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Published by Chuck Hains & Sally Beer

Fosselman Wins ACT Endorsement Ballot

Jill Fosselman, District 4 candidate for Pasadena City Council in the April 19 run-off election, won the ACT mail endorsement ballot. Fosselman received 63 votes (92%) to Gene Masuda's 5 votes (8%).

ACT's endorsement of **Tom Selinske** for PUSD District 6 in the March primary election carries over to the run-off.

At the April meeting, Steering Committee members voted to contribute \$1,000 to both the Fosselman and the Selinske campaigns.

Tom Selinske for Pasadena School Board 2011
984 E. Topeka Street, Pasadena, CA 91104-2449
www.tomselinske.com

Jill Fosselman for City Council
P O Box 5002, Pasadena, CA 91117
www.fosselmanforcitycouncil.com
626-227-1608



ACT Members Vote in Force for March Primary

Our fellow citizens in PUSD may be couch potatoes, with only a 16.2% turnout rate for the March election.

But not ACT members! Our members had an **87.7% turnout**, putting their fellow citizens to shame. Furthermore, as of Monday morning, April 11, 91 had already cast ballots for the April run-off, and another 57 had outstanding absentee ballots.

So keep up the good work -- be sure to vote on April 19th, and encourage household mem-

bers, neighbors and friends to do so as well!

Save the Date – Our Jack Scott Event is on May 29

On Sunday, May 29, ACT will host and roast our favorite Educator/Yellow Dog Democrat, **Jack Scott**, at an afternoon fundraiser at the home of Steve English and Molly Munger.

It will be a joy to visit with Jack and Lacreata. We don't see them very often since they've moved to Sacramento.

Mark your calendar now and watch for your invitation in the mail.

The Perfect Gift

Give someone you know a special surprise – **an ACT gift membership!** For the bargain price of just \$20, you can provide them with hours of political pleasure - including:

- 1) **Exciting programs and events!**
- 2) **Energetic, engaged and politically savvy colleagues!**
- 3) **A full year subscription to the *Phoenix* – chock full of political news, views and prognostications!**

Go to the ACT webpage to sign up:

www.ACTPasadena.org – or - send your \$20 check per recipient to ACT, PO Box 40074, Pasadena, CA 91114-7074. Be sure to include the full name(s) and address(es) of the recipient(s) and the donor.

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May Phoenix Deadline

The deadline for the May *Phoenix* will be Sunday, May 8 (Mother's Day). Please send items to Chuck Hains at Hains27@SBCGlobal.net. We will prep *The Phoenix* for mailing on Thursday, May 12 at 7 p.m. at Chuck's house, 1391 La Solana, Altadena. (Volunteer mailers please verify time with Ellen Coles, 626-798-2402.)

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2011 Steering Committee Meeting Calendar

In 2010 we voted to go back to our old meeting schedule: Steering Committee meetings will occur on the first Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday of the month - in rotation.

These are the 2011 meeting dates (coffee at 7 p.m.; meeting at 7:30 p.m.):

Thursday, May 5

Tuesday, June 7
 Wednesday, July 6
 Thursday, August 4
 Tuesday, September 6
 Wednesday, October 5
 Thursday, November 3
 Tuesday, December 6

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San Gabriel Valley Democratic Women's Club

The venerable San Gabriel Valley Democratic Women's Club was founded in 1959 to support the California State Assembly candidacy of the late Marylyn Sobieski. Still going strong in 2011, it meets on the second Friday of the month at 10 a.m. (except for July and August) usually in the Community Room of the Altadena Public Library.

An interesting program always follows the Club's brief business meeting. For example, at recent meetings Jon Fuhrman, ACT's Executive Director, explained a proposed amendment to the Pasadena City charter that would change school board elections from "at large" to "district only;" Dr. Irma Strantz updated the group on healthcare reform at both National and State levels.

The 10 a.m. meetings help folks who can't attend night meetings keep up-to-date on current issues. The next meeting is Friday, May 13 at the home of Sara Carnahan at 2525 Highland Avenue, Altadena. The program is Ray Bennett on redistricting. Everyone is welcome.

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Do we have your current Email address?

Please send your new Email address to Jon Fuhrman at jon_fuhrman@charter.net.

Watch Out - "Pinocchio" May Get Elected to the PUSD

When The Research Committee interviewed Sean Baggett last December everyone felt he was exaggerating or outright lying about some of his responses. Our intuition has apparently been proven true and the Pasadena Weekly has validated our suspicions. It is absolutely vital that everyone vote for Tom Selinske in the PUSD runoff election on April.

