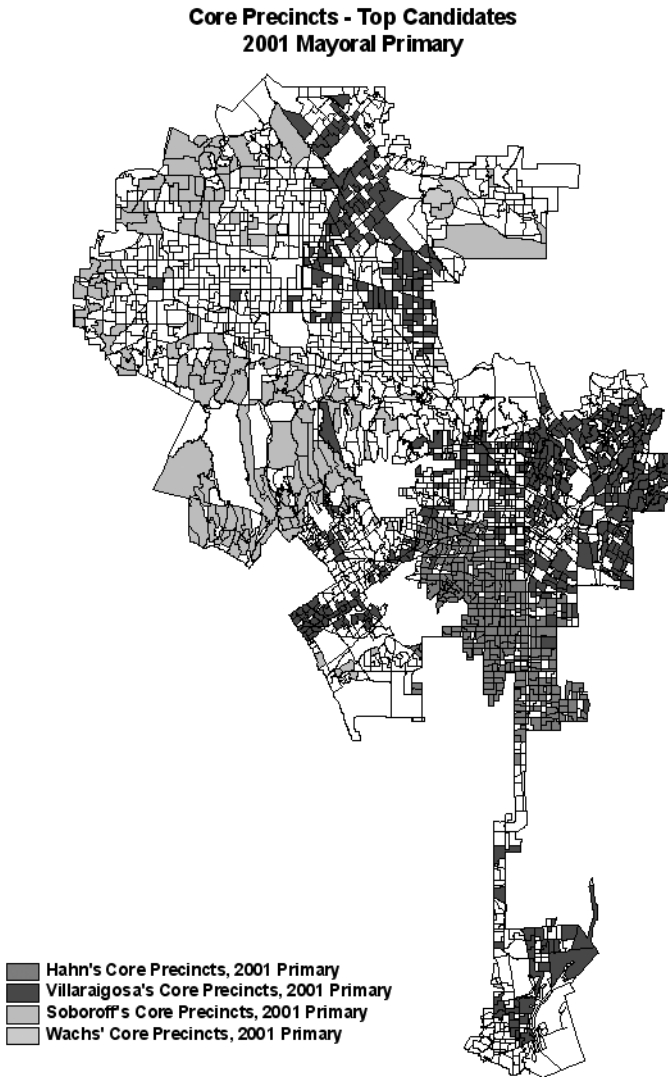
In the 2001 mayoral election, yet another pattern emerged (Figure 5). Running against Antonio Villaraigosa, James K. Hahn forged an unlikely alliance of African Americans and white conservatives. Villaraigosa, meanwhile, put together an alliance of Latinos and liberal whites on the Westside that looked somewhat like the coalition for a larger city council in 1999.

Between 2001 and 2005, the Hahn coalition evaporated, as his decision to oppose the reappointment of police chief Bernard Parks cost him African American support, and his strong campaign against Valley secession hurt him with Valley conservatives. Mark Drayse and I looked at the 2005 mayoral primary and found that Villaraigosa and Bob Hertzberg each ran on coalitions that looked like those of 2001 (with Hertzberg's closely resembling that of 2001 Republican candidate Steve Soboroff). Hahn, however, had built a coalition out of various pieces around the city rather than in areas of strong personal support.

So where does this leave us? In the world of Los Angeles coalition politics in the era of immigration, old patterns have been shoved aside and the new pattern is a multitude of patterns. The meaning of urban ideologies has been altered by the presence of two overlapping minority movements, of African Americans and of Latinos, and the possibility of further political efforts by a third group, Asian Americans. African Americans, once the bulwarks of Los Angeles liberalism, are now cross-pressured because of the rise of Latinos. On some issues they may be more conservative than in the past. White conservatives, weaker than before, have to become more centrist in order to compete in the new Los Angeles. White liberals find themselves torn between two minority movements and the pull to vote more like whites than like liberals.

What this means for immigrant communities is that the coalition world into which they are stepping is both more open than in the past,

Figure 5.



and more confusing. The old politics of black and white was great for its time, but also complicated the rise of immigrant communities. With blocs in flux, and with coalition patterns uncertain, there are new openings for immigrant communities to participate in coalitions. On the other hand, there is likely to be less trust in city politics among groups because of the difficulty of building and sustaining enduring coalitions. It may be that the artistry of coalition politics now and for some time to come will belong to those who can make short-term arrangements while keeping an eye on the development of long-term trusting relationships yet to be formed.

# **Environmental Justice and the Fate of Community Development in Southern California**

HONORABLE HILDA SOLIS\*  
Member, United States Congress

Thank you Jaime for the warm introduction. It is nice to be here this morning with you all to discuss an issue very dear to me—environmental justice. For those of you not familiar with me, I am Congresswoman Hilda Solis and for the last 4 years I have represented East Los Angeles and portions of the San Gabriel Valley in Congress. Prior to being elected to Congress in 2000, I served on the Rio Hondo Community College Board and served in the California House and Senate.

I have seen first hand the damage that environmental injustices brings to poor and underserved communities. As a child, my six siblings and I grew up in the shadows of one of the largest landfills in the country. Our neighborhood was full of trash. I remember when my dad first got sick—he worked in a battery recycling plant and the chemicals in the air gave him lung infections. My family could not afford to travel to the beach for vacation, so my dad and mom took my siblings and I camping and picnicking in the Azusa Canyons, but we couldn't play in the river because it was polluted. As I got older I realized that not everyone lived next to a landfill, not everyone's parents get sick from their jobs and that there were a lot of kids who could play in the river or go to the ocean or hang out at a local park or play in a recreational sports league.

I took these lessons with me when I began working in the Carter White House Office of Hispanic Affairs and later became a management analyst in the Office of Management and Budget's Civil Rights Division. I was determined then and continue to be determined now to find a way to reverse the injustices that exist between one's income and protection

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\* Based on a lecture delivered for the Pat Brown Institute on March 21, 2005.

from environmental pollutants. The environmental issues I focus on all have one thing in common—they directly affect our health.

Consider these statistics:

- There are only five National Parks near urban centers, yet urban centers have the greatest incidences of cardiovascular disease, asthma, diabetes, infant mortality, birth defects and cancer.
- In East Los Angeles and the communities in the San Gabriel Valley that I represent there is less than one-half acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents; but in neighborhoods where household incomes are \$40,000 or higher the ratio of parks to people is 40 times higher.
- In Los Angeles, more than 71 percent of African Americans and 50 percent of Latinos reside in areas with the most polluted air, and nationwide 70% of Latinos live in communities designated out of attainment for air quality. Only 34% of whites live in highly polluted areas.
- Latino children have asthma at more than two and one half times that of non-Latino white children.
- The death rate from asthma among African Americans is 2.5 times higher than for Whites.
- 10 million children under the age of 12 live near enough to a toxic waste site that their health is at risk.

These statistics give you the numerical face to the issue. There is one thing we can do locally. My bill, the San Gabriel River Watersheds Study Act, was signed into law in 2003. This bill directs the Department of Interior to study ways for the San Gabriel Valley to preserve and restore open, green and recreational space to improve the environmental potential of this long neglected area. I am very excited that the National Park Service is now beginning the study. What does that mean for the San Gabriel Valley?

This study lays the groundwork for the possibility of opening lots of doors for future federal funding for revitalization and recreation in East Los Angeles and the San Gabriel Valley. More recreational areas will give people a place to go when they are looking for nature. In the process, people will be educated about the community's environmental needs.

The road to make this study happen has not been an easy one. This study is not about taking people's water rights or establishing a National Park in the middle of the San Gabriel Valley. The National Park Service is not going to de-cement the river or take property that isn't already theirs. This study is about finding out what the community would like to see—be it neighborhood parks or a cultural center or a bike trail—and then figuring out how the National Park Service can help us achieve that. This is a unique opportunity for the community to think long-term about how it envisions itself 10 years down the road.

I believe we need to start planning today and try to take advantage of what opportunities we can benefit from with the involvement of the federal government. The road to restore our environment and improve public health will be a long one. Last year the *Washington Post* wrote a story about a 4-year old boy named Elam. Elam's parents live in East Omaha, Nebraska, a largely poor inner city neighborhood on the edge of one of the nation's worst sites of toxic pollution. Elam was a normal child until age two when he suddenly lost the ability to talk and became hyperactive. His mother found a description of lead poisoning and realized it matched Elam's symptoms. Elam was found to have 4 times more lead in his body than the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has determined is safe. Elam is one of 2,600 children with lead poisoning in East Omaha.

In my district, we have 3 superfund sites. I have been able to push very hard to make sure the Environmental Protection Agency cleans these sites up before our communities become unnecessarily poisoned. Not every community is so fortunate. Despite the extensive knowledge we have that these sites are dangerous for our communities and ought to be cleaned up quickly, they are not getting the necessary funding and the polluters are getting away without contributing to the cost of cleanup. At least 63 of the Superfund sites that have been put on the priority list for cleanup are not getting the money they need to. Many of these are sites like East Omaha where the community does not have the ability to fight itself to keep out polluters or to make the government clean up the pollution. So until the government decides to make these sites a priority,

the community—and families like Elam’s—suffers because they cannot afford to move or in many cases don’t enough know about the dangers around them.

I fight for environmental justice because I believe that a lack of income should not dictate whether industry or the government has the right to threaten public health. I believe there are steps that we can take—both locally and federally—which can make a difference. As a State Senator, I was able to get signed into law regulations on environmental justice. California was the first state in the nation to have such a law. Federally, I have partnered with Rep. Udall on the Environmental Justice Act—a similar initiative to California state law. We first introduced this legislation in 2003 and have since been working to require Federal agencies to consider environmental justice concerns in all their activities. I am also working to make sure that those agencies already required to consider environmental justice impacts of their regulations are abiding by the law.

