



Tidbits from Sacramento

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Legislative and Governmental Advocacy
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1121 L Street, Suite 210 • Sacramento, CA 95814
(916) 448-9275 • www.mjgriffin.com

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THE BUDGET PASSED

It is not a pretty budget, nor is anyone happy, but the budget is now on its way to the Governor and pursuant to his comments, he will sign this budget along with all the “trailer bills” on Monday. This year’s budget will be remembered as the longest delayed budget in our history. The State Controller, John Chiang has stated he will get the checks processed as fast as possible.

There are over \$4.25 billion in unpaid bills for July and August and this is just a drop in the bucket. The amount owed to various public and private entities is close to \$11 billion. Nursing homes, hospitals, clinics and other healthcare providers will be at the top of the list for payment. Many entities were forced to obtain loans to continue to provide necessary services.

This is not a time to celebrate as it is clear that the 2009-2010 budget, which will be released in January, will find California facing another fiscal nightmare unless there are significant changes in our income and expenditures. Perhaps this year has encouraged some legislators to take a serious look at our budget process and begin to consider how to reform this process. However, I suspect that with the next legislative session we will again see hundreds of bills requiring a fiscal appropriation.

LEGISLATION

With the end of the budget stalemate, legislation is finally moving toward its finale. Hundreds of bills have been held in their respective houses pursuant to the Governor’s threat to veto any bills sent to him prior to the resolution of the budget impasse.

Over 800 bills are now on their way to the Governor to either sign or veto these bills. Thanks to the tough rules in the Appropriations Committee of both houses, many bills with any major fiscal impact were held permanently in the Committees. Still there are the 800 plus bills that will require the Governor’s action. The Governor’s staff will have a very limited time to prepare the bills for the Governor’s pen. I expect to see more vetoes than usual, particularly those with a cost to the state. Stay tuned.

ELECTIONS

A bit early, but it appears that the Presidential race is having some impact on California. We seem to be focusing on the Governor’s race a bit early. Insurance Commissioner Poizner has made it official; he filed his papers to run for Governor in 2010.

Lt. Governor Garamendi is certainly making it known that he will be on the Democratic ticket for Governor. He may have a lot of competition in the primary and it could include Senator Diane Feinstein. She is not saying “no” when asked.

The November elections are in full swing. Ballots are expected to be mailed by October 6. There are not very many competitive races for legislative seats either in the Senate or Assembly. The redistricting done after the 2000 census created “safe” districts for many legislators. This means that for many Republicans and Democrats, the real race was in the June Primary.

The June 29th edition of Tidbits reviewed the Senate races and their potential outcomes. The following are among the very few competitive races in the 80 member Assembly.

Assembly District 10

Current Assembly Member Dr. Alan Nakanishi (R) will be termed out.

Allyson Huber (D) and Jack Sieglock (R) will compete for this seat. Sieglock is a small business owner and former San Joaquin County Supervisor. Huber is an Attorney with a litigation practice.

This will be a race to watch.

Assembly District 15

Current Assembly Member Guy Houston (R) will be termed out.

Joan Buchanan (D) was elected to the San Ramon Valley Unified School District in 1990.

Abram Wilson (R) was elected to the San Ramon City Council in 1999 and became the first elected Mayor in 2003.

This is expected to be a very close race.

Assembly District 26

Current Assembly Member Greg Aghazarian (R) will be termed out.

Bill Berryhill (R) is a member of the Ceres School Board, President of the family farm (Berryhill Orchards) and serves on the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau Board. John Eisenhut (D) farms 80 acres of almonds, is member and former officer of the Stanislaus County Farm Bureau Board. Both have been long time members of various agricultural entities.

This is a race to watch

Assembly District 30

Current Assembly Member Nicole Parra (D) will be termed out.

Danny Gilmore (R) is a retired CHP Officer having served for 31 years. His last venue was as the Assistant Chief to the Central Division Headquarters in Fresno. He is also a Marine Corp veteran. Fran Florez, (D) mother of Dean Florez, a current State Senator, is the mayor pro tem of the City of Shafter and was elected to the Shafter City Council in 1996.

Given the local dynamics of this race, it will be a close one.