First we suspected his statements about being faculty at PCC and Caltech were questionable. Baggett never taught at either PCC or Cal Tech, much less been a professor or a faculty member. Five years ago, he was briefly a part time assistant for the PCC track team, and he has also volunteered as an assistant for the Cal Tech track team. He told us he taught a class at CSU Sacramento and currently was teaching graduate level courses there. According to the Sacramento CSU Department of Education Leadership Studies he is not .

More damning is his arrest record. He has been arrested four times: twice for drunk driving; once for public urination; once for petty theft and until last month he was wanted on a \$30,000 bench warrant for failure to appear in court. That was actually printed in the March 24, 2011 Pasadena Star News.

The Research Committee could never figure out where he worked. And we have all wondered why the local Tea Party folks are backing such a terrible candidate. It is vital that you contact your friends and urge them to vote for Tom. If past history repeats itself, Baggett will win the runoff election because of the low turnout and the disproportionate number of conservative Republicans that vote by mail.

-- Ralph Hurtado

Best Wishes to Robert

We send our love and good wishes to our dear friend **Robert Cuite** who is seriously ill. Stalwart ACT member Robert is a former Co-Chair, Chair of the Election Procedures (Endorsement Ballot) Committee and a Co-Recording Secretary.

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Welcome New and Returning ACT Members:

Marcy Goodwin, Pasadena
Victor Griego, South Pasadena
Loretta Mockler, Pasadena

Thank You to Members for Additional Contributions to ACT's Operating Account

Marge Leighton, Pasadena
Betty Sandford, Monrovia
Garrett Schneider, South Pasadena

And Thank You to Members for Additional Contributions to ACT's Political Account

Garrett Schneider, South Pasadena

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Redevelopment Agencies -- Where is California Going?

At our May Steering Committee meeting, ACT will sponsor a panel discussion on Redevelopment Agencies -- Where is California Going -- and where should we be going. Chris Sutton, a long-time ACT member, Pasadena attorney, and frequent critic of redevelopment agencies, will join another special guest for a dynamic discussion about Governor Brown's proposals and the fate of redevelopment agencies in California.

Political Notes

by Jon Fuhrman



Monday, Apr. 11.

It's hard to know where to begin -- national budgets, government shutdowns avoided, the state in chaos, the Tea Party run rampant in Pasadena; one could write a whole novel, but that might tax even our most loyal readers (even if we all do want to pay more taxes).

Back in Washington, we seem to have avoided the abyss, at least for the moment. Republicans forced deeper cuts, although of the \$38 billion in reductions, less than half are actually "new" cuts -- most were already being recommended by the Obama administration. In exchange, the Reps surrendered on virtually all their policy "take-backs" -- like restricting EPA authority, attacking Planned Parenthood, and interfering with the early stages of health care reform.

But more important than the fight over this

year's spending were the first shots fired over next year's -- and future years' -- spending. Here, unfortunately, the Reps scored first blood. Congressman Paul Ryan, who now chairs the House Budget Committee, has given us the "big picture", a twenty-year plan to save the nation, complete with spending cuts, deficit reduction, economic growth, smaller government, tax cuts and just about everything a pure supply-side, voodoo economics, deficit hawk could dream of, other than privatizing social security.

Congressman Ryan, and the Reps generally, drew wide praise for providing specifics, for opening the conversation, for setting the standard against which any other plans would be compared. Unfortunately, most analyses of the plan were remarkably superficial. Of all the mainstream media, only Slate, in an article by Annie Lowrey, really looked under the covers to reveal the smoke and mirrors behind the plan.

Three elements are particularly worth describing. First, the plan proposes to cut marginal tax rates dramatically -- down to 25% for both corporations and individuals. But the plan claims to be tax neutral; the reduction in marginal rates is offset by elimination of various tax breaks and loopholes. On the surface, that sounds attractive. However, Ryan's plan doesn't specify which tax breaks and loopholes should be discontinued. It merely directs the Ways and Means Committee, the tax-writing committee in the House, to find enough money to offset the reduction in marginal rates.

In fact, though, reducing marginal rates would cost hundreds of billions each year. Even the biggest tax breaks, like the mortgage interest deduction, don't come close to that amount. So there really is no way cutting tax breaks and closing loopholes could come close to offsetting the revenue loss from lower marginal rates,

which, by definition, goes exclusively to the wealthiest families, at the direct expense of all the other poorer families. This tax change would be a huge gift -- even bigger than the Reagan tax cuts -- to the rich and exacerbate the growing gap between rich and poor.

The second fascinating problem is Congressman Ryan's economic predictions. The Heritage Foundation created a set of economic models and forecasts that Ryan adopted whole hog. They forecast that unemployment, given our current policies and budgets, would fall to 8.4% next year, and would slowly drop to 5.2% by the year 2021. Given that the unemployment rate is now 8.8%, that might be somewhat pessimistic, but it seems at least to be a reasonable worst-case base forecast. However, by adopting the Republican tax and fiscal policies, the Foundation forecast that the economy would soar, leading to 6.4% unemployment in 2012 and a mere 2.8% ten years from now, in 2021.