In 2003, I requested that the General Accounting Office, Congress’ investigative branch, to look at whether the Environmental Protection Agency—the agency in charge of protecting public health from environmental hazards—has really been considering the impacts of its air regulations on underserved communities. This report will be out in the next two months, and I am frustrated by what I anticipate we will hear—which is that so long as there is a decrease in pollution nationally local impacts don’t matter. That is wrong. Local impacts do matter—they impact all of our health. If this is indeed the conclusion of this report you can guarantee I’ll fight even harder to make sure that this problem is addressed.

Sometimes the knowledge of what is occurring is enough to make a positive change. As a result of a report that I released two years ago with help from Congressman Waxman, the 17 gravel pits and mining operations in my district and similar operations elsewhere in Southern California now have stronger restrictions on how much they can impact the air quality in the community. These new regulations, which become enforceable this July, will protect the neighborhoods in Azusa, Duarte, and

Irwindale from the dust and fine particulate matter from these operations and will help protect the health of the workers.

I have also introduced legislation to protect our communities' water supply from contamination. For the 3<sup>rd</sup> straight year the Department of Defense is coming to Congress asking that it be exempted from water quality and environmental regulations. The Department of Defense is seeking to put perchlorate—or rocket fuel—into our water supplies at will. Perchlorate is known to impact the ability of the thyroid to regulate development in children and high levels of perchlorate are now being found in breast milk, lettuce and even wheat. The health of our environment, the health of our communities, and the health of our families is a priority for me.

As a public servant, one of my goals is to make sure that our environment is protected, restored and most importantly, safe for our families. I believe that, as a public servant, I must serve as a role model, especially to the young women who dream of a career in politics. When I was granted the John F. Kennedy Profiles In Courage Award in 1999 for my environmental justice work, I became the first woman in history to win that honor. I owe part of that honor to the work done by two of my heroes—Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez. They successfully worked to protect the health of farmworkers from pesticides like DDT. Their work paved the way for my efforts and the efforts of many others to continue fighting. These great humanitarians and social justice leaders remind us that our struggles, whether bettering the lives of farm workers, ensuring environments free of industrial chemicals, or simply guaranteeing neighborhood parks in minority and low-income communities, are basic human rights that must be fought for.

I am grateful to serve as the Democratic Chair of the Women's Caucus, the Ranking Democrat on the Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on Environment and Hazardous Materials, and the Congressional Hispanic Caucus' Task Force on Health in Congress because I can focus on public health and the environment. As I serve in each of these roles, I try to remember the lessons Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta taught me every day to resolve the injustices that plague all our communities. I know that I face many obstacles in this fight.

This administration has proposed eliminating programs that are crucial to development in the communities I represent. The Community Development Block Grant program is one of HUD's oldest programs. It helps to develop viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, and by expanding economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons. The Community Development Block Grant program provides critical funding for public safety, affordable housing, and economic growth initiatives for cities, counties and Native American communities. The district I represent strongly opposes these cuts.

I have heard from the Los Angeles County Community Development Commission, the League of California Cities, the Southern California Association of Nonprofit Housing, the mayors of major cities in California, and the Los Angeles City and County Native American Indian Commission and all of them strongly oppose the Republican budget proposal to cut funding for the Community Development Block Grant program. My own city of Rosemead has used this money to provide residential rehabilitation assistance to over 100 elderly and disabled households and to test 50 low income homes for lead paint contamination.

I have urged my colleagues to enact a budget package that contains sufficient funding for community development that helps the underserved neighborhoods throughout the country. I support new developments very strongly but I am always wary that they benefit the needs of the community and that they keep the health of the environment in mind. I will continue to work toward justice in these areas. And I hope you all will continue to work with me. Thank you.

# CALIFORNIA RISING: The Life and Times of Pat Brown

ETHAN RARICK\*

Author of *California Rising: The Life and Times of Pat Brown*†

The spring of 2005 has been a time in which Pat Brown is back in the news. In part, this has been a mere function of the calendar: April 21 was the centennial of his birth. But there is also a renewed interest in Pat's era and career because political issues are once again at the forefront of California's collective psyche. The state is governed, of course, by an international celebrity, and wherever Arnold Schwarzenegger turns, attention follows. After a run of far less magnetic personalities in the governor's office, Schwarzenegger seems to many people to offer a chance for a fresh assault on the state's problems, and thus many minds have refocused on the last governor perceived as one of California's great political leaders: Pat Brown.

There's not much doubt the two men would like one another personally, both being blessed with endless affability and an abundant affection for a good cigar. But politically, they are vastly different creatures, possessed of starkly different philosophical touchstones and operating in starkly different political environments. And therein lies the underlying problem with much of the nostalgia that hovers around Pat Brown's reputation. As he has become an icon of the state's politics, he has been stripped not only of his humanity—his foibles and weaknesses and mistakes—but also of his basic political philosophy. People forget that the success of his governorship rested on a vigorous, muscular liberalism that believed proudly in the power of government to help solve problems, ideas that are rarely articulated today.

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\* Based on a lecture delivered for the Pat Brown Institute on May 3, 2005.

† Rarick, E. (2005). *California rising: the Life and Times of Pat Brown*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Ironically, it was Brown's iconic status that first attracted me to his story. Covering the 1998 governor's race as a newspaper reporter, I noticed that the candidates frequently cited Brown as the model of the governor they wished to be. Curious about this transformation—in 30 years his reputation had changed from a bumbler booted out of office in a landslide to one of the state's political giants—I began the research that has now led to the publication of *California Rising: The Life and Times of Pat Brown*. During that lengthy examination of Brown's life and career, I became convinced that if we are to understand Brown's achievements and how we might replicate them, we must understand how the political climate has changed in the intervening decades. And to do that, we must first understand an extraordinary historical drama that marked Brown's era, an interconnected sequence of three events that altered the way Americans think of California and led directly to the political climate we experience today.

The first of these three episodes was the postwar growth and optimism for which the Brown era in California is now chiefly remembered. In the wake of World War II, America as a whole was a growing and optimistic country, yet nowhere was that sense more palpable than in California. When Brown was elected governor, the state's population was growing by 500,000 a year, or one new resident a minute. California was about to surpass New York to become the most populous state in the nation, a moment of great symbolic importance: the triumph of the age-old American migration to the West. There was an extraordinary sense that California offered the best of the good life, that people moving to the Golden State from the Midwest or the East were escaping a frozen rustbelt for a land of endless sunshine. One transplanted Chicago man said that in California he and his family "just get more sheer pleasure out of being alive." At times, the celebrations could verge on the absurd. James Michener once argued that westerners not only were more open-minded than easterners—they "had a rough and ready acceptance of new ideas"—but were also taller, almost literally the giants of the old myths about California.

Brown never argued that the residents of his state enjoyed some outsized physicality, but he loved the sense that he ruled over a place

that was the new embodiment of the American Dream. Jumping the gun, he declared a state holiday to celebrate numerical supremacy even before demographers agreed that California had finally passed New York. Far more important, he used his time as governor to enact a series of public policy initiatives that equipped California both for the growth that was already occurring and that which was sure to follow. Some of these initiatives are the trademark achievements for which Brown is now remembered: the State Water Project or the Master Plan for Higher Education, for example. But others are more obscure. To name but a few: tougher laws against racial discrimination in employment and housing, better unemployment benefits, air quality standards, tougher consumer protections, and increased aid to public schools. To pay for it all, Brown proposed and enacted a massive tax increase, including a progressive increase in income tax rates for the affluent and an increase in corporate tax rates. Far from debilitating the economy, this set of policies resulted in an extraordinary burst of public energy, investment and accomplishment. In the eight years Pat was governor, for example, the state built three University of California campuses from scratch; it has been 40 years since he left the governor's office, and we are only now building one more. Such glittering public achievements—the campuses, the well-funded schools, the social safety-net programs, the freeways and water projects—led directly to the sense of California's unique status. In a nation certain that it offered a better life than could be lived anywhere else in the world, California seemed to offer a better life than could be lived anywhere else in the country.

The second great characteristic of American life typified by the California experience of Brown's era was Sixties Rebellion. To a surprising degree, the Sixties—not the chronological decade but the mood of turmoil and dissension—began in California. Two events are particularly striking: the Free Speech Movement and the Watts Riot. In the fall of 1964, students at the University of California's flagship Berkeley campus began protesting against a ban on political speech on university-owned land. The protests grew increasingly confrontational until early December, when hundreds of demonstrators marched into Sproul Hall, the university's main administration building, and staged a sit-in. More

than 800 were arrested, but in short order the Board of Regents effectively capitulated to the students' demands and allowed political speech on campus. A few months later in Los Angeles, police arrested a young man for drunken driving in the largely African-American section of Watts. A scuffle ensued, which soon ignited lingering tension between local residents and the police, who were widely regarded in Watts as being racist and needlessly violent. The dispute erupted into a full-blown riot that was eventually quelled by the National Guard, but only after 34 people were killed, more than 1,000 were injured and almost 4,000 were arrested.

As governor, Brown was critical to both stories, although not in ways he might have preferred. At the critical juncture of the Free Speech Movement—the night of the culminating sit-in—Brown was in Los Angeles attending a hospital fundraiser. The commander of the California Highway Patrol officers who were at the campus phoned Brown to ask for permission to arrest the protesters. Brown approved the request, saying later that he felt he had no choice but to allow a police officer to enforce the law. Within hours, he announced that the decision was his, thus making himself the public face of the crackdown by authority. Amazingly, he was also absent when the Watts Riot began, this time in Greece. Alerted by phone, he rushed back to the state as fast as possible, and again became the public face of the crisis. The National Guard was already patrolling the streets by the time he returned, but Brown toured the afflicted area and appointed a commission to examine the causes of the crisis. As with the Free Speech Movement, he became the visible sign of authority, but in both events he also took on an unflattering reputation in the minds of many voters: he was the governor who had “allowed” a great campus to be captured by a mob and a great city to be devastated by hooligans.

