



an insider look at city hall

CITYWATCH EXTRA

October 20, 2005
Volume 3 Issue 15

CityWatch Today—The November 8 Special Election is controversial and complicated. The eight initiatives on the ballot are beginning to push our hot buttons and to set some reasonably well defined groups against each other. Unions against the Governor. Parents against teenagers. Business against the proletariat. Financially strapped seniors against ... well, against the financially well off of all ages.

In this CityWatch Extra, we provide a somewhat simplified list of the propositions and two counter points of view on those propositions.

What has this got to do with grass roots democracy and Neighborhood Councils? Even if these are not issues your Council is likely to agendize and advise on, they are issues that touch all of your stakeholders: Teen pregnancy, education, unions, seniors, your congressional district.

And, wherever you come down on these issues, grass roots democracy is about civic engagement. It's about making your voice heard. It's about going to the polls and voting.

We hope you find this CityWatch useful.

--Editor

Say What?

"Voting is part of the price you pay for freedom."

--Anon



Commentary—Vote No

It's Spelled "No for November"

By Mark Siegel

Initiatives, the invention of the Progressive era, tend to be political tools used by one special interest to wreak havoc on an opposing interest under the banner of citizen's democracy. Such is the case for the initiatives featured in the Special Election on November 8, 2005. The entire election is a political tactic costing the taxpayers 80 million dollars to give the Governor advantage over his adversaries. There is no pressing emergency other than to use the lowest turnout election to ensure the highest percent conservative turnout. All of these issues could have waited until the regularly scheduled June 2006 ballot.

Here is a rundown of each measure and who wins and loses:

Proposition 73 ... requires parental notification when a minor girl plans to terminate a pregnancy. Sure I would like to know if my daughter is pregnant, but I could think of plenty of circumstances where parental notification could be a dangerous act. Not every family is like mine and I hesitate to insert my family values on families that I have no idea about. It seems like an inappropriate intrusion into family and individual privacy. Its political purpose seems clear, attract religious conservatives to the polls in large numbers to buoy the chances of initiatives farther down the ballot.

See Page 3. "Spelled No"

Commentary—Vote Yes

It's About Preventing Disaster

By Steve Twining

The following is direct from the Ballot Proposition Voter Guide put out by the Governor. "My plan for California has been very simple--recover, reform and then rebuild. The system in Sacramento cannot change itself, so we the people must reform it. There are four common sense measures on the November ballot that will allow us to fix the system and rebuild California."

"A yes vote on Prop 74 will improve our schools by making sure our kids have the best teachers. Prop 74 will reform our outdated teacher tenure system and will give schools and parents the power to reward qualified teachers and remove those who do not perform. A yes vote on Prop 75 will stop leaders of the big government employee unions from spending their members' paycheck money on political contributions without first getting their written consent. A yes vote on Prop 76 will force our government to balance the budget and live within its means. Prop 76 will prevent state expenditures from growing faster than revenues while also stabilizing education funding. Proposition 76 will fix Sacramento's broken system of deficits and out-of-control tax increases."

See Page 2. "Preventing Disaster"

List of November 8 Special Election Propositions: Page 2

Special Statewide Election November 8, 2005

The Propositions: A Thumbnail Sketch

- Prop 73**—Pregnant minors must wait 48 hours and Dr. must notify parents.
Prop 74—Teachers must wait five years for permanent status vs. present two
Prop 75—Restrictions on use of Public Employee Union dues.
Prop 76—Limits funding for schools. Gives Governor more control of budget
Prop 77—Changes State's redistricting process. Judges would decide districts
Prop 78—Discounts on prescription drugs by contracting with pharmacies
Prop 79—Discount prescription drugs. State negotiates.
Prop 80—Regulate electricity providers. Users cannot switch providers.

*For complete details on these propositions ... pros and cons ...
visit: www.voterguide.ss.ca.gov*



Preventing Disaster-continued from Page 1.

"A yes vote on Prop 77 is all about holding the politicians accountable. It will change how we draw election districts in California. Instead of incumbent politicians drawing their own districts so they can never lose, a panel of independent retired judges will set up equitable districts designed for fair competition and then their plan will be approved by a vote of the people. This will end a rigged election system for the status quo and give you a stronger voice with your vote." The governor then adds "Join me in voting YES on these four reforms so we can keep the promise of the recall—fixing the broken system in Sacramento and rebuilding our great state."

Fundamental Problems

The fundamental problems as I see them are these: Approximately one-half of Los Angeles High School students are graduating. Why are their so many dropouts? Are LA teachers so involved in trying to maintain order, due to whatever reason, that they are failing to get through to LA students? Perhaps it is a lack of a family support system. Perhaps LA School District is lopsided in favor of Administrators. The major objection to allowing union members to decide political contributions seems to be that corporations don't ask their shareholders. However, if a shareholder doesn't approve of the political contribution, he can sell his stock and buy another. In most union jobs, you must belong to the union or you cannot work and support your family.

Sooner or later the budget will have to be balanced. The national and state deficits will eventually create a disaster.

Redistricting

The current method of apportionment ends up with the fringes of both parties in control. At the moment, the primary of both political parties is more important in terms of the legislative make-up, than the general election because Republicans must appeal to the far right and the Democrats to the far left.

