



**Voters to Decide Budget Issues at Special Election.** Proposition 169 on the ballot of the November 1993 special election proposes to amend the California Constitution to allow all the trailer bills<sup>7</sup> that follow the state budget—bills that change substantive statutory provisions needed to implement the budget—to be put into one bill. Under existing law, each trailer bill—there were about twenty this year—must be voted on separately by the legislature. Under the proposal, the Governor would be able to veto individual provisions of the bill; similarly, the legislature could override the vetoes separately. Proponents, including former Democratic Senator Barry Keene, former Legislative Analyst A. Alan Post, and Kirk West, president of the California Chamber of Commerce, contend that the proposal would keep special interest groups from jeopardizing the entire budget by killing one trailer bill and would facilitate timely passage of the budget. Opponents, including Assemblymember Dean Andal and former Assemblymember Tom McClintock, now director of the Center for the California Taxpayer, contend that with all the trailer bills in one package, it would be easier for tax increases to slip through without the public knowledge and debate; opponents also contend that politicians would be able to vote for a package instead of individual bills and would be less accountable for the taxes they raise.

Also on the November ballot is Proposition 172, a constitutional amendment which would permanently extend the temporary half-cent sales tax that Californians have been paying since 1991; revenues would be dedicated to public safety. If the voters reject Proposition 172, the tax will expire on December 31; if passed, it would raise \$1.5 billion per year. Supporters, including Los Angeles Police Chief Willie Williams, the California State Sheriff's Association, and California Professional Firefighters, argue that continuation of the sales tax is necessary to maintain funding levels for public safety. Opponents, including Assemblymembers Richard Mountjoy and Gil Ferguson, claim that although proceeds are supposed to fund public safety programs, the measure does not guarantee that the money will be so directed.

## ■ LEGISLATION

**ACA 2 (Hannigan)**, as introduced in December 1992, would provide that statutes enacting budget bills shall go into effect immediately upon their enactment and eliminate the two-thirds vote requirement for the passage of appropriations from the general fund. [A. *Inactive File*]

**ACA 3 (Richter)**. Under the California Constitution, appropriations from the general fund, except appropriations for the public schools, require the approval of two-thirds of the membership of each house of the legislature. As amended August 16, this measure would additionally exempt appropriations in the budget bill from that two-thirds vote requirement, and specify that statutes enacting a budget bill go into effect immediately upon their enactment. This measure would amend the California Constitution to require, in any year in which a budget bill is not passed by the legislature before midnight on June 30, that each member of the legislature forfeit all salary and reimbursement for living expenses from July 1 until the date that the budget bill is passed by the legislature. This measure would also require that the total of all expenditures, as defined, that are authorized to be made under the Budget Act enacted for any fiscal year, combined with the total of all reserves that are authorized to be established by the state for that fiscal year, shall not exceed the total of all revenues and other resources, as defined, that are available to the state for that fiscal year. [A. *ER&CA*]

**ACA 21 (Areias)**, as introduced March 5, would provide that if the Governor fails to sign a budget bill on or before June 30, then on July 1 an annual budget that is the same amount as that which was enacted for the immediately preceding fiscal year shall become the state's interim budget for the new fiscal year and the balance of each item of that interim budget shall be reduced 10% each month, commencing August 1, until a new budget bill has been signed by the Governor. [A. *Rls*]

**SB 1171 (Alquist)**, as introduced March 5, would eliminate the requirement that the Legislative Analyst prepare a judicial impact analysis on selected measures referred to specified legislative committees, and require LAO to conduct its work in a strictly non-partisan manner. [S. *Rls*]

**SB 1172 (Alquist)**, as introduced March 5, would eliminate the requirement that the Legislative Analyst evaluate the workload of the State Bar Court and submit a final written report of his/her findings and conclusions to specified committees. [S. *Rls*]

## ASSEMBLY OFFICE OF RESEARCH

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Under the director of the Assembly's bipartisan Committee on Policy Research, AOR investigates current state issues and publishes reports which include long-term policy recommendations. Such investigative projects often result in legislative action, usually in the form of bills.

AOR also processes research requests from Assemblymembers. Results of these short-term research projects are confidential unless the requesting legislators authorize their release.

## ■ MAJOR PROJECTS

AOR released no reports between May 19–September 24, 1993.

## SENATE OFFICE OF RESEARCH

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Established and directed by the Senate Committee on Rules, the Senate Office of Research (SOR) serves as the bipartisan, strategic research and planning unit for the Senate. SOR produces major policy reports, issue briefs, background information on legislation and, occasionally, sponsors symposia and conferences.

Any Senator or Senate committee may request SOR's research, briefing, and consulting services. Resulting reports are not always released to the public.

## ■ MAJOR PROJECTS

**Politics in California: How Can We Make the System Work?** (July 1993) is the product of a collaboration among the California State Senate, through SOR, the University of California at Davis, and the Kettering Foundation. The report is intended to promote public deliberation about the political system in California. Specifically, the report is designed to help Californians match their political values with a corresponding approach to decisionmaking. The choices set forth in the paper are not recommendations for government policies, but rather reflect the various viewpoints that Californians seem to be expressing today.

The report indicates that many Californians believe the current political system is not working, noting that a proposal currently being readied for the November 1994 ballot would split California into two or more separate states. Moreover, in the last several years, a significant number of



state and local elected officials have been forced to resign or removed from office for improper or illegal activities. According to the report, public dissatisfaction with the system is high, as is illustrated by the large number of eligible Californians who do not take part in the electoral process by voting. In the 1960 presidential election, 69% of eligible California voters went to the polls; in June 1992, that figure had dropped by more than half, to 34%. Noting that the reasons for such political dissatisfaction are many and varied; this report examines four basic approaches to reforming the political system; each approach or choice, as the report calls them, examines existing problems and discusses possible strategies designed to make the political system function effectively.

—Choice 1 takes the position that the current political system is being misdirected and corrupted by the influence of special interests. These well-financed special interests receive better access to officeholders and preferred treatment when government takes action. According to the proponents of Choice 1, campaign finance reform would curtail these questionable activities, causing elected officials to base their actions on the needs of the general public rather than those of special interests.

—Choice 2 proponents maintains that government has become too big to perform effectively. Supporters of this view believe that too much red tape, bureaucracy, and multi-layer government have led to inefficiency and gridlock; their solution would be to pare down government to a leaner, streamlined governing unit.

—Choice 3 holds that the failure of our political system lies with the people themselves. The proponents of this view believe that large numbers of Californians have become too inclined to blame politicians for the problems of government, rather than their own failure to participate in the political system or the lack of common agreement by citizens on the issues. Their solution would be to increase public "civic literacy" and have Californians accept more responsibility for the way the system works.

—Choice 4 states that the political system is failing because too many Californians feel they are no longer stakeholders in the political system. Supporters of this view believe that the situation will improve only when stronger action is taken against discrimination, fairer redistricting laws are enacted, fewer programs promoting dependency are passed, and a greater equality of economic opportunity is provided.

SOR warns that these four approaches do not constitute a package of recommen-

dations to be implemented, but merely represent four different perspectives on the underlying cause of the system's breakdown and some possible answers. According to SOR, only by examining these different fundamental values can Californians begin to solve the problems facing this state.