In each of these cases, the mood that began in California was exported to the rest of the country. Though it drew energy and inspiration from the Civil Rights Movement, the Free Speech Movement produced a more generalized sense of youth rebellion—precisely the mood with which we now associated the Sixties. Similarly, Watts created a sense of urban rebellion against a system of authority and law enforcement often

perceived as racist and repressive. The Free Speech Movement became the model for other youth protests in the years that followed; Watts in many ways presaged the riots in Detroit and Newark two years later. California had exported the Sixties to the rest of America.

The third great historical phenomenon of the Brown era was directly related to such turmoil; it was the conservative backlash that followed almost immediately. Only weeks after the Watts Riot, Ronald Reagan announced his candidacy for governor, declaring that California's city streets had become "jungle paths" after dark, an obvious reference to Watts that no one could possibly misconstrue. During his campaign, Reagan began to promise that he would "clean up the mess at Berkeley," an obvious reference to the Free Speech Movement. In both cases, Brown was the political target, and in both cases, the attacks succeeded hugely.

Through his constant references to the social turmoil of the state, Reagan began to reach a segment of the electorate that had been staunchly Democratic for decades: blue-collar union workers. Such voters were a critical component of the New Deal coalition, and had backed Brown overwhelmingly. But many were moderate-to-conservative on law-and-order issues, and the turmoil of the Sixties bothered them immensely. Using census data, I identified a dozen California cities with particularly high rates of industrial employment, mostly suburbs around Los Angeles filled with aerospace workers. In 1962, against Richard Nixon, Brown carried all 12 of those cities. In 1966, against Ronald Reagan, he carried only one. As a candidate for governor, in other words, Reagan identified the cohort of potential defectors from the Democratic Party that would one day make him president.

So three great waves of American historical experience—postwar optimism, Sixties rebellion, and conservative backlash—typified California in the Brown years, and as a result Americans began to think differently about their largest and most dynamic state. California ceased to be an exception to the American experience—an idea that had held sway in the century after the Gold Rush—and instead became its leading edge.

The most recent of these events—the conservative backlash of which Brown was in many ways the first victim—remains the most important,

for it altered our politics not merely tactically, by destroying the New Deal coalition, but also philosophically, by ushering in a newfound hostility to government. To my mind, the greatest change between Brown's era and our own is this rightward shift in the American political spectrum on bedrock economic issues. Brown said of himself, "I'm a big government man," a reflection of his belief that government often played a constructive role in helping to solve society's problems. For him, that was a core conviction born of personal experience. He started out life as a Republican, not so much from settled dogma as because, strange though it seems today, almost everyone in San Francisco in the 1920s was a Republican. But Brown was won over to the Democratic Party by Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal. The poverty and disaffection of the Great Depression were visible around him, and he was deeply moved that FDR sought to use the power of the federal government to help individual Americans. That belief in the ability of government never left him.

Yet today California and the nation are beset with a starkly different political climate, a politics far more redolent of Ronald Reagan's statement that government is the problem rather than the solution. Some conservatives go much farther and allege that government is a beast that must be starved, an idea Pat Brown would never have conceived. Let me offer this comparison to illustrate the changes in the political climate. Pat Brown came into office facing a deficit, and raised taxes to help fund important state programs. Ronald Reagan faced a substantially similar situation, and did essentially the same thing. So did Pete Wilson, although he was in many respects forced into a tax increase by the Legislature. Yet in today's political climate, Arnold Schwarzenegger has thus far adamantly refused to raise taxes, even at the cost of suspending the funding guarantee for public schools. Nor, as happened in Wilson's day, has anyone forced the governor into a more moderate position on this basic economic issue. It is inconceivable to me that faced with a choice between raising taxes and cutting important programs, Pat Brown would have chosen the latter.

That comparison of California governors reveals the largely unnoticed truth about Brown's legacy. Discussions of his iconic status in California history are too rarely accompanied by a full understanding of

how he achieved his record. Pat Brown's time in office was a success not because he was a saint or a genius—for he was not—nor because the politics of his day was endlessly pure and honest—for it was not—but because he pursued a set of policies that improved the lives of average Californians. He believed that government could do good things, that it was a useful agent of change, that it offered a way to solve the problems facing the state. If we are to enjoy another era like his, we must move back toward that political philosophy, back toward an embrace of public enterprise and investment. In doing so, if we are both dedicated and lucky, we might once again experience a California like the one that Pat Brown built.

# THE HARDEST PART OF POLITICS: The California Budget

BILL HAUCK\*

California Business Roundtable

Californians are right to be concerned with the broken state budget system. In the last several years it has produced record deficits, unbalanced budgets and out of control spending.

This is unacceptable and on a broader basis symptomatic of a much deeper problem in Sacramento.

The State's political and governmental system is broken and in desperate need of a complete overhaul. Californians are aware of this fact as reflected in a recent Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) survey in which "only 29 percent (of the respondents) say they can trust the government to do what is right just about always or most of the time."<sup>1</sup>

While it is healthy for citizens to be skeptical of their government the system to function properly must engender a much higher level of trust in its politicians than is now present.

How did we come to this point?

Many factors have combined to produce an environment in which the status quo is no longer acceptable.

Today, we have a state legislature that is constantly gridlocked and in many respects dysfunctional. The result has been more and more use of the initiative process as a means of resolving major public policy issues. Governing by initiative has rightly been termed "a blunt instrument" that bypasses the legislative process in which proposed laws are subjected to comprehensive scrutiny by a variety of interested parties. When a law is enacted through this process it may also be changed in the same way if flaws are detected or circumstances change. A law enacted through the initiative process may only be changed by a subsequent initiative.

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\* Based on a lecture delivered for the Pat Brown Institute on June 7, 2005.

It is imperative for the legislative process to be functional. But currently in Sacramento we are witnessing the almost total inability or unwillingness of political leaders—elected officials and constituency group leaders—to agree on problems and set priorities.

The factors contributing to this situation are a severe term limit law, a redistricting system that has produced safe seats for incumbent lawmakers and the tremendously increased power and influence of organizations representing public employees.

The outcome is a Capitol as one observer put it that is possessed by: “a lethal combination of ideological imperatives, special interest pressures and single purpose budgetary laws”<sup>2</sup>

The state’s term limit law effected a complete turnover of the legislature in ten years. While it may have been a worthy objective to be sure that legislators not make a career in Sacramento, as so often seems the case in America, we have gone from one end of the spectrum to the other.

Inexperienced legislators dealing with the complex problems of California is not equitable for anyone. It is especially severe to limit service to a specific number of years in each house (Senate, 8 years; Assembly: 6 years) and then ban for life anyone who has served the 14 years.

In this system Members once elected immediately focus on the next office they plan to seek with arguably much less time devoted to solving the state’s problems.

When combined with a system of safe districts the outcome is very little main-stream voter accountability. Elections are decided in the Primary when fewer voters come to the polls. In November 2004 there were 153 Congressional, State Senate and Assembly Districts up for election. Not one changed parties. The same incumbents won and in open seats a person of the same party of the former incumbent won.

The lack of political will to take on tough problems that arises from this situation is not serving California’s citizens.

This can best be illustrated by the immense public debt that politicians have built up in the last five years.

In 2003 the state was spending about 3 percent of its general funds to pay for its debt. PPIC in a recent report entitled, “California

2025” estimates that by 2007-08 the state will be spending about 7 percent on its debt.

In the 2005-06 fiscal year (that began on July 1) 3 percent of general funds is approximately \$2.6 billion dollars. Small percentage increases amount to big dollars that are not available to spend on education, transportation, higher education or natural resources.

Another example of the state’s dysfunctional government was the energy crisis. The failure of the executive and legislative branches to take decisive action at the time has cost and will continue to cost Californian’s billions of dollars. It need not have been. Actions to stop the skyrocketing wholesale prices were available but were not taken.

In another recent PPIC survey it was revealed that this massive failure to perform has resulted in an electorate where 64 percent of likely voters want to make long term budget and government reform decisions with only 32 percent wanting the Legislature and Governor to make these decisions. In the same survey, however, only 11 percent of Californians could correctly identify the largest category of state spending (education) and the largest revenue source (personal income tax).

I would argue that this conclusion of voters results not from their natural desire to make these decisions but from their frustration and the earlier cited profound distrust of their state government.

So what might a total overhaul of state government look like? In his January State of the State speech the Governor declared 2005 as “The Year of Reform” and outlined objectives in four areas:

1. Budget
2. Redistricting
3. Public Pensions
4. Education

While it is clear these are worthy issues today I will deal only with Budget and Redistricting.

First, redistricting. As noted earlier, legislative districts in the state were constructed to be safe for the incumbents. This is a system in which legislators get to pick their voters rather than voters picking their legislators.

For many reasons, I believe it is time to remove the power to draw district lines from the legislature and place that authority and responsibility in a more neutral setting. While there is no perfect answer as to how this should be structured other states have used a variety of approaches from Commissions to “special masters” appointed by the State Supreme Court. Whatever the method chosen the objective is clear: draw districts that objectively represent natural communities and when possible do not divide cities and towns. While this process naturally will produce some relatively safe seats for both parties it also should result in more “competitive” districts where the election will take place in November and where each of the two candidates has an arguable chance to win.

Over time (and probably not much time if California retains its current term limit law) this should result in a legislature that is more accountable and more balanced with members of both parties that will work together to solve problems. This also might result in increased voter participation rates at a time when the number of citizens voting is declining.

