Front Page

Post-election Cigarette: What do we say to each other now?

This is another one of our "the more things change, the more they stay the same" stories. Last week's midterm elections changed both the rules and the players in California politics, and yet somehow, it's still the same old song and dance. In January, friendly-but-tough-toward-unions Governor-again Jerry Brown will submit his first state budget in three decades to the State Legislature, where it's now way easier to pass a budget (with a simple majority, thanks to Proposition 25) but way harder to raise revenues for it, thanks to the passage of Props 22 & 26 and defeat of Props 21 & 24.

(Prop 22 disallows the state from shifting some local funds; Prop 26 makes it harder to raise certain regulatory fees, e.g. fines for polluting corporations, because they're now called "taxes." Prop 21 would have created a vehicle license surcharge to fund state parks; Prop. 24's defeat allows corporations to keep more than a billion dollars in tax breaks. All together, a $3.5 billion boon for corporations and a loss of at least that much for the state of California.)

"Revenues before cuts" has been our watchword both statewide and in our local jurisdictions when it comes to recessionary bargaining, service cuts, etc. Every time SEIU 1021 members are at the table, we propose revenues and savings against management's layoffs and furloughs. Now, however, raising revenue in Sacramento could be just as hard as blocking cuts was before. Local revenue measures have had more success in the past few election cycles, and while that's alleviated some cuts to jobs and services, a bandage is still not a cure.

This week, State Legislative Analyst Mac Taylor announced a new, record-breaking assessment of next year's budget deficit, nearly double what most had expected. According to the Los Angeles Times, Taylor "warned this week that tackling the full $25.4-billion deficit will be 'much, much more difficult than last year.' His report described a state beset by a 'painfully slow
economic recovery,' billions in temporary taxes set to lapse and the federal stimulus that has supported many programs about to expire."

"Arnold Schwarzenegger came into the governorship seven years ago on a pledge to end ‘crazy deficit spending,’” wrote Sacramento Bee columnist Dan Walters. "As he exits in January, however, he will leave behind a budget deficit that's just as bad, and perhaps even worse, than the one he inherited from predecessor Gray Davis."

"However, the sheer size of the deficit, not only now but in the future, probably means that sooner or later -- sooner, most likely -- Brown and the Legislature will be begging voters for more revenue," Walters concluded.

On Thursday, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger called a special session of the State Legislature to work on the budget in December. Brown had already said he would do that, and no one can say what Arnold thinks he'll accomplish during his last, lame-duck month in office that he couldn't accomplish during the seven years he was governor. Blow up one last box?

What we can say is that the elections are over but our campaign to improve our communities and the services we provide to them is not. The elections provided us both more and less freedom to work out a sustainable state budget, which means both bigger challenges and greater opportunities in the coming year. At the same time, we face a constant sobering reminder: Despite our many election victories this month and this year, we live in a world where public perception of unions has reached an all-time low. Changing that perception will be key to our success in 2011.

Sacramento Bee: "Dan Walters: Schwarzenegger hands off huge budget deficit to Jerry Brown"

PEW Research: Unions falling out of favor with public

"Positive views of labor unions have plummeted since 2007. The Pew Research Center this year found just 41% of the public said they have a favorable opinion of labor unions while about as many (42%) expressed an unfavorable opinion. In January 2007, a clear majority (58%) had a favorable view of unions while just 31% had an unfavorable impression."

"Public skepticism about the purpose and power of labor unions appears to stand behind their falling ratings."

Read the reports: "Independent Voters vs. Unions" I "Favorability Ratings of Labor Unions Fall Sharply"

The Live Wire

The election's 10 commandments

Sacramento Bee: "The Marks (Baldassare and DiCamillo) break down the election"

Ben Franklin said there are "lies, damn lies and statistics." So what are polls? Whatever they are, the heads of California's top polling institutions -- the Field Poll and the Public Policy Institute of California -- are respected analysts of California's political scene. They recently told the Sacramento Press Club what they thought of last week's elections. The Sacramento Bee:

"[PPIC President Mark] Baldassare said the election had revealed 10 trends in the state election: a strong environmentalist bent among voters, the importance of Latino voters, low approval for the Legislature, low trust in state government, the poor economy, disapproval of the budget crisis, the continuing popularity of President Barack Obama, an unpopular GOP, a reform-minded electorate and the large number of independent voters."

Both "said voters were consistent in their positions on propositions, showing an anti-tax and reform-minded mood that Gov.-elect Jerry Brown will have to wrestle with."

Boo Who: Meg Whitman's campaign manager whines to Meet the Press about the unions that beat his candidate
Sacramento Bee: "Dan Walters: Meg Whitman's consultant has a plethora of excuses"

One of [Mike] Murphy's excuses for failure, aired on "Meet the Press," was that Whitman was a victim of public-employee unions who "run California politics" and spent heavily during the summer to counter Whitman's ads and protect Brown from spending his own limited resources.

"They paid for Jerry Brown's campaign," Murphy said, adding, "The big unions in the last couple of years have spent $300 million on politics. So, you either can't raise enough money to compete, and they swamp you ... or you spend your own money, but if you're a self-funder, the press wants to make that money the issue."

Whitman alone, from her personal money, in one campaign spent half of what "the unions" spent "in the last couple of years." Poor Meg. Read on:

SF Gate: "Rove Groups, U.S. Chamber Build Winning Record in Elections"

"The record amount of secret money spent by right-wing outside groups turned this political storm into a Category 3 political hurricane," said Representative Chris Van Hollen of Maryland, chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

The election was the first since the U.S. Supreme Court reversed decades of precedent and said corporations could spend unlimited sums on federal races. Companies and wealthy individuals funneled millions into outside groups, many of which didn't disclose their donors.

