



Tidbits from Sacramento

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Legislative and Governmental Advocacy
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BUDGET FOLLOW UP

The \$24 billion budget was signed on July 28. The Governor used his “blue pencil” authority to veto a number of items in the budget that he considered too costly. Before the ink was dry, there were those who believed that the vetoes were illegal and the grumbling began. However, by July 30th, the dust began to settle as it was clear the Governor had the authority to make those cuts. Approximately 31 bills were part of the overall budget.

The question now becomes will California be able to live within its means or will we be facing another round of budget talks in the near future. There are debts to be repaid. It is estimated that \$2-4 billion were borrowed from local governments alone.

The Governor has identified several boards and commissions which will be either consolidated or eliminated to reduce expenditures:

- Integrated Waste Management Board - merge into the Natural Resources Agency
- Bureau of Naturopathic Medicine’s Licensing Function - combine with Osteopathic Medicine Board
- Board of Geologists & Geophysicists - combine with the Professional Engineers & Land Surveyors Board
- Hearing Aid Dispensers Bureau - consolidate with the Speech-Language Pathology & Audiology Bureau
- Inspection & Maintenance Review Committee – eliminated
- Governor’s Office of Planning & Research (OPR) – Eliminate OPR & place functions under appropriate existing state entities
- Bureau of Home Furnishings & Thermal Insulation – Consolidate with the Bureau of Electronic & Appliance Repair
- Structural Pest Control Board – Consolidate within the Department of Pesticide Regulation

Various other state departments and boards are expected to be reorganized and/or consolidated within the next few months. This change is expected to save about \$50 million in the current year budget.

Despite all the budget cuts and reductions that have been made, the financial outlook for the coming year has many challenges. The hope is that the economy will pick up and that revenues may increase – time will tell!

ELECTIONS

A variety of initiatives will be on the June, 2010 next statewide elections:

Budget Vote Requirement. An initiative to lower the voting requirement for passing the state budget has passed its first hurdle. The Secretary of State's Office has given the okay for the proponents of the initiative to begin the signature gathering process. This initiative would lower the current 2/3rd requirement to a 3/5th requirement. The initiator of this initiative believes that this change would be more likely to pass than lowering the budget vote requirement to a simple majority.

Term Limits: Several Senators are attempting to put a term limit reform proposal on the ballot. Senate Constitutional Amendment (SCA) 24 authored by Senator Loni Hancock and co-authors, Roy Ashburn and Alan Lowenthal is expected to be on the November, 2010 ballot. This is not the first attempt to revise term limits, but this one has put in some interesting conditions. Currently members potentially can serve up to 14 years (6 in the Assembly and 8 in the Senate) in the Legislature. Under SCA 24, legislators will be able to serve 3 four-year terms in the Senate or 6 two-year terms in the lower house – not to exceed a total of 12 years combined. This will apply only to first time legislators elected to office following the passage of SCA 24 in November, 2010.

Congressional Election

CD 10 is the seat vacated by former Congresswoman Ellen Tauscher (D). Tauscher is now the Undersecretary for Arms Control and International Security in the Obama Administration. A special election will be held on September 1st. This seat is generating a great deal of interest among various entities. CD 10 is expected to remain a Democratic seat. The key Democratic players are Senator Mark DeSaulnier, Assembly Member Joan Buchanan and Lt. Governor John Garamendi. Two lesser known Democrats are also running, Hampton and Woods. Republicans Christopher Bunch, David Peterson and David Harman will also be on the ballot for this Congressional Seat