I want to mention, briefly, one other electoral change that also could produce similar results. That change is a move to an “Open Primary” at the state level. Simply stated, this system would list all candidates for the office on the Primary ballot. Voters would be eligible to choose any one of the candidates. The top two vote getters in the Primary regardless of Party registration would “run off” in November. This essentially, is how we conduct all local elections today in California.

Together with the reforms already noted the state might once again have a legislature with the “political will” to take on and solve difficult issues. Hopefully, this also would result in fewer initiative measures being submitted to voters with a substantial saving in funds now devoted to qualifying proposals and mounting multi-million dollar campaigns for and against them.

Second, the California State Budget. In early July, the Governor and Legislature agreed on a budget for the 2005—06 fiscal year that exceeded \$116 billion dollars. Despite the tremendous changes that have occurred in the state in the last 40 years the process for considering the

budget and its associated decisions has not changed. Numerous Commissions and advisory groups have been formed over the years to examine the budget process and many excellent recommendations have been made for needed change. In 1996 the California Constitution Revision Commission created by the Governor and Legislature issued an extensive set of recommendations regarding the structure of state government and the Budget process.

In relation to the Budget, the Commission noted that, “there is a lack of long term vision, a lack of performance measures to guide budget decisions and few constitutional standards for improving fiscal discipline” The Commission recommended adopting:

- “A long term strategic plan to guide the state
- A formal performance-based budgeting system
- A two-year budget
- A budget “rebalancing” process to meet changing conditions”<sup>3</sup>

More specific recommendations followed and ultimately were drafted in bill form and introduced in each house of the Legislature. Neither of the legislative constitutional amendments cleared the first committee to which they were referred.

California has a 19<sup>th</sup> century budget process completely unsuited for 21<sup>st</sup> century needs. Spending decisions are driven by immediate perceived needs with no long term goals or priorities established. There is a constant debate about raising taxes versus spending restraint. Truthfully, even if taxes were increased the demand for the additional funds would be far greater than the proceeds of the tax increase. In a state with 37 million residents and extensive public needs there will always be scarce resources. This is at the heart of the reason why California needs a fully functioning state government. It is the principal task of the Governor and legislature to equitably allocate these scarce resources. No one would argue that this is an easy task. But it is critical to all of our citizens and to future generations of Californians. Failure to responsibly execute these duties will and has had great immediate and longer term consequences.

A good example of the longer term consequences of this failure can be found in the state's infrastructure (or public works).

In 1960-61 13.5 percent of the state's general funds were allocated to infrastructure investments. In 2002-03 that percentage was down to 0.9 percent.

I would argue that the state's fiscal and budget problems of the last five years constituted a gross failure to properly execute these responsibilities and at a minimum demonstrated a complete lack of any fiscal discipline. The structural reasons for this stemmed principally from the numerous "ballot box budgeting measures" that have been enacted since 1978 and the absence of any meaningful constitutional framework that would have required some restraints and indeed, if in place, might have prevented the problem.

For any organization, private or governmental, the size of California to have a budget that is enacted about July 1 of each year and not reviewed until the next budget is enacted is beyond comprehension. Any private organization that pursued this course would quickly go out of business.

So how do we bring California's budget process into the 21<sup>st</sup> century? We must remedy the shortcomings of the existing process. The Constitution Revision Commission identified three areas that must be addressed:

- “1. There is no organizational way to develop and adopt a long term vision for the investment of public resources
2. The current process is organized and operated to protect the status quo and, as such, is insulated from change; and
3. Fiscal discipline is not one of the values that governs the budget process.”<sup>4</sup>

To correct the absences and voids in the current process we need:

1. A “spending cap” that allows state spending to grow with the economy and that prevents the spending of one time “windfall” revenue from being spent on on-going programs. The Revision Commission expressed this as a, “need for fiscal integrity. The Commission's objective is to prohibit spending in any fiscal period that will exceed the revenue that will be received.”<sup>5</sup>

2. A real “prudent reserve” and a priority on repayment of the staggering debt that has financed the gap between expenditures and revenue existing in the operating budget for the last five years. The current Administration has been supportive of each of these goals. Proposition 58 enacted in 2004 requires the enactment of a balanced budget and the establishment of a reserve. The initial payment into a reserve will begin at the end of September 2006.
3. A process for re-balancing the budget during the year so that the state will never again get so deeply in deficit that the problem cannot be remedied. This is a critical missing piece in the current process. Again, the Revision Commission called for this in 1996 and it remains absolutely necessary. The Governor currently is supportive of an initiative measure (The “California Live Within Our Means Act”) that has qualified for the November 8, 2005 ballot. That measure specifies an explicit procedure that is to be followed when the budget falls out of balance as early as three months into the fiscal year.
4. A method for dealing with the failure of the state to enact a budget by the start of the fiscal year (July 1)
5. A prohibition on borrowing from “special funds” to balance the general fund.
6. Modification of the K-12 school funding formula that meets the reasonable needs for public school funding but does not increasingly “crowd out” other unprotected general fund spending (for example: public higher education, health programs especially for children, resources etc).
7. Consideration of moving to a biennial budget to reflect the legislative cycle and to permit longer term setting of priorities and when necessary their modification.

## **SUMMARY/CONCLUSION**

Californians have made it clear that they believe the state’s political and budget system are badly broken and in need of systemic reform. They have made it clear that the “status quo” is not acceptable. But the forces that protect things as they are present a mighty barrier to accomplishing needed reform. What’s at stake is the future quality of life to be experienced by the young people who follow the current generation and the state’s economy. In many respects, today we are living off the legacy

of the previous generation. That generation invested public resources wisely and brought us an excellent quality of life.

I believe we have an obligation to do no less for our children.

The reforms outlined above ideally should be accomplished by the Governor and Legislature through negotiated agreements with (when necessary) submission to the voters. In the absence of agreement the initiative process seems the only resort.

The one constant that remains is that our state government must confront and eventually solve the problems facing California. To do any less would constitute a breach of trust to all of our citizens.

### NOTES

1. PPIC, "Special Survey on the State Budget," P.2, May 26, 2005
2. Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee
3. California Constitution Revision Commission Final Report and Recommendations to the Governor and Legislature, 1996, P. 35, 37
4. California Constitution Revision Commission P. 36, 37
5. California Constitution Revision Commission P. 41

# THE HARDEST PART OF POLITICS: The California Budget

JEAN ROSS\*  
California Budget Project

It is fitting that we are gathered today under the auspices of the Pat Brown Institute of Public Affairs: Pat Brown governed during what is widely considered California's "golden era." An era when the state came together to build school, university, water, and highway systems that were the envy of the nation. These investments have sustained the state and supported the tremendous population and economic growth of the past 40 years.

I am the product of Pat Brown's dreams for California. I was educated in California's public schools, during the golden years prior to the passage of Proposition 13 in 1978, and I am a graduate of the University of California. The question now before us is whether my generation will leave a comparable legacy for the current and future generations of Californians.

California stands at a crossroads. In the upcoming weeks and months, California's voters will make decisions at the ballot box that will affect the size and role of government services in California, as well as the process of governance itself for decades into the future. The measures that will appear on the ballot reflect divergent views of how and who should determine the state's policy priorities and what role government should play in California's social and economic future.

There is agreement across the political spectrum that California faces considerable challenges. However, there is far less consensus over how to respond to these challenges. I would highlight the following:

- The demographic make up of the state's workforce is changing. Our research finds that in 2020, more than 70 percent of the state's prime age workforce—those between the ages of 25 and 54—will be non-white and nearly half will be Latino. Historically low levels of educational

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\* Based on a lecture delivered for the Pat Brown Institute on June 7, 2005.

attainment for Latinos will increase demands on the state's K-12 and higher education systems to boost graduation rates and ensure a steady supply of well-educated workers.

- Based on demographic trends, enrollment in higher education should outpace population growth through the end of the decade. Yet, due to budget reductions, enrollment at the University of California (UC) and the California State University (CSU) systems actually fell in 2004-05—by 900 at UC and 7,600 at the CSU.
- The state has high standards for our public schools—the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest in reading and highest in math in the nation, according to one survey. Yet we have the 4<sup>th</sup> highest pupil to teacher ratio and *Education Week* magazine reports that California ranks 44th in per pupil spending, adjusted for regional costs of living, and 39<sup>th</sup> in respect to taxable resources spent on education. In 2002, just 0.6 percent of California's students were in districts with per pupil spending at or above the US average.
- According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, California has the 7<sup>th</sup> highest percentage of uninsured residents and ranked 39<sup>th</sup> in the share of the state's population with employment-based health coverage in 2002-03.
- California ranks 35<sup>th</sup> with respect to the share of the state's population living in poverty and 33<sup>rd</sup> with respect to the share of the state's children living in poverty. The state's large number of families who are working, but poor, places additional demands on publicly supported health and other safety net services, as well as our public schools.
- Reports by groups ranging from the Business Roundtable to the Public Policy Institute of California find that the state has unmet infrastructure needs that will require significant investment in order to ensure that the state can meet the demands of a growing population.

How policymakers respond to these challenges will have a tremendous impact on the ability of our economy to compete, the social and economic well-being of the state's families, and the future of California.

Frankly, I am deeply concerned about the future of our state and fear that California lacks the shared commitment to providing the next generation the opportunities enjoyed by my generation and that our failure to do so will leave the state ill-prepared to meet the challenges of the future.

The budget lies at the heart of my concerns. California faces red ink for as far as the eyes can see. The state faces a structural shortfall—a

gap between the spending required under our current laws and policies and the revenues brought in by the state's tax system—of approximately \$5 billion through the end of the decade and, potentially, thereafter. The budget shortfall will seriously constrain the state's ability to respond to the significant the policies challenges that confront California.