Republican-leaning groups spent $167 million between Sept. 1 and Oct. 31 in support of their party's nominees [nationwide], compared with $68 million by Democratic-leaning organizations, Federal Election Commission reports show.

Washington Post: "Too much money in politics? Ain't seen nothing yet"

Los Angeles Times: "Business gains a friend: Congress"

Los Angeles Times: "In 2012, campaign finance trends expected to grow"

Heavy, unregulated spending has helped the GOP mount effective challenges in many races. Democrats say they will adapt ahead of the next national vote.

SF Gate: "U.S. Chamber of Commerce Spent $37 Million on Federal Lobbying"

Sacramento Bee: "Head to Head: Is unlimited campaign spending by special interests good for democracy?"

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The Live Wire: SEIU 1021's political action central

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Action Center

**Call on Monday to save Head Start funding**

As the fiscal year began October 1, Congress passed (instead of a budget) a continuing resolution with funding at levels before passage of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). The continuation bill would provide funding for Head Start programs through December 3, 2011, unless a new budget is passed.

Unfortunately, the continuation bill provides less than last year. Both the House and Senate appropriations committees were working on budgets that actually
would have increased funding beyond ARRA, but with the recent change in leadership in the House and the close margin in the Senate, neither party wants to appear to be increasing the federal budget as congressional staff work this weekend on an omnibus appropriations bill for FY 2011.

We are concerned that this bill would actually reduce funding below even today's pre-ARRA levels. The best possible outcome is that the Senate and House pass the budget that the appropriations committees were working on. This would provide increases again this year but is very unlikely to happen. Second best is passage of a budget that includes ARRA-level funding. This may or may not happen. More likely is passage of the current continuation bill at pre-ARRA funding. Worst case scenario is that a budget doesn't pass until after the new Congress is seated, in which case we can expect reductions to the funding levels seen pre-ARRA.

Our members in Head Start of San Joaquin County are asking all members to help by calling your US Senators and Representatives on Monday and tell them not to drop 300,000 children from Head Start through defunding. Make sure that continued funding for the Child Care and Development Block Grant and Head Start is NOT REDUCED in the appropriations bill and that the Early Learning Challenge Fund is included.

U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer (Sacramento)  
(916) 448-2787

U.S. Senator Diane Feinstein (Fresno office)  
(559) 485-7430

U.S. Congressperson Jerry McNerney (Stockton)  
(209) 476-8552

U.S. Congressperson Dennis Cordoza (Stockton)  
(209) 946-0361

**Good & Welfare**

**It's (union-made) Miller Time**

As you're trying to forget the elections and state budget and get into the holiday spirit, why not get your spirits union-made?

Here's a list of beers and ales made by members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), the International Brother of Teamsters (IBT), the United Autoworkers (UAW) and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), plus many other benefits from one union member to another.

- [Union-made beer](#)
- [Wine & Champagne](#) (UFCW)
- [Liquor & Spirits](#) (UFCW)
- All [UFCW-made products](#)
- All "union-made" savings from Union Plus
- Subscribe to [ConsumerReports.org](#) (27% discount for union members)
- Union Plus [Health Discount Programs](#)
Calendar

Map links to SEIU 1021 office locations
Calendar Online

Moon Phases: 1st Q, Nov. 13 - Full, Nov. 21 - 3rd Q, Nov. 28 - New, Dec. 5

SEIU 1021 Boards & Committees

Fr-Su 11/12-14 - Budget & Finance Committee - Fr 1-6p, Sa 9a-6p, Su 9a-2p - SEIU 1021, 447 29th Street, Oakland

Sa 11/20 - Executive Board - Time TBA - SEIU 1021, 350 Rhode Island, #100 South Building, San Francisco

Issues & Communities

Mo 11/15 - Disability Caucus- 6-8p - SEIU 1021, 100 Oak St., Oakland
Mo 11/15 - AFRAM Solidarity Committee - 6-8p - SEIU 1021, 100 Oak St., Oakland
Tu 11/16 - Peace & Solidarity Committee - 5:30-8p - SEIU 1021, 350 Rhode Island, #100 South Building, San Francisco
Tu 11/16 - Women's Solidarity Committee - 6:30-8:30p - Location TBA
We 11/17 - Lavender Solidarity Committee - 6:30-7:30p - Meet by teleconference; contact Eileen at eberkun@ix.netcom for info
Th 11/18 - Social & Economic Justice Committee - 6-8p - SEIU 1021, 350 Rhode Island, #100 South Building, San Francisco

Education & Training

View the complete catalog and register at www.1021training.info.

Tu 11/16 - Making the Labor-Management Committee Work - 5:30-8p - Northern Region location TBA
Tu 11/30 - Union? What's That? - 5:30-8p - SEIU 1021, 1006 4th Street, 8th floor, Sacramento

Regions & Industries

Tu 11/16 - East Bay Region Meeting - 5:30-8:30p - SEIU 1021, 100 Oak St., Oakland - RSVP for dinner: 1-877-687-1021

Retiree Councils

Th 11/18 - (rescheduled from Th 11/4) - East Bay Retirees Chapter - 12-2p - Hs. Lordship's, 199 Seawall Drive, Berkeley

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