



Tidbits from Sacramento

Griffin & Associates
Legislative and Governmental Advocacy
"We Open Doors - We Get Results"

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Welcome to Griffin & Associates "Tidbits from Sacramento."

Some of you may remember receiving the "old" Tidbits in the '90's and early 2000. With this edition, we are reinstating the newsletter to provide our clients and other interested individuals with information regarding the happenings in Sacramento and Washington. While our focus will always be on health care and its many facets, we will include various other items we believe will be of interest to our readers, including personalities in the news and administrative actions.

Changes at Griffin & Associates

- On February 1, 2007, Peter Anderson joined the firm as Vice-President. Peter is a long time colleague whom I have worked with over the last twenty plus years. His extensive experience in government and his 10 years as a consultant in the Capitol has provided him with a broad array of health care policy and fiscal knowledge. Peter served as Chief Consultant for the Assembly Health Committee and the Assembly's Human Services Committee, as well as serving in various other consultant roles in the Capitol. Peter also has 20 years of experience in developing and administering government programs. His experience will serve Griffin & Associates and our clients well.
- Linda Muir, who has provided contract lobby services for a number of years for Griffin & Associates, is now physically located in our offices. While she still is an independent lobbyist, Linda's availability and experience will be an asset when we bring her on during the "crunch" times, with little notice.
- Vanessa Griffin has working with us since last August, but unfortunately, is now only here Monday, Wednesday and Friday. She has decided to return to college to become a nurse – as we know, the healthcare system certainly needs nurses.
- The newest addition to our office is Christine Henderson, another independent contractor, who will be providing some on-site services for the firm. Her specialty is organizational development.

California Legislature Begins To Move Into High Gear

The deadline for introduction of bills was February 23. It took another week before all the bills were in print, nearly 2800 of them. In addition, a number of urgency bills and specific committee measures were also introduced after the deadline, which is permissible "He who makes the rules, may break the rules." I expect the final count will be closer to 2900 bills.

Health care reform proposals will clearly dominate this year's legislative session. A close second will be the "Green House" legislation which I will cover another time. While there are many health care bills, the discussions are expected to center around the following proposals:

- Governor's proposal - Secretary of Health & Human Services, Kim Belshe' is the prime spokesperson for the Governor on this issue before legislative bodies. She has made several major presentations, including one before the Senate Health Committee that lasted four hours and another lengthy one before the Little Hoover Commission.
- SB 349 (Perata) – Senator Perata is the President pro Tempore of the Senate and leader of the Democrats. This is clearly a “spot” bill, the details of which will be forthcoming over time. We can expect an individual mandate for working Californians and coverage for all children up to 300 percent of the federal poverty level to be part of the discussion..
- SB 236 (Runner) – Senator Runner is carrying this legislation on behalf of the Senate Republican Caucus and will be its key spokesperson. Major difference is this proposal will carry an individual mandate, but not an employer mandate. Senator Runner will be presenting this proposal during a health care panel on March 20th before the leaders of the National Association of Women Business Owners-California.
- AB 9 (Nunez) – Assembly Speaker Nunez bill at this time is a “spot” bill. During his presentation during a Health Committee Information hearing, the Speaker focused his comments on the need to cover all children.
- SB 840 (Kuehl) – Senator Kuehl introduced her Universal Health Coverage bill this session as she has in the past. This will definitely be part of the dialogue relative to health care reform.
- A chart of the four proposals minus Senator Kuehl's bill has been put together by legislative staff. If you wish an email copy of the chart, please contact my office.

Another major issue will be the break-up of the Department of Health Services (DHS). Policy and budget committees will be looking closely at how the current department functions will be split and the impact on current programs. The transition will begin in July, 2007, provided the budget is signed. More on this as the program details are solidified.

Profile – Mervyn Dymally.

Assemblyman Dymally was appointed Chair of the Assembly Health Committee in January, 2007. Assembly Member Dymally is not only the oldest, but the most experienced politician in the Capitol.

- 1962 – Elected to the part-time California Legislature.
- 1966 – Elected to the Senate where he served until 1975.
- 1974 - Elected Lt. Governor of California.
- 1982 - Elected to Congress, serving for a number of years.
- 2002 - Elected to the California's 52nd Assembly District, following a short retirement

Health care has been one of his main interests for many years. He has served on the Assembly Health Committee since his 2002 election. Mervyn Dymally celebrated his 80th birthday in 2006. He will be “termed-out” in 2008.

Mini-Tidbits

- The State Senate approved changing the presidential primary from June to the first Tuesday in February. This is an added expense to the counties and state, but supporters believe it will give California more say in the presidential race. Opponents are concerned about the cost of another election. Some legislators have indicated they will not vote for it unless the state reimburses counties for the cost of the primary.
- The California Teachers Association and the California Chamber of Commerce, an unusual alliance, have submitted the “Term Limits and Legislative Reform Act” to the Attorney General's Office for approvals. This proposed initiative is expected to lower the total number of years an individual lawmaker could serve to no more than 12 years

total. As worded, it would allow some members currently scheduled to be “termed-out” to be elected again. Stay tuned, this should be interesting.

- The Calif. Chamber of Commerce is sponsoring legislation authored by Assemblyman Benoit to allow workers and their employers to mutually agree to a four day work week.
- Congress has a number of proposals under consideration in an attempt to address health care reform. The House Small Business Committee will hold a hearing on Wednesday, March 14 relative to small business insurance coverage. Senate Baucus (D-Mt) is trying to craft legislation to allow small businesses to pool together for health insurance and offer tax credits for providing insurance. Senator Kerry (D-MA) is expected to work with Baucus on this issue.

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