California's fiscal difficulties have lingered longer than those of other states, in large part, because of the constitutional rules that govern taxing and spending in California. Specifically, California is one of just three states in the country to require a two-thirds or greater margin to pass a state budget under any circumstances. The other two—Rhode Island and Arkansas—are substantially smaller and less diverse than California. Moreover, California is one of just 11 states to require a supermajority vote of the Legislature to approve any state tax increase. When faced with fiscal crises of a magnitude similar to those of California—states across the country including “red” states such as Tennessee, Ohio, and Virginia—have raised taxes to help bring their budgets into balance.

The conventional wisdom—advanced by Governor Schwarzenegger and his allies—is that California has “a spending problem.” The facts do not support this assertion:

- California ranks near the middle of the 50 states in state spending as a share of the state's economy. We ranked 24<sup>th</sup> in total spending and 26<sup>th</sup> in general purpose spending in 2001-02, the most recent year for which data are available.
- California ranked even lower, 32<sup>nd</sup> in 1999-00 (the most recent year for which data is available), in spending by local government. This results from Proposition 13's limits on local property taxes. Because of Proposition 13, a significantly smaller share of combined state and local revenues comes from property taxes—25 percent—than in the nation as a whole, where the comparable figure is 31 percent. This disparity has implications for the volatility of our revenue system—property taxes are extremely stable—and for school finance. In most of the country, when state funding for schools is cut, local property taxes are increased to make up the shortfall. Proposition 13 prevents this from happening in California.

- Public opinion polling consistently shows that Californians want their government to do more, not less, and that they are particularly opposed to reductions in funding for education. The Governors budget proposals reflect that fact that there is little or no public support for cutting the state's way out of the problem. Neither the Governor's January nor May budget proposals were balanced. His May Revision to the 2005-06 budget spent \$2.5 billion more than anticipated revenues in 2004-05 and \$4.7 billion more than anticipated revenues in 2005-06.
- The other part of the story, which is not mentioned by the purveyors of the convention wisdom, is the impact of tax cuts on the state's budget problems. Between 1993 and 2004, the state enacted tax cuts that reduced 2004-05 revenues by \$9.3 billion. The reduction in Vehicle License Fee rates alone is responsible for three-quarters of the state's 2005-06 shortfall (\$4.5 billion).

The state's budget problems are the focus of a costly special election, the outcome of which will be critical to the future of California. At the heart of the debate is Proposition 76, an initiative sponsored by Bill Hauck of the Business Roundtable and Allan Zaremberg of the California Chamber of Commerce.

Proposition 76 would:

- Give the governor sweeping power to reduce spending, potentially including the ability to override state laws. The governor could declare a fiscal emergency and cut spending even in years when the state is running a surplus.
- Reduce the long-term Proposition 98 school spending guarantee by nearly \$4 billion per year, equivalent to a reduction of slightly less than \$600 per student for K-12 education at a time when California's public schools face the challenge of educating a rising number of low-income children and children who are more likely to come from families where English is not their first language.
- Allow the state to spend more than it brings in in revenues when the state heads into an economic downturn, but less than it brings in during a recovery.
- Cap spending from voter-approved taxes, such as Proposition 10's tobacco tax for early childhood programs.

- Cap spending supported by regulatory and user fees, including student fees paid by California State University students. Proposition 76 would prohibit the state from all of the revenues it receives from fees for their intended purposes in years when total state revenues exceed the new spending cap.
- Put more, not less, spending on “autopilot” by eliminating the legislature’s ability to defer certain transportation spending in bad budget years and by eliminating a provision of the Proposition 98 guarantee that was designed to ease pressure on the budget during years when the state experiences a shortfall.

If Proposition 76 had been enacted last year, it would require spending to be cut \$7.7 billion below the level proposed by the Governor in his May Revision. If Proposition 76 had been in place during this year’s budget negotiations, it would have required cuts of the magnitude of those proposed by the Governor, including \$3.6 billion in cuts to K-14 education; deep cuts in cash assistance to poor families, seniors, and the disabled; plus an additional \$7.7 billion in spending reductions. At the same time, this measure would make it much more difficult for the Legislature to achieve the required level of reductions by “locking in” in an even greater share of state spending, prohibiting certain reductions to transportation funding and preventing internal borrowing from special funds.

Moreover, the measure has serious flaws that may be inadvertent, but which make little or no sense:

- Because of the interaction with Proposition 58, the measure approved last year in as part of a package that authorized the issuance of bonds to finance the state’s budget deficit, if even one dollar were spent out of the state’s Budget Stabilization Account (BSA), the Governor would gain the authority to make unilateral reductions in state spending. This interaction would last until the state allocates \$5 billion from the BSA toward early repayment of the deficit financing bonds.
- The cap would potentially apply to moneys the state borrows using the authority granted by voter-approved bonds in the years when the cap is in place. In fact, since Proposition 76 does not define what spending the new cap would cover, cap we really do not know what it would and would not apply to.

The fiscal noose facing California will become even tighter if another measure supported by the campaign committee associated with the Governor and the sponsors of the LWOM Act succeeds in winning votes. That measure would require a two-thirds vote to approve any measure that increases user fees or the tax of even a single Californian. Currently bills that increase some taxes, but reduce others, can be approved by a majority vote so long as the net impact is a tax reduction.

The fight over Proposition 76, and other measures slated for the November ballot, including initiatives that would impose strict limits on public workers' unions' ability to use members' dues money for political activities, lengthen the period teachers must work before achieving permanent status, and a change the method for reapportioning legislative and congressional districts, are likely to create deep rifts between key players in the public life of California. Labor unions will view the limitations on their use of dues money as a major threat to their ability to represent the interests of their members. A broad array of advocates for education, children, poor families, and others will see Proposition 76 as a threat to the programs and services they value greatly. They will also view—correctly in my opinion—the shift of power to the Governor as a threat to their ability to have an effective voice in public policy debates.

My concerns for the future of the state where I was born and raised are rooted in the tenor of the current debate around the budget, budget process, and the fundamental issues of taxing, spending, and governance. I am generally an optimist, however, it has become increasingly difficult to maintain an up-beat attitude, and my short-term prognosis for California is decidedly gloomy. Whatever the outcome, the battle that will ensue during the upcoming months will drive a wedge between individuals and organizations whose cooperation and collaboration are essential to charting a future that addresses the challenges facing California.

Fortunately, Californians are resilient and the state retains tremendous wealth and diversity. These are our greatest assets, assets that, if used wisely, will build a future that honors Pat Brown's achievements and leaves a legacy for current and future Californians.

# Rethinking Progressivism

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In California, and much of the nation, we still live, largely obliviously, in the afterglow of the progressive era that flourished in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many of the things that have made this state, and the nation, the most powerful and successful large society in world history rest upon the basic approach of the early progressives—a belief in science, attention of infrastructure concerns, political pragmatism, and a sense of social balance and basic ethical principles.

These notions produced great consequences—the national and state parks, the beginnings of suburban transport, the great water and power systems, agricultural conservation, protections for workers, and homeowner mortgages. Progressive ideals helped drive expansion of the middle class. They also engendered many cherished notions of public life, including open government, fair elections, and the initiative and recall processes.

One extraordinary legacy of progressivism lies in its nonpartisan nature. Progressives operated through both major political parties as well as in independent associations. The great names of progressivism include Democrats such as Woodrow Wilson, Franklin Roosevelt, and Pat Brown as well as Republicans such as Theodore Roosevelt, Robert LaFollette, Hiram Johnson, and Earl Warren.

In the current political climate, with its extraordinary level of partisan acrimony and small-mindedness, the progressive legacy counterposes an alternative perspective suffused with the notion of public virtue. At a time when science and technology are often hijacked to promote narrow, sectarian, and private interests, progressivism still seeks to apply impartial intelligence to improve the environment, the economy, and the general well-being of society.

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This progressive tradition—with its focus on providing effective nonpartisan policy solution—provides an excellent framework for responding to today’s great problems. Progressivism’s pragmatic problem-solving approach could be particularly useful in addressing such challenges as improving the competitiveness of our work force and our overall economy.<sup>1</sup>

Today’s educational weaknesses have also exacerbated concerns that the gap between classes has begun to widen, much as it did in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> In addition, our basic infrastructure—roads, bridges, transit, water, ports, and power systems—has not kept up with growth and, in many cases, is in far worse shape today than ten, twenty, or even thirty years ago. Recent catastrophic events on the Gulf Coast provide ample evidence of this.

America’s unique economic and political strengths have so far allowed the nation to withstand these problems. But it seems increasingly clear that, as a nation or a state, we are neither mobilizing to compete nor planning ahead.

A progressive response is not only programmatic, but to be effective it also has to have a political strategy. Fortunately, there seems to be at least some potential here. Most surveys of national and California opinion suggest that Americans are broadly in agreement on the major issues facing themselves and their children. They also increasingly distrust both major parties, much like the turn of the century electorate. In California, barely one in three residents trusts the government to do the “right” thing most of the time.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, the forces most closely tied to the parties—the union movement on the left and the large corporate establishment on the right—increasingly represent shrinking portions of the electorate. Instead, we see the rise of an ever-increasing entrepreneurial, self-employed, and professional class.<sup>4</sup> This group has powerful new tools to organize and inform, notably the Internet, which also greatly enhances its market power.

This class, and the Internet, have helped spur the growth of a new kind of politics, epitomized in recent years by the insurgency of Republican John McCain and Democrat Bill Bradley.<sup>5</sup> Of course, neither of

these candidates ultimately won, but we should remember neither did the first generation of progressives over a century ago.

This increasing class of voters offers a potential base for creating a new and viable progressivism. Independent by nature, pragmatic, and public-minded, they resemble the very classes that fostered and nurtured the first progressive movement and could also be the key to its 21<sup>st</sup>-century revival.