As Slate gently pointed out, there isn't an economist in the country who would buy that one.

Indeed, even the Heritage Foundation backed off when challenged, resetting their predictions to 7.8% unemployment in 2012 and 4.3% ten years from now. But still the Foundation argued that changes in the unemployment rate, in their model, had no effect on government revenues or costs or overall economic activity. Even for modern-day Republicans, that seems an amazingly and boldly specious argument.

In essence, Ryan's deficit reduction is fueled partly by spending cuts, but even more by revenue growth. He simply postulates that Republican policies will catalyze dramatic economic growth and hence more tax income and less need for safety-net programs. If the

President used those assumptions, his budgetary projections would show far smaller deficits. Of course, the President generally prefers reality-based assumptions. So comparing the President's proposals (and he will likely have unveiled his 2012 budget plan by the time you read this article) and Ryan's plan is akin to comparing apples and oranges until one normalizes their economic assumptions.

Republicans will argue that the essence of their plan is that it stimulates economic growth, whereas the President's plan will not. They assert this, basically, as a matter of faith. Yet what little historic evidence we have supports the President's position far more than the Republican's side. In the 1980's, President Reagan tried supply-side economics and tax cuts. In the 1990's, President Clinton balanced budget cuts with higher taxes. Reagan got modest economic growth and huge deficits; Clinton got astounding economic growth and budget surpluses. Then President Bush pushed through tax cuts to give away the surpluses, and we've been in the hole ever since.



To be fair, external factors clearly complicate these comparisons -- the dot.com boom helped Clinton, and 9/11 and the Afghan and Iraqi wars hurt Bush. Nonetheless, what evidence there is suggests higher taxes do not kill the economy; tax cuts alone are not a panacea; cutting deficits can start a "virtuous" cycle where additional resources are available for business formation. But this level of analysis doesn't make it to the daily news cycle or to the talking head shows.

Lastly, Congressman Ryan addressed the Medicare / Medicaid entitlements head-on. Entitlements are, admittedly, a core issue in the budget crisis. One can think of them a bit

like the defined-benefit / defined-contribution pension debate. Medicare is like a defined-benefit system: we guarantee medical care, regardless of the costs. We estimate the costs and try to collect enough money up front, but if the costs go up or exceed our estimates (as they reliably seem to do), then we taxpayers are on the hook for the extra costs.

The Reps want to move to a defined-contribution plan: for those starting Medicare on or after 2021, they want the government to pay a set fee up front. It's then up to the recipient to get whatever insurance they wish for that amount. But if costs go up, or their medical expenses exceed coverage limits, they're on the hook -- either pay for the extra care, or go without.

Thus, the Rep plan transfers the economic risk onto the individuals, and away from the government. This indeed does lead to a less expensive system for the government; it just means that lots of individual citizens will pay more. Further, in their dogma, Medicare is not just a victim of increasing medical costs, it is a prime cause of those increasing costs. By reforming Medicare, the Reps postulate that they will retard the growth in medical costs, presumably by reducing the demand for services and forcing competition among insurance providers.

From the Democratic perspective, this means seniors do without medical services because they can't afford them or don't want to pay for them. It seems painfully obvious to Dems that lesser costs mean lesser care, which inevitably translates to a lower quality of life and a shorter life span. Yet no one is accusing the Reps of creating "death panels", or creating a "death plan."

Democrats generally see Medicare, like Social Security, as a communal obligation, a shared mechanism for letting all of us, collectively, care for our parents. Some will incur higher

costs than others, but all should be entitled to basic health and welfare without having to bankrupt themselves. And if we have to tax ourselves a bit more to ensure that all our parents are cared for, then so much the better.

To be a little fair, the Reps have, albeit indirectly, highlighted a tough issue we as a society need to face. We are aging, we are living longer, and our medical services constantly become more sophisticated and complex -- and thus more expensive. How much should we spend on ourselves as we approach the end of life? Should we limit, or ration, hip replacements or quadruple by-pass operations, for example? Private insurance policies already, quietly, make such decisions: this procedure is "experimental" and therefore not covered; that procedure is disallowed as non-standard care. We do have to create limits as to what we, as a society, can collectively afford. Several states, like Oregon, are already beginning to tackle these issues vis a vis Medicaid. But it seems to be difficult politically to talk frankly about issues like these.

In Sacramento, Gov. Brown has been talking frankly about the state's budget crisis, but to little avail. He couldn't crack the Republican caucus; although several Republican State Senators did engage in intense negotiations, ultimately they lacked the courage to go for specific, achievable compromises. Their demands were the ultimate of "blue sky" policy demands, attempting to undo decades of Democratic, and often bipartisan, policy decisions.

