



URBAN
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January 12, 2009

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Darrell Steinberg
Senate President pro Tempore
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Dave Cogdill
Senate Republican Leader
State Capitol, Room 305
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Karen Bass
Assembly Speaker
State Capitol, Room 219
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Michael Villines
Assembly Republican Leader
State Capitol, Room 3104
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **Special Election**

Governor and Honorable Members:

On behalf of California's 58 counties, we write to share some information about counties' ability to conduct a special election in the spring of 2009. Given that a balanced 2009-10 budget likely relies on the passage of at least one statewide ballot measure, we assume that there is a strong likelihood the state will hold a special election before the end of this fiscal year.

California's counties take pride in conducting elections that are among the most fair, transparent, and accountable in the world, and will be ready to hold this election when the state needs it, regardless of cost or other hardship. However, the five of you can limit unnecessary cost and hardship with the decisions that you and your colleagues make in the coming days. Four of these decisions are particularly important.

First, the budget plan currently under negotiation should include a reasonable estimate of the money necessary to reimburse counties for the costs of this presumed election. Counties are teetering on the same fiscal faultline as the state, but with essentially no revenue authority to help close the gap, an array of cuts coming from the state's efforts to balance its own budget, and an inability to access the credit markets. Many election departments have already been ordered to cut their budgets, some by as much as twenty percent.

It would also be helpful to have plenty of notice about the date of the special elections. California's election laws presume at least 88 days' notice. We realize that this might be difficult given the circumstances, but the more notice counties receive, the better.

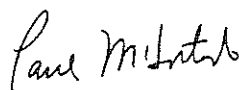
Recruiting and training poll workers, finding and inspecting polling places, ordering paper from paper mills, printing ballots at one of the few election-certified printers, formatting and translating ballot language, sending ballots to the men and women overseas, and dozens of other tasks are all necessary, and all add to the time needed to fulfill our responsibilities to voters. We request at least 75 days' notice.

Another step that would help counties is allowing communities to decide for themselves whether this one election should be conducted entirely by mail. Each community's needs are different, and allowing each county's Board of Supervisors to decide whether to hold a traditional election or one conducted by mail only seems reasonable. It would help the most cash-desperate counties save the costs of recruiting, training, and paying poll workers, and finding and inspecting polling sites, all while maintaining the transparency, inclusion, and fairness of which we are all proud.

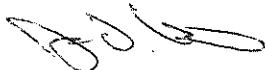
Lastly, the choice of a date will make a big difference for certain jurisdictions. The most significant conflicts into which you are likely to run all take place within the County of Los Angeles. Elections in the City of Los Angeles are already scheduled to occur on May 19, and that would be the best day for holding a statewide election. It still falls before the end of the current fiscal year, so the results of it could be implemented fully before the beginning of the 2009-10 fiscal year. Having the state's election then would not only avoid unnecessary voter confusion, but would save the state money by consolidating operations with an already-scheduled election. Any other date, except for April 21 or possibly March 24, would cause enormous practical difficulties for voters and the county's election staff.

Counties, more than perhaps anyone else, are staked to the state's fortunes, and are therefore keenly interested in a resolution to the current budget crisis. As you work toward that goal, please consider our four requests above. As public servants, we will do what we must to conduct any necessary election; as your partners in governance, we hope you will take our requests seriously.

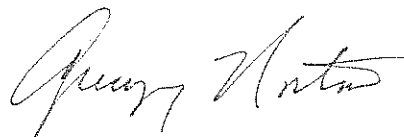
Respectfully,



Paul McIntosh
Executive Director
CSAC



Jolena L. Voorhis
Executive Director
UCC



Greg Norton
Executive Vice President
RCRC

cc: The Honorable Denise Ducheny, Chair, Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review
The Honorable Robert Dutton, Vice Chair, Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review
The Honorable Noreen Evans, Chair, Assembly Committee on Budget
The Honorable Roger Niello, Vice Chair, Assembly Committee on Budget
The Honorable Loni Hancock, Chair, Senate Committee on Elections, Reapportionment, and Constitutional Amendments
Mike Genest, Director of Finance

Brenda Quintana, Director of Local Government and Community Relations,
Office of the Governor
Daniel Alvarez, Staff Director, Senate Committee on Budget and Fiscal Review
Seren Taylor, Staff Director, Senate Republican Fiscal Office
Christian Griffith, Chief Consultant, Assembly Committee on Budget
Peter Schaafsma, Staff Director, Assembly Republican Fiscal Office
Craig Cornett, Fiscal Policy Advisor, Office of the Senate President pro Tempore
Erin Guerrero, Deputy Chief of Staff, Office of Senate Republican Leader
Christopher Woods, Fiscal Policy Advisor, Office of the Speaker
Deborah Gonzalez, Chief Consultant, Office of the Assembly Republican Leader
Ethan Jones, Chief Consultant, Assembly Committee on Elections and
Redistricting
Darren Chesin, Chief Consultant, Senate Committee on Elections,
Reapportionment, and Constitutional Amendments
Rebecca Martinez, County Clerk-Recorder, County of Madera
Gail Pellerin, County Clerk, County of Santa Cruz
Cathy Darling, County Clerk/Registrar of Voters, County of Shasta
Neal Kelley, Registrar of Voters, County of Orange
Stephen L. Weir, Clerk-Recorder-Registrar of Voters, County of Contra Costa
Jill LaVine, Registrar of Voters, County of Sacramento
Deborah Seiler, Registrar of Voters, County of San Diego
County Caucus