The funded and unfunded pensions of the state and local employees are in a serious state of disarray. In the private sector, the example of the automotive unions where Delphi employees (unionized) earn, including benefits, \$65.00 per hour has just caused the company to declare bankruptcy. The same thing has happened in the Airline industry.

I'm not sure society can afford providing full pensions, after 20 years of employment, given that the general population is aging. I'm not sure that

See next column

CITYWATCH

The E-Newsletter for LA's NC's

EXTRA

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CITYWATCH is published to encourage grassroots civic engagement through information, ideas and perspective.

CITYWATCH the E-Newsletter is published weekly on Tuesdays. Share it with your Neighborhood Council and other activists.

CITYWATCH is published by CityWatch Media Group.

Cont from previous column

California can afford to provide education and health care for every citizen of the hemisphere. *(Steve Twining is the President of Bel Air Beverly Crest Neighborhood Council. These views are his own.)* ■

Find your Polling Place
www.lavote.net

Spelled No-Continued from Page 1

Proposition 74 ... changes the statewide rules, which prohibit new teachers from obtaining tenure for 5 years instead of the current 2. No other job that I am aware of has a five-year probationary period. While the firing of inept teachers may be a problem, employees at least deserve the right to hearing before their careers are trashed. It does not reduce class size, or provide for better training or new materials. It is the Governor's attempt to punish the teacher's union for calling him out on his failure to return money to the state public schools.

Proposition 75 ... is an attempt by the Governor and his anti- government allies to silence the voice of working people and the unions that represent them. Based on the common sense idea that public employees should be asked before their dues money is used in political campaigns it is really an attempt to create a bureaucratic wall that will make it virtually impossible for nurses, teachers, firefighters, police officers and other public employees to speak out on issues that impact all Californians. Public employees already have the right to not join the union if they do not want to participate in its activities. In today's body politics it has been the unions that have been the strongest voice for health care, quality public education and protecting the middle class. Who will speak for these issues when their ability to participate is choked off? There is no requirement that corporations ask their stock holders for annual written permission before they spend their money for politics.

Proposition 75 ... is the "Tanya Harding" initiative which seeks to break the knees of their opposition before they head out on the ice in 2006.

Proposition 76 ... gives the Governor virtually unilateral control over the budget. It repeals the minimum funding levels of Prop 98 and gives the Governor the authority to declare a fiscal emergency which gives him the right to cut state programs without legislative consent.

Proposition 77 ... would trigger a redistricting of legislative districts next year using six-year-old census data. It also gives former political appointees and retired judges the responsibility to draw legislative districts. Even if this passed we would be required to redistrict again in six years.

Proposition 78 ... is a measure placed on the ballot by the pharmaceutical industry to draw votes away from Proposition 79. This proposition encourages drug companies to participate in a voluntary drug discount program. There is no punishment if they choose not to, nor incentive to make participation attractive.

Proposition 79 ... is sponsored by senior and consumer groups. It establishes a drug discount program. It contains an incentive in which companies that refuse to participate are denied access to the Medi-Cal market.

Proposition 80 ... puts the State's electrical utilities back under the pre-Enron regulatory structure. It is sponsored by TURN, one of the State's most effective consumer organizations.

Even though this Special Election is not very special, weigh in on the issues and vote. (Mark Siegel is a former political consultant and founder of CityWatch.) ■

Coming to a Polling Place near you
November 8 Special Statewide Election
7 a.m. – 8 p.m.

No one else.

No where else.

CityWatch.

Uniquely

Yours!



CITYWATCH Future Assignments

Neighborhood Councils are involved in a growing number of citywide issues ...

NC Emergency Preparedness Network ... NC Congress ... Council File Numbers ... NC Review Commission ... Planning MOU ... Mayor's Budget Process ... Oversight of DWP MOU ... Oak tree Ordinance ... are examples.

We will sort them out for you and provide a status report ... Next CityWatch: October 27 ...

...On a Computer Near You !!



CITYWATCH DayPlanner

City Council

Oct 25, 26, 28 (10 a.m.)

Education & Neighborhoods

Wednesday, October 26 (2 p.m.)

NC Review Commission discussion continues

BONC

Thursday, October 27 (6:30 p.m.)

Planning & Land Use

Tuesday, October 25 (1 p.m.)

Over concentration of sex offenders

Planning Commission

Thursday, October 27 (8:30 a.m.)

Planning Commission Hearing

Thursday, November 10, 2005

Oak Tree Ordinance



Los Angeles: Home to Human Trafficking and Slavery

Human trafficking is one of the most horrifying crimes being committed worldwide. **Los Angeles is one of the top three cities in the US, for human trafficking.**

Most Angelinos have no idea that human trafficking is happening in their city. Most would be shocked to find out it happens in our very own neighborhoods.

The reality is, human trafficking is a \$9.5 billion business, and nearly 20,000 people are trafficked into the United States each year. Eighty percent of those trafficked across borders are women and girls. Building a Los Angeles ... and a world ... where all women and girls are free from violence means that this important issue has to be addressed head on.

**Learn More.
Do Something!**

Lifetime Cable Channel "Human Trafficking"

Two-Part Series

Monday, October 24 (9 p.m.)

Tuesday, October 25 (9 p.m.)

A Must Watch for All of Us!