So the state is stuck in idle for now, facing the prospects of another \$14 billion in budget cuts. The Governor did get some good news, wrapped in bad news, on the fiscal front. State Controller John Chiang announced that, in March, the state was \$300 million short of budget projections. Ordinarily, this would be bad news indeed. In fact, though, it's great news: the \$300 million shortfall was due to the

failure of the state to sell (and then lease-back) a number of state office buildings, as Gov. Schwarzenegger had proposed. That proposal was a terrible idea -- it would have cost the state far more than the \$1.2 billion in short-term cash it might have generated. Yet despite the lack of that cash, this month's deficit was only \$300 million, because state income taxes were \$1.2 billion over projections (though corporate taxes came in \$300 million under projections). That \$1.2 billion in excess income taxes comes essentially entirely from payroll tax withholding, which means that extra income is likely to be there month after month.

This boost tracks closely with the improved jobs picture at the national and state levels, with declining unemployment rates and declining numbers of applicants for unemployment benefits. If these numbers hold for April and May, it may mean the Governor can project substantially higher income for the remainder of this year and for all of next year, which might significantly reduce the second round of budget cuts needed in absence of extended taxes.

But whatever the economic outlook, my guess is that Governor will continue pitching his message for the need to extend the current taxes. Look for him to continue traveling to Republican districts and, my guess is, to launch an initiative campaign to get a vote on a special November statewide ballot. The only question in my mind is whether the initiative is limited to extending the taxes, or whether the Governor attacks the 2/3 requirement for taxes and/or for placing measures on the ballot. Either one could relieve the constipation in Sacramento and allow the Legislature to govern without being held hostage by 37.5% of either house.

For the true political aficionados, it's worth noting the California Citizens Redistricting

Commission is getting started. There are 14 members -- 5 Dems, 5 Reps, and 4 members who don't belong to either party. Any action has to be approved by at least 3 members from each group.

They had quite a battle choosing a legal firm and a consultant: they finally agreed on Gibson, Dunn & Crutcher as their legal consultant, using a team headed by one lawyer with Democratic credentials and one with Republican credentials; for their consultant, they finally hired Karin MacDonald, owner of the Q2 Data and Research firm. The initial vote to hire her failed when they learned that she had worked for Bruce Cain and that Bruce was a minority owner of her firm. ACT members may recall that Bruce, while a professor at CalTech, led the 1980 Democratic Assembly caucus reapportionment effort, and some of us even worked for Bruce in that effort. It turns out though that Bruce has moved to Washington, D.C., and both he and Karin promised he would have no connection whatsoever with the California reapportionment effort. With that reassurance, and with positive recommendations from the San Francisco and San Diego commissions, where MacDonald led reapportionment efforts in a relatively non-partisan fashion, the Commission unanimously chose her.

The Commission is looking to publish tentative reapportionment plans by June 10, with final maps released by August 15. They have an aggressive outreach plan, with 67 public meetings on their schedule (including one in the Monterey Park / San Merino [sic] / Alhambra area). Judging from the presentations made so far (which are available on their web site -- www.wedrawthelines.org), they are focused not so much on creating competitive districts (which I recall as the main argument for the commission) but on ensuring fair minority representation. They seem to be stressing the importance of keeping communities of

interest (which is a difficult term precisely to define) together over the importance of geographical compactness and neatness.

Incidentally, the U.S. Census Data, down to block level population data, is also now available on the U.S. Census web site, for those amateur reapportioners who want to draw their own maps. (Beware, though -- the Census web site didn't seem particularly user friendly at first glance!)

Here in Pasadena, we've been able to digest the final tallies, including all the absentee and provisional ballots, for the March primary. Overall, turnout was 16.2% -- not atrocious, but overall not really very impressive. Democrats held their own; they represent about half of all registered voters, and about half of all voters who turned out. Republicans were 33% of those who voted, but only 25% of all registered voters. This trend will likely be exacerbated in the run-off election, with a lower overall turnout and a higher representation of Republican voters.

In the primary, 58% of the vote came from absentee ballots. This highlights the importance of Permanent Absentee Voters. Republicans represent only 25% of all voters, but 36% of Perm AV voters, and 40% of Perm AV voters who actually voted. Thus, those who actually vote are increasingly unrepresentative of the electorate at large. The issues and perspectives of those Perm AV voters -- who tend to be seniors, homeowners, longer-term residents, and not have children at all, and certainly not in the public school system -- hence begin to dominate public policy, to the disadvantage of those who may have different needs or perspectives.