### **WHAT HAPPENED TO THE PROGRESSIVE IDEAL?**

A new progressive movement naturally can not simply adopt wholesale a program developed at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Yet we can derive from progressivism ways of approaching problems that have been time tested, and then try to best apply it to our contemporary reality.

Progressivism was a movement that attempted to address the problems of modernity. The great achievement of the progressives in America—in contrast to the fate of other industrializing nations such as Japan, Germany, Italy, and Russia—occurred within the context of a democratic political system.

#### **Progressive Roots**

In contrast to populism, whose roots lay in the countryside, American progressivism was always a “town” movement. Its earliest antecedents were in the social reform movements in mid-19<sup>th</sup>-century Great Britain, which experienced the industrial revolution first and with the greatest ferocity. In Britain, the reform movement originated not with the working class or displaced yeomanry but with the clergy, businesspeople, and a rising professional class.

These early movements brought the beginnings of efficient administration to the sprawling, chaotic cities. They established parks, baths, and washhouses for the poor. New sanitary measures and improvements in medicine initiated by reformers lowered urban rates of mortality dramatically. And, crime, once rampant, dropped dramatically in cities like Manchester, Liverpool, and Leeds.<sup>6</sup>

When America began to emerge as an industrial power, a similar reform movement took shape. As in England, it was led largely by business, professional, and religious leaders. It also spearheaded the movement to reform local governments, with success particularly in cities such as Milwaukee, Cleveland, Toledo, and Detroit.<sup>7</sup> In many cities, services such as police, fire protection, and transportation were organized systematically for the first time.<sup>8</sup>

Progressives also promoted an expansion of public works, from water and sanitation systems to new roads, libraries, and schools.<sup>9</sup> They also began to make concerted efforts to save some of the natural environment for their increasingly harried, city-bound citizens. Particularly ambitious efforts were made in St. Louis, Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston, and New York,<sup>10</sup> where Frederick Law Olmsted, a primary designer of Central Park, defined his mission as an attempt “to supply to the hundreds of thousands of tired workers... a specimen of God’s handiwork.”<sup>11</sup>

Achieving political success took time. Starting out as a movement of the educated and affluent, the progressives only slowly learned to marry high-mindedness with political savvy and energy. They needed to reach out to wider groups—small businessmen and farmers threatened by monopolies or unions seeking better working conditions—before they could win electoral majorities and, with the rise of Theodore Roosevelt, control of the White House itself.<sup>12</sup>

### **California Progressivism**

Many of California’s progressives also were “well-fixed” people who in many cases had been conservative McKinley Republicans earlier in their lives.<sup>13</sup> Most remained moderate politically, seeking simply to reform the abuses of capitalism, although some veered closer to socialism.

For much of the progressive era in California, starting in the early 1900s, these two tendencies frequently not only feuded but also often worked together on a common program.<sup>14</sup> In California, their primary target was the Southern Pacific Railroad, whose predatory prices and corrupt practices threatened not only working people and consumers but various entrepreneurial interests as well.

Legislation passed to regulate the railroad in 1911, noted historian Spencer Olin, “was regulatory but certainly not anti-business.”<sup>15</sup> The pivotal figure of the California progressive movement, Hiram Johnson, was an upper-middle-class Republican in the Theodore Roosevelt tradition. His running mate, Albert J. Wallace, a Methodist minister with extensive oil and farm holdings in the Central Valley, came from a similar class and political background.

Despite their decidedly bourgeois roots, Johnson and other progressives also sometimes made common cause with organized labor, then just beginning its rise to power, favoring labor legislation such as workmen’s compensation. They also worked for political reforms, such as the recall and referendum, then favored by union leaders.<sup>16</sup>

But at its root, California progressivism remained largely a movement of the middle class, the small property owners and professionals. It was also defined by a strong sense of conventional morality—much of which might seem a bit anachronistic by contemporary standards—and a powerful attachment to the notion of political decency.

Particularly striking was the progressives’ commitment to efficiency in government. Unlike traditional conservatives, progressives believed that government could be a positive force in the economic and social life of California. But they insisted this be done in a business-like manner, embracing the latest notions of scientific management. Their stated goal, as one Johnson administration report put it, was “to systematize the business of the State of California.”<sup>17</sup>

Such principles were applied not only on the state level but at the municipal level as well. A progressive city was one managed with the best expertise derived from the private sector, preferably by businessmen. “The administrative affairs of the city are a business matter, rarely a political issue,” Berkeley’s reform minded Mayor suggested in 1909. “The object, therefore, [is] to provide a method that will result in the election of businessmen, not politicians, to office.”<sup>18</sup>

The reform agenda of the progressives did not always turn out as intended. Commissions of “experts” could, over time, be manipulated by special interests. But overall the progressives, suggested historian Jack-

son K. Putnam, created a government that, for the most part, “worked well” for Californians for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Most important, California created state government that, for all its limitations, helped prepare the state for the rapid growth that characterized the state throughout much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Progressivism’s pragmatic orientation, the melding of science and technology into government, the large-scale investment in infrastructure, and a strong nonpartisan tradition established California’s government something of a national role model.<sup>19</sup>

### **FROM PROGRESSIVISM TO INTEREST GROUP LIBERALISM**

Progressivism’s ascendancy faded with the First World War. The exigencies of global conflict, followed by a period of revolutionary turmoil, increased political polarization. On one side, the nation witnessed both the rise of radical socialism as well as that of a renewed, isolationist right wing. On the other, conservative forces increasingly dominated the national Republican Party.

The focus of progressive politics now shifted decisively to the Democrats. The key figure in this transformation would prove to be New York’s Governor, Franklin Roosevelt. A distant cousin of Theodore, Roosevelt saw himself in the traditional progressive mold. He envisioned the Democratic Party as a broad middle-class political entity financed by small donors—in contrast with the massive corporations that now financed the Republicans.

In classic progressive fashion, Roosevelt never opposed capitalism at all but favored a free market system that, as he saw it, went beyond serving the interests of “a small cross-section of business.”<sup>20</sup> As New York’s Governor, Roosevelt initiated classic progressive programs, such as promoting the conservation of natural resources, regulation of utilities, and enforcement of decent labor standards.<sup>21</sup>

The Great Depression brought Roosevelt into the White House. The catastrophic conditions of the times tested the validity of the old progressive ideals and, to some extent, transformed them. The need to rely

on organized labor, then concentrated in large industrial concerns, as a political ally and the pressing need to stimulate production made him look increasingly to favor economic institutions.

Some Roosevelt confidants, such as Rexford Tugwell, Adolf A. Berle, and Gardiner Means, now saw the old entrepreneurial class as an anachronism in a world dominated by large corporate, labor, and governmental bureaucracies. This notion, later to be refined by liberal thinkers including John Kenneth Galbraith, would become indifferent, or even hostile, to independent business.

In the process, Roosevelt helped transform progressivism into modern interest group liberalism. This new ideology essentially replaced the progressive notion of “fairness” and hostility to concentrated power with a more *dirigiste* approach favoring a strong central government dedicated to both redistributing wealth to favored groups and building national power.<sup>22</sup> If the old progressives prided themselves on providing favors to no one, noted historian Richard Hofstadter, the liberal state “offered favors to everyone.”<sup>23</sup>

These tendencies were exacerbated by both the Second World War and the ensuing conflict with the Soviet Union, both of which greatly increased the power of the central government. Later, the rise of the civil rights and environmental movements also focused more attention on federal intervention, particularly at the judicial level.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Limits of Interest Group Liberalism**

The liberalism that blossomed in the postwar era diverged dramatically from the standards of traditional progressivism. In contrast to the idea of a broad public interest, liberalism became ever more identified with specific interest groups—minorities, feminists, union members, and gays—whose agendas often did not resonate well with the majority of middle- and working-class voters.

The failure of this approach was most evident in the decline of the large cities, which had been the birthplace both for progressivism and, later, interest group liberals. The greatest of all American cities, New York epitomized this process. Under Mayor Fiorella LaGuardia, a Republican of the Theodore Roosevelt stripe, the city built new parks, play-

grounds, swimming pools, roads, and sanitation systems with an almost messianic fervor.

La Guardia's expanded city government, noted Fred Siegel, still operated under an efficiency-oriented progressive administration. La Guardia and his parks commissioner, Robert Moses fired political appointees and dismissed incumbents, leading some public employees to identify him with the Italian dictator Mussolini. Rejecting narrow ideology, he famously claimed: "There is no Republican or Democratic way to clean streets."<sup>25</sup>

La Guardia's sense of social issues remained tied to traditional middle- and working-class values. A strong supporter of civil rights, he never attempted to identify his liberalism with the cultural *avant garde*. La Guardia himself liked the combination of "progressive government and conservative art."<sup>26</sup>

La Guardia's successors, in New York and elsewhere, did not stick to this moral and administrative rigor. The share government workers in New York's workforce expanded from 10 percent in 1950 to over 17 percent in 1970s but with increasingly little accountability. Meanwhile, public employee unions evolved into a dominant political force not only in New York but also in many major cities.<sup>27</sup>

At the same time, liberalism increasingly identified itself with a radicalized social agenda. Embracing the politics of black power, gay advocacy, feminism, and chicanismo, liberal politicians further alienated themselves from the vast American middle class, which now increasingly opted to live elsewhere.