One other interesting note on the District 4 City Council election: in 2007, only about 125 Armenian voters cast ballots. This year, with Chris Chahinian on the ballot, over 450 Ar-

menians voted -- an impressively substantial increase. Nonetheless, Chahinian's strategy hinged on both registering a significant number of new voters, particularly within the Armenian community, which he was unable to do, and dramatically boosting the turnout of existing voters. Going from 125 to 450 is quite a substantial boost, but it was drowned out by the higher turnout generated as Masuda and Fosselman battled for the center-right vote in the district, and diluted by Allan Shay's efforts to win over other Democratic voters.

I can't conclude, however, without mentioning the remarkable happenings in the PUSD Seat 6 run-off. Incumbent Tom Selinske is running against challenger Sean Baggett. In recent years, every time a PUSD incumbent has been forced into a run-off, the incumbent has lost. This year, however, may be different, thanks in part to Sean Baggett's remarkable record.

As it turns out, Sean was convicted of reckless driving in 2008, but failed to pay the fine. A bench warrant was issued, with a \$30,000 bail amount. Just as the Pasadena Weekly was breaking that story on its web site, Baggett went into court to pay, in part, the outstanding fine and get the bench warrant cancelled. He still owes part of the fine, and is on probation, and also apparently has an outstanding civil judgment for \$14,000 pending against him from a San Diego court.

Further, it is clear now that Baggett repeated implied he was a faculty member at PCC and Caltech; in reality, he was never on either institution's instructional staff, but rather was a volunteer coach for various athletic teams. Baggett misrepresented his educational background on his web site, claiming a degree from UCSD that he never received, and seems to have stretched his occupational history as well.

Political consultants always ask candidates about "skeletons in their closets", but typically don't really expect to hear about anything

exciting. After all, who would run for public office with such skeletons knowing that one's personal history would be open to scrutiny? I guess we found such a candidate, either exquisitely naive or incredibly arrogant. It's sad that information like this is part of the public discussion, but it raises the stakes of this election enormously. You MUST be sure to vote on April 19th -- there are clearly some folks who just don't belong in public office, and Sean Baggett is Exhibit A.

-- Jon Fuhrman

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**From
Congressman
Adam B. Schiff...**

WASHINGTON UPDATE



● **House Budget Chairman Ryan Releases Budget Proposal**

Budget Chairman Paul Ryan recently released his FY 2012 budget proposal. As a Blue Dog democrat who has long championed the need to balance our budget and pay down our debt, I am encouraged that the necessity of putting the nation's fiscal house in order now commands such attention, and the prospect for dealing with our deficit and debt problem is greater than ever. I cannot, however, embrace the solutions recently offered by Chairman Ryan, which would continue an unsustainable policy of upper-income tax cuts, while turning Medicare into a voucher program. These proposals are not new and do not meet a test of basic fairness. Instead, they reflect a policy that is in evidence in the current debate over the continuing resolution to fund the govern-

ment, which would hold harmless multibillion dollar tax subsidies of the oil industry, while cutting home heating oil assistance to the poor.

There are many ways to balance the budget -- but the one I favor will require a shared sacrifice for all Americans. Notwithstanding the flaws in the particulars of Ryan's budget, I welcome his entrance into the debate and hope we can now begin the hard work of finding common ground and saving our nation from a future mortgage to its past.

● **Supporting the No Fly Zone in Libya, Calling for Our Role to Remain Limited**

The US, along with the UK, Canada, France and Italy, recently joined the UN-backed operation to protect Libyan civilians from Qaddafi's use of military assets to kill his own people. The protective action comes after passage of a UN resolution, supported by the Arab League, to impose a no-fly zone in Libyan airspace, and authorizes member states to "take all necessary measures" to "protect civilians and civilian populated areas under threat of attack." Tragically, Qaddafi has said that he intends a "long, drawn-out war with no limits."

While I support the President's decision to intervene with the support of the international community, he believes that bringing the intervention to a successful and near-term conclusion will be difficult and that the American role must remain limited.

● **NATO has now taken over leadership of the military mission in Libya.**

As we near the 10-year anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and are keeping a close eye on countries across the Arab world undergoing significant changes in their quest for democracy, the House Intelligence Committee continues to be engaged in work critical to our nation's security.

In January, I was tapped to continue serving on the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, and last week I was named Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Technical and Tactical (T & T) Intelligence. T & T oversees the technical aspects of intelligence gathering, including space-based assets, as well as cyber security.

Satellites play a critical role in our intelligence agencies, because their images can be used to track suspected terrorists around the world and stop future attacks. Satellites provide real-time data to our troops on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan, and allow us to monitor important global developments. Cyber networks don't just power our cell phones and iPads; they keep our electric grid running, secure the banking world, protect our water supply, and operate our classified military and intelligence systems.

● 29th District Students Serve as Interns in Pasadena Office

As a college student, I was an intern for Congressman George Miller (now one of my colleagues), where I first learned the value of internship experiences for elected officials, students and staff. I enjoy the opportunity to interact with these bright young people, and hope to provide them with as rewarding experience as I had with Congressman Miller.

This semester, I selected four students to serve as interns in the Pasadena Office. Out of dozens of students who applied for a summer internship, the following students were selected to join the team working in the district office:

- Kevin Lee, Senior, University of Southern California, Political Science and Philosophy.
- Camille Lillian Davis, Junior, Loyola Marymount University, Political Science
- Kevin Meurer, Senior, Pasadena Polytechnic School

- Jennifer Der, Senior and student body class president, Temple City High School

To apply for an internship in the Washington, D.C. office, return completed application to: Patricia Higgins, Staff Assistant / Rep. Adam B. Schiff, 2411 Rayburn House Office Bldg./ Washington, D.C. 20515

I look forward to providing you with another Congressional update in ACT's next Phoenix Newsletter. Until then, please find more useful information on constituent services and recent news by visiting my Web site at: www.schiff.house.gov. To sign up for my weekly Washington Update e-newsletter, please visit:

<http://schiff.congressnewsletter.net/mail>. I would also love for you to add me as a friend on Facebook:

www.facebook.com/CongressmanSchiff; and follow me on Twitter:

<http://twitter.com/RepAdamSchiff>.

As always, please reach out to my office to tell us your thoughts or let us know if there is any way we can be helpful to you: (626) 304-2727 or (202) 225-4176.

Sincerely yours,

Congressman Adam B. Schiff

Congressman Adam Schiff represents the 29th Congressional District of California, including Alhambra, Altadena, Burbank, East Pasadena, East San Gabriel, Glendale, Monterey Park, Pasadena, San Gabriel, South Pasadena, and Temple City.



Relearning deadly lessons

Operations at California nuke plants need to be pared back & finally stopped

John Grula, first printed in the Pasadena Weekly

The unfolding nuclear disaster in Japan should put an end, once and for all, to recent calls for a nuclear power "renaissance" in the US. Instead, the recent events at the Fuku-

shima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant dramatically demonstrate how nuclear power should be phased out completely.

The organization with which I am affiliated, the Southern California Federation of Scientists, has long opposed the further development of nuclear power, and the ongoing disaster in Japan certainly vindicates our position on this issue.

It will take many years to determine exactly how many deaths and cancers will be caused by the apparent meltdowns at the Fukushima plant, but the casualties may eventually exceed those caused by the 1986 nuclear accident at the Chernobyl plant in Ukraine. In that case, The Chernobyl Forum, comprised of various United Nations organizations and the governments of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, has estimated the number of cancer deaths caused by Chernobyl may reach a total of 4,000. On the other hand, "Chernobyl: Consequences of the Catastrophe for People and the Environment," a book published in 2009 by the New York Academy of Sciences, concludes that by 2004 almost 1 million had died as a result of the released radioactivity.

At Chernobyl, more than 50 reactor staff and emergency workers died soon after the accident as a result of explosions and acute radiation sickness. How many heroic reactor staff, emergency workers and others at the Fukushima plant have already or will soon die from these causes remains to be seen.

The Fukushima calamity reminds us of the interconnectedness that exists among our modern technological societies. Decisions made decades ago in Japan about how and where to build nuclear power plants are now affecting Southern Californians as we wonder how much deadly radioactivity...may eventually drift our way.

There are 104 commercial nuclear power plants in the US, many of which have designs and are operated in ways similar to the Fukushima plant. This includes the practice of storing spent fuel rods in "swimming pools" near the reactors, where the highly radioactive and physically very hot rods must be continuously covered with water. At Fukushima, the inability to keep stored fuel rods continuously under water — due to failures in water pumping systems and cracks in the pools that have created leaks — has been an even bigger problem than dealing with the radioactive fuel in the damaged

reactor cores.

Storing spent fuel rods in pools of water is a temporary "solution" to the very long-term problem of how we safely dispose of this extremely dangerous radioactive waste. While this waste contains radioactive isotopes with relatively short life spans, such as Cesium-137 and Strontium-90 with half-lives of about 30 years, the longer-lived transuranics (uranium and heavier species) remain highly radioactive for many thousands of years.

California has two nuclear power plants, Diablo Canyon near San Luis Obispo (about 190 miles from Pasadena), and San Onofre near San Clemente (about 70 miles from Pasadena). Both are located next to the ocean, like Fukushima, and thus may be vulnerable to tsunamis. And, of course, both are located in earthquake country. Less than three years ago, a previously undiscovered fault was found within a mile of Diablo Canyon. Although regulators have asked the utilities that run the plants to conduct additional seismic studies, neither has sought the permits required to do so. While Diablo Canyon and San Onofre have been built, as was Fukushima, to withstand the largest earthquake considered likely in their regions, we now know Japan never thought a magnitude 9.0 earthquake could occur off the coast of Fukushima. Upgrades to ensure the structural and operational integrity of Diablo Canyon and San Onofre, both of which have been cited for multiple safety violations in recent years, should be done immediately. Moreover, early closure of these plants needs to be given serious consideration.