Indeed, despite a widespread concept of an "urban renaissance," businesses and people, particularly middle-class families, continue to flee the urban core. In some areas—Detroit, Minneapolis, San Francisco, Boston, Cleveland, and New Orleans—the number of people in the cities is actually shrinking while in most others, the liberal city is losing its share of the metropolitan population to its more conservative leaning suburbs and exurbs.<sup>28</sup>

The disastrous record of the Democratic Party since 1968 stands as persuasive evidence of liberal political failure. With the exception of two

centrist southerners—Carter and Clinton—the Democrats have been significantly rebuffed, reduced largely to fighting rear-guard action against a more vibrant right-wing Republican agenda. As historian Fred Siegel noted: “Modern liberalism was born there in the big cities and died there, a suicide of sorts.”<sup>29</sup>

### **The California Case**

In California, progressive politics lingered well after the war. Governor Republican Earl Warren, who served between 1943 and 1953, epitomized progressive virtues—pragmatic in policy, nonpartisan in approach, and activist in his manner.

Under Warren, California prospered enough to find room for some tax cuts. But Warren also spent much of the surplus tax revenues on roads, mental health facilities, and schools. Even Warren’s defeats, on issues like health insurance and civil rights, revealed how much he was ahead of the curve on cutting-edge political issues.<sup>30</sup>

Yet, within Warren’s own Republican Party, new forces were emerging that would soon overwhelm the progressive faction. The growth in the ranks of more conservative voters in suburban Southern California was turning the Republican Party toward an increasingly right-wing orientation.

Progressivism now found its home largely within the Democratic Party. Under Edmund G. Pat Brown, elected in 1958, the state continued with an aggressive program of public works, a rapid expansion of higher education, and the massive California Water Project. Like his Republican progressive predecessors, Brown advocated civil rights for minorities but also remained tied to many prominent business interests, notably in real estate development, Hollywood, aerospace, and agribusiness.

Brown also embraced the traditional good government principles of the progressives. Shortly after taking office, Brown initiated a thoroughgoing reorganization of state government, attempting to make it more businesslike. California, Brown himself noted, needed “to apply the latest concepts of management, organization and cost control just as modern corporations have done, and are continuing to do...”<sup>31</sup>

Yet by the mid-1960s, Brown's traditional progressivism was being undermined by the rise of interest group liberalism. State employees, left-liberal lobby groups, and minorities were demanding more and more from the governor. Fed up with ever-increasing taxes and social spending, business interests became increasingly alienated from Brown. Once seen as a boon to the private sector, state government was increasingly perceived by corporate interests as overly meddlesome and hostile.

Perhaps even more damaging was the cultural rift that now developed. Many Anglo middle- and working-class voters felt threatened by the rise of new militant minority and student groups. Riots at Berkeley, in 1964, and Watts, the following year, deepened resentments against the university and African Americans, two linchpins of the Brown's support.

In the 1966 gubernatorial election, Ronald Reagan smashed Brown and what was left of the old progressive coalition. The former actor captured both business support and grassroots votes in previously Democratic-leaning areas in suburban Los Angeles and the Central Valley.

Wealthy interests largely financed Reagan's campaign and dominated his eight years in Sacramento. Interviews with his closest confidants at the time make clear that their agenda was not social conservatism but a desire to reduce the progressive era regulatory regime and, at the same time, restore order on the state's campuses and ghetto streets.<sup>32</sup>

One scholar has claimed that Reagan "destroyed" progressivism, but some of the blame should also be laid at the feet of the Democrats. People who paid taxes for California's world-leading system of education, for example, had a right to be displeased when these were roiled by civil unrest.

Of course, there was also a significant racist sentiment behind the massive shift to the Republicans. Even legitimate civil rights demands engendered resentment from some whites, particularly those whose roots were in the South or rural Midwest. Yet whatever his source of support, Reagan now tapped a new political majority largely through the desertion of disgruntled Anglo Democrats.<sup>33</sup>

Over the next decades, the Democrats would fare better in California than in the rest of the nation, but traditional progressivism never re-

turned to the state. Even Reagan's successor, Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown, Jr., veered away from the traditional focus on nonpartisan governance and infrastructure spending—what long-time advisor Tom Quinn called "this build, build, build thing"<sup>34</sup>—and instead focused on an environmentally friendly "small is beautiful" approach.

But the real problems did not lay with the brash, creative, and sometime unpredictable young governor. It was entrenched in Democratic interest groups, particularly public employees who refused, among other things, to vote for property tax relief for California's middle-class homeowners. Ultimately, this failure brought about the passage of Proposition 13, a draconian measure that would sharply limit infrastructure spending for the next quarter century.

Now, arguably, the best-organized political force in the state, public employees, along with groups such as trial lawyers and narrow interest activist groups, gained a dominant hand over Democrats in the legislature. Their ability to raise money, and impose their political will, often outweighed that of even the most powerful business interests.

This failure was evidenced in the recall-shortened gubernatorial reign of Gray Davis, Brown's former chief of staff. Although cognizant of the old progressive tradition, and instinctively pro-business, Davis failed to restrain the escalating demands of the new style "progressives"—essentially allies of the liberal interest groups—who now dominated his party.

These post-1980s progressives shared little of the traditional progressive concern for small business, competition, infrastructure spending, or efficient management. Their goal, as reflected by their dutiful supporters in the legislature, was to increase spending on salaries and pensions for public workers, regulate business for the benefit of environmental or labor causes, and advance the general civil rights agenda.

As a result, even with a massive state surplus, Davis did little to expand the state's infrastructure at a time when the state's population was again growing rapidly. And when the state's revenues shrank after the high-tech bust in 2000, Davis found himself unable to resist the demands of these so-called progressives. Perhaps the most telling example of the misplaced priorities of the Democratic mindset took place

amid the state budget crisis when legislators, facing an imminent fiscal disaster, took time to debate legislation about providing more protections for transgender Californians.

## RESTORING PROGRESSIVISM IN CALIFORNIA AND AMERICA

The problems now afflicting President Bush and Governor Schwarzenegger, lead some Democratic “progressives” to predict an inevitable return to power. Yet even if political fortunes change, the agenda embraced by many of these “progressives”—ever-expanding social spending, tough regulations against business, generous support for public employee pensions—do not constitute a workable *governing* strategy.

### The Problem With Blue State Progressivism

In this context, what actually constitutes *progressivism* constitutes increasingly critical concern for those who want to see meaningful change.

Sadly, the predominant definition in California and today’s notion of the term *progressive* diverges dramatically from its historic roots. Instead of favoring robust private-sector economic growth, the emphasis tends toward remedial measures, such as redistributing wealth to selected “victim” groups. In the same way, the idea of efficiency in government has been replaced with a kind of shadow government by public employees who increasingly dominate “progressives” on city councils and in the state legislature.

At the same time, the old progressive ideals of being nonpartisan and supporting the overall public good have been lost. Much of the blame here belongs to a Republican Party that seems either ashamed or ignorant of its own progressive tradition. In the end, we are left with two widely divergent political tendencies, one far to the left and the other, far to the right, neither of which seems capable of serving the true interests of either America or the state of California.

The new progressivism reflects largely the narcissism of its political base in the urban core and a few elite suburbs. Liberal “progressive” activists in affluent, largely childless places like San Francisco, Manhattan, Seattle, Portland, and Boston see the world as needing simply to become more like themselves. As *The Stranger*, a Seattle weekly, put it, they perceive themselves as “islands of sanity, liberalism and compassion” compared with the suburbs, exurbs, and rural areas where “people are fatter and slower and dumber.”

The new progressives’ prescriptions for America reflect their prejudices. They favor, among other things, greater density and huge subsidies for urban mass transit systems over better roads. They seem often more concerned with environmental protection than the creation of jobs. Not surprisingly, as labor-advocate Harold Meyerson pointed out, most white blue-collar workers trusted Republican Bush over Democratic Kerry on economic issues in the 2004 election.<sup>35</sup>

In economic terms, blue state progressives also seem to be living in a solipsistic dream world. Rather than focus on sparking growth, they tend to look more favorably at redistributive measures, such as higher minimum wages (the so-called living wage) and enforced union rules on state projects. At best, these measures help only a few workers at the low end of the spectrum; however, as a recent Public Policy Institute of California report suggested, such measures often tend to reduce employment opportunities for the least skilled.<sup>36</sup>

Finally, the contemporary blue state progressives lack the strong moral convictions that underlined the policies of leaders such as Hiram Johnson.

The progressive lexicon, as Hofstadter noted, was full of old-fashioned values about patriotism, the role of the citizen, the importance of law and character, conscience, morals, service, duty, and shame.<sup>37</sup> In contrast, contemporary blue state progressivism tends toward at best an indifference to notions of discipline, self-reliance, and other traditional moral or religious ideals.

This moral failing may be the most difficult of all to overcome. Without a sense of right and wrong, or of balance and discipline, no serious reform program can succeed. Even in a postindustrial era, suggested the

late Daniel Bell, the fate of societies still revolve around “a conception of public virtue” and the “classical questions of the polis,” that is, how best to solve the overall public good.<sup>38</sup>

### **WHAT WOULD BE THE BASIS OF A REVIVED PROGRESSIVE AGENDA IN CALIFORNIA AND THE NATION?**

To succeed in the new century, progressivism must move away from its current configuration and back to its core, fundamental principles. Modern progressives need to focus, as the turn of the century reformers did, on issues that impact the vast middle and working class. They must place serving the needs of the public above those who work for the state. And they must express stronger appreciation for religion and traditional morality.

There are clearly powerful issues upon which reformers— in either party—could restore the progressive legacy. On the national level, these clearly lie with domestic issues surrounding middle-class concerns in an era of social and economic instability, energy dependence, our crumbling physical infrastructure, the rising challenge posed by China and India, and cloudy prospects facing the next generation.