Recently nuclear power has been promoted as a carbon-emissions-free alternative to fossil fuels like oil and coal, and thus an energy source that could help alleviate global warming. But in addition to the incalculable dangers posed by highly radioactive fuel, nuclear power plants are extremely expensive to build, require government subsidies to be economically feasible, are difficult to insure, and in the event of a major accident the taxpayers who survive are liable for the costs of the clean-up and recovery.

Now that Fukushima has demonstrated the magnitude of the risk, ... further development of nuclear power should to be stopped in its tracks.

John Grula, PhD, is affiliated with the Southern California Federation of Scientists.

From State Senator Carol Liu...



April Update

More budget. Towards the end of March, negotiations among the Governor, Senate and Assembly Leadership and Republican members who might conceivably vote to place on the June ballot a measure extending for five years the sales tax and VLF increments passed to two years ago. At that time, the Legislature had passed a budget and trailer bills that address \$14 billion of the \$28 billion problem through a mix of cuts (\$11 billion) and other solutions (\$3 billion).

The Governor determined that the 53 requests the Republicans put on the bargaining table were not in good faith and extended far beyond the budget balancing problem at hand. Examples are the demands for CEQA reform and moving the Presidential Primary to March.

Now, the Governor has gone on the road to discuss California's budget dilemma directly with the people, especially those residing in Republican districts. Though a June ballot measure is no longer possible, the Governor hasn't ruled out a November ballot tax initiative. By then, of course, the taxes that were originally proposed to be extended will have lapsed.

The Senate Budget and Fiscal Review Committee has now begun hearings to review the budget actions already taken by the Legislature and assess the options available for finding an additional \$14 billion in budget solutions. The options available can only be de-

scribed as ugly and potentially devastating. For example, the Budget Subcommittee on Education, which I chair, will be forced to look at \$5.2 million in further cuts to the K-14 systems and another \$1 billion in cuts to the CSU and UC. Social services programs, for which we have tried to maintain at least a skeletal infrastructure, are also a major target for further cuts and/or elimination. Redevelopment is still on the table.

I believe what is missing from public and media discourse on the state's budget is a discussion of what Californians want their state to look like now and for future generations. What do they envision for our educational institutions and attainment, transportation and water infrastructure, environmental quality, and precious natural and historical resources like our state parks? What is our vision, what values do we hold dear, and what role do we think government should play in making our vision a reality? I hope to promote those discussions through the Committees and Subcommittees I chair. I hope you will engage those you encounter, who don't necessarily share the Democrats point of view, in similar discussions.

Thanks you again for all the good work you do. I hope to see many of you at the upcoming State Democratic Convention.

Senator Carol Liu represents nearly 850,000 people of the 21st District, which includes Altadena, Burbank, Glendale, Pasadena, La Cañada Flintridge, San Gabriel, Temple City, several City of Los Angeles communities and portions of cities and communities stretching West to Reseda. Visit www.senate.ca.gov/LIU.



**From
44th District
Assemblymember
Anthony
Portantino**



Greetings from Sacramento!

As many of you know, many states and countries have been very effective in taking film and TV production out of California. In 2009, the legislature enacted a \$500 million tax incentive package for filming right here in our golden state. As someone who wants to keep Californians working in traditional middle class jobs with healthcare, I supported the tax package. I'm also a legislator who believes that we must have accountability in how we spend our limited tax dollars. I recently held an informational hearing in Pasadena to look into the effectiveness of these targeted tax breaks for film and television production. I was very pleased to hear from dozens of movie and television production workers, producers, small business owners and union representatives who painted a picture of improved filming opportunities in the golden state because of the tax incentive program. According to the California Film Commission, our tax program has been very successful in keeping jobs here in California. In the past 18 months the Film Commission has allocated \$300 million toward the production of 116 film and TV projects shooting in California. Those projects have generated 41,000 jobs and \$2.2 billion in spending. As a former filmmaker, I want the public to know that this tax credit program is our best tool for keeping California competitive – that's why I have co-authored legislation to extend the film credits for five more years.

I have also introduced legislation this session

to help long-term unemployed workers because I believe that some of them may be at the end-of-their-rope and need our help. AB 558 eliminates state penalties on early withdrawals from retirement accounts for those workers who have exhausted their unemployment insurance. There are nearly 330,000 Californians – many older workers – who have depleted their 99-week unemployment benefits and may need to draw on their retirement accounts. This bill would eliminate the state's 2.5% early withdrawal penalty up to \$25,000. It could mean a savings of up to \$625.