The recent disaster around New Orleans reflected all these concerns in sharp relief. Republican conservative attitudes on planning, conservation, and investment in basic infrastructure have clearly contributed to the tragedy along the Gulf. But so did the failures of the corrupt, inefficient Democratic liberal administrations that have controlled cities such as New Orleans for generations. The need for a rigorous, forward-looking approach to urban development was never clearer.<sup>39</sup>

In California, these issues are put in sharp relief by the state’s continuing rapid growth. As the progressives understood in their day, growth requires a massive investment in infrastructure—ports, roads, and water and power system—to be sustainable and successful. In the era from Hiram Johnson to Pat Brown, California led the nation in all these areas.

Today the picture could not be more different. California’s power system routinely experiences brownouts and blackouts and water prices often rise rapidly while the ports, notably the great Los Angeles-Long

Beach port complex, remain highly congested and under constant threat of increased competition from the East Coast, the Pacific Northwest and, in the future, Mexico's Baja California.<sup>40</sup>

The biggest beneficiaries of such investments would be California's business community as well as its middle and working class. Lower electrical and water rates, for example, would help preserve the state's industrial facilities—from semiconductor aerospace plants to textile mills. Reinvestment in the port complexes is critical to employment growth. The LA-Long Beach trade complex, the world's third largest port system, accounts for as much as 15 to 20 percent of the region's total employment, much of it in highly paid, blue-collar sectors.<sup>41</sup>

Another area critical to the middle class lies in the development of the state's human capital. California's educational system has been in decline for decades. Its worker training system lags behind states such as Wisconsin and Georgia. Although still a center for the elite, creative talent in the world, California employers frequently complain of the low level of skill and work commitment of the overall workforce. The state's rebounding aerospace industry, for example, is experiencing problems finding new workers to replace aging skilled technicians and machinists.<sup>42</sup>

The priorities of infrastructure, education, and economy have the virtue of appealing to voters both in the urban core and in the so-called red parts of California. These include areas, such as the Inland Empire and the Central Valley, that increasingly represent the future demographic vitality of the state.

Voters in these areas would be the primary target for a renewed progressive movement. Just as Hiram Johnson barnstormed the turn-of-the-century farm country or Pat Brown wooed the booming suburbs of postwar California, a contemporary progressive movement must find its base beyond the elite bastions in the core cities. Focusing primarily on winning votes among minorities or well-heeled "enlightened" San Francisco and Santa Monica voters is not a long-term winning strategy.

If the old progressive leaders were around today, they likely would already have laid out the challenges before us. They would not spend their time placating the extremes of their parties, much less let special

interests or public employees divert them from the basic business before the nation and California.

Whether the next generation of such like-minded progressives occurs within one party or the other, or in a new party, is of little long-term importance. What matters is to find political leadership that is interested in getting the public's work done.

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## Biographies

BRUCE E. CAIN is Robson Professor of Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley, and Director of the Institute of Governmental Studies, came to Berkeley from the California Institute of Technology, where he taught from 1976 to 1989. A *summa cum laude* graduate of Bowdoin College (1970), he studied as a Rhodes Scholar (1970-1972) at Trinity College, Oxford. In 1976 he received his Ph.D. in political science from Harvard University. His writings include *The Reapportionment Puzzle* (1984), *The Personal Vote* (1987), written with John Ferejohn and Morris Fiorina, and *Congressional Redistricting* (1991), with David Butler. He has also co-edited numerous books, including *Developments in American Politics*, Volumes I - IV, with Gillian Peele, *Constitutional Reform in California*, with Roger Noll, *Racial and Ethnic Politics in California*, Vol. II, with Michael Preston and Sandra Bass, and *Voting at the Political Fault Line: California's Experiment with the Blanket Primary* with Elisabeth R. Gerber (2002). Professor Cain has served as a polling consultant for state and senate races to Fairbank, Canapary and Maulin (1985-86); redistricting consultant to (among others) the United States Justice Department, 1989; Los Angeles County, 1991; San Diego Citizens Commission on Redistricting, 2001; City and County of San Francisco, 2002; and Special Master for three judge panel, Arizona State Legislative Redistricting, 2002. He has been a consultant to the *Los Angeles Times* (1986-89) and serves as a political commentator for numerous radio and television stations the Bay Area. He received the Zale Award for Outstanding Achievement in Policy Research and Public Service in March, 2000, and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in April, 2000. Professor Cain received a Distinguished Research Mentoring of Undergraduates Award from the College of Arts and Letters, UC, Berkeley in May, 2003. In August, 2003 he was honored for Outstanding Teaching in Political Science by the American Political Science Association and Pi Sigma Alpha, The National Political Science Honor Society.

BILL HAUCK has served as President of the Sacramento-based California Business Roundtable for nearly a decade, a statewide, non-partisan organization composed of chief executive officers of California's leading corporations

Bill is a founder, major shareholder and a member of the Board of Directors of Information for Public Affairs Inc. Doing business under the name State Net, Bill led the company for more than 20 years. After retiring from State Net, Bill served as chairman of the California Constitution Revision Commission and Deputy Chief of Staff for Governor Pete Wilson. Earlier in his career he served as Chief of Staff to Assembly Speakers Bob Moretti and Willie L. Brown Jr. More recently, Bill served as Co-Chair of Governor Schwarzenegger's California Performance Review Commission. Bill serves on the Board of Directors for Blue Shield of California and is a member of the Board of Trustees of the California State University, currently serving as chairman of the Board's Finance Committee.

JOEL KOTKIN is an Irvine Senior Fellow with the New America Foundation, which is based in Washington, DC. He is the author of six books, including the newly published *The City: A Global History (Modern Library)* which is a concise exploration of over five thousand years of urban history. Kotkin's other books include *Tribes: How Race Religion and Identity Determine Success in the Global Economy*, published in 1993 by Random House Inc. and most recently the *New Geography: How the Digital Revolution is Reshaping the American Landscape*, also published by Random House and three weeks on the LA Times Best Seller List. Mr. Kotkin is a frequent contributor to the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, Inc. Magazine, , the American Enterprise, The New Republic, the Weekly Standard and the Los Angeles Times. For almost three years he wrote the "Grassroots Business" column for the Sunday New York Times Money and Business Section. Over the past two years Mr. Kotkin has written major reports on the future of New York, the Inland Empire Region of Southern California, St. Louis, the San Fernando Valley, greater Los Angeles and Phoenix. He is a also visiting

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ETHAN RARICK is a journalist covering politics in both Oregon and California for more than 15 years, writing for many publications, including the *Associated Press*, *United Press International*, the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Francisco Chronicle* and the *Contra Costa Times*. He is a visiting scholar at the Institute of Governmental Studies at the University of California at Berkeley and a former Knight-Ridder Visiting Media Fellow at Duke University. While covering the 1998 gubernatorial race, he noticed that almost all the candidates cited Pat Brown as a model governor. Curious about Brown's new iconic status in California politics, he began the research that has now resulted in the publication of *California Rising*. The book has been described as "colorful and masterful" by the *Los Angeles Times*, "shrewd" by *The Economist*, "first-rate" and "excellent" by the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and "lively, fast-paced, critical and fully informed" by *Publishers Weekly*.

JEAN M. ROSS is the founding executive director of the California Budget Project, which serves as a resource to the media, policymakers, and state and local constituency groups seeking accurate information and analysis of state policy issues. Prior to the California Budget Project, she was the Principal Consultant to the Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee. She also served as Senior Consultant to the Assembly Human Services Committee, where she staffed the California Legislature's Joint Select Committee on the Changing Family and Assistant Research Director of the Service Employees International Union in Washington, DC. Ms. Ross has published numerous reports and articles on fiscal and economic policy issues. Jean serves on the Board of the Washington, DC-based Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, the Advisory Committee of California's Franchise Tax Board, and the Board of the California Tax Reform Association

CONGRESSWOMAN HILDA L. SOLIS was first elected to Congress in 2000, and is serving her third term in the U.S. House of Representatives.

She represents the 32nd Congressional District of California, which encompasses the San Gabriel Valley and parts of East Los Angeles. Congresswoman Solis serves on the House Energy and Commerce Committee becoming the first Latina to serve on this committee. She is the Ranking Member of the Environment and Hazardous Materials Subcommittee and is part of the Energy and Air Quality Subcommittee. Solis is also Democratic Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Women's Issues, Chairwoman of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus' Task Force on Health and a Regional Whip for Southern California. Her priorities include protecting the environment, improving the quality of health care and fighting for the rights of working families.

Solis continued to advance environmental justice when she was elected to Congress and in 2003, her San Gabriel River Watershed Study Act was signed into law (Public Law No. 108-042). This bill authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to conduct a special resources study of the San Gabriel River to look at how the federal government can improve the area's recreational and environmental opportunities.

Congresswoman Solis graduated from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona in 1979, and earned a Masters degree in Public Administration from the University of Southern California in 1981. She worked in the Carter White House Office of Hispanic Affairs and was later appointed as a management analyst with the Office of Management and Budget in the Civil Rights Division. Congresswoman Solis is a lifetime resident of the San Gabriel Valley and currently resides in the city of El Monte with her husband Sam, a small business owner. Her parents and her six siblings continue to be a great source of inspiration to Congresswoman Solis.

DR. RAPHAEL SONENSHEIN is professor of political science at California State University, Fullerton since 1982, and is the author of two books on Los Angeles politics. *Politics in Black and White: Race and Power in Los Angeles* (Princeton U. Press, 1993) won the 1994 Ralph J. Bunche Award from the American Political Science Association as the best political science book of the year in the area of racial and cultural pluralism. He served as Executive Director of the City of Los Angeles Appointed

Charter Reform Commission between 1997 and 1999. His book on Los Angeles charter reform, *The City at Stake: Secession, Reform, and the Battle for Los Angeles*, was published by Princeton U. Press in 2004. He is currently studying electoral coalitions in Los Angeles in an era of immigration, in association with CSUF geography professor Mark Drayse. He served as election day political consultant to Los Angeles Times Poll in 1997 and 2001.

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