Reminder: the annual Women in Business Awards luncheon will be held July 15. If you know a successful businesswoman you think should be honored, please check out the nomination form at our website asm.ca.gov/portantino. Deadline for nominations is April 22.

On the family front, Bella's softball team, The Snappin Lemonade, is undefeated. Ellen and I celebrated our 21st wedding anniversary on March 31st. We had wanted to get married on April Fool's Day, but Ellen's priest in Pennsylvania did want us to use that date. Sofia wants to know when we'll be out of town so she can come home for the weekend. Hmm, what does that say? On a sad note, I flew back east for a memorial service for my brother, Michael. It was nice to see so many relatives who came to support my mom as she copes with the loss of her son. Some of the relatives I hadn't seen since my wedding, 21 years ago.

Assemblymember Anthony Portantino represents the 44th Assembly District of California, including La Canada, Pasadena, Altadena, South Pasadena, Eagle Rock, Highland Park, Glassell Park, Temple City, Duarte and parts of Arcadia and Monrovia. He can be reached by Email at:

<http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a44/>



**From
43th District
Assemblymember
Mike Gatto**



Greetings from
Sacramento!

**California Voters Should Know
Who Is Paying for Democracy**

At the beginning of a Dodger game or even an NPR broadcast, the listener hears that the program is “brought to you by” and a list of corporate sponsors or donors. How is it that special interests can sponsor ballot initiatives without the voter being made aware of the same? I’ve authored legislation that would change that. The bill is AB 65, and it would require that the top five contributors to a ballot initiative campaign be listed right in the ballot pamphlet.

Ensuring that voters are well-informed before heading to the ballot box is critically important to creating a rational system of governance in our state. For example, just last year, out-of-state oil companies spent millions to place an initiative on the ballot in an attempt to overturn California’s clean-air laws. Environmentalists had to counter with millions of their own, just to inform voters of this cynical attempt by out-of-state interests to purchase an exemption at the ballot box.

And that’s just one example. There are plenty of other instances of special interest groups, in many cases from out of state, trying to affect California law or even the rights of California citizens with a ballot initiative.

I believe the electorate would be better informed if they simply knew who was the “money” behind a ballot initiative, because in almost every instance, knowing (who seeks to change

California law to their benefit) is half the battle. Letting the sun shine in will help voters make informed decisions, and informed decisions are always best.

Mike Gatto represents all or part of Silver Lake, Franklin Hills, Los Feliz, Atwater Village, Glendale, Burbank, North Hollywood, Valley Village, and Van Nuys in the California State Assembly. His web site is asm.ca.gov/gatto. You can e-mail Mike at: assemblymember.gatto@assembly.ca.gov, or call him at (818) 558-3043.



**Special Thanks to Sustaining
Members**

Ken Chawkins, Pasadena
Andrea Gordon, Altadena
Monica and Tom Hubbard, Altadena
Paul Hunt & Gina Frierman-Hunt,
Sierra Madre
John and Brooke McLean, Pasadena
Muriel and Ross Mitchell, Pasadena
Michael Reagan & Carolyn Garner-
Reagan, Pasadena
Betty Sandford, Monrovia

Special Thanks to Our Patrons

Melissa Boggs, Arroyo Grande
Walt and Zan Cochran-Bond, Altadena
Marge Leighton, Pasadena
Harry Montgomery, Pasadena
Tom Seifert & Dianne Philibosian,
Pasadena



ACT and ADC 2011 Dues Are Now Due

Yes! 2011 ACT and Arroyo Democratic Club dues are due! Please respond to our renewal letter as soon as you can. Or go to ACTPasadena.org and follow the renewal steps.

Either way, know that ACT and ADC need and appreciate your continued membership and involvement. (Our grateful thanks go to all the ACT and ADC members who have already renewed.)



I'd like to join both groups for one low price! (Checks payable to ACT/ADC)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$40 Single | <input type="checkbox"/> \$70 Single Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 Each additional member per household | <input type="checkbox"/> \$90 Double Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student or limited income | <input type="checkbox"/> \$150 Patron |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> \$275 Benefactor |

I'd like to join ACT (Checks payable to ACT)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Single | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60 Single Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Each additional member per household | <input type="checkbox"/> \$85 Double Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student or limited income | <input type="checkbox"/> \$125 Patron |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Gift Membership (NEW!) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$275 Benefactor |

I'd like to join the Arroyo Democratic Club (Checks payable to ADC)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 Single | <input type="checkbox"/> \$60 Single Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20 Each additional member per household | <input type="checkbox"/> \$85 Double Sustaining |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$15 Student or limited income | <input type="checkbox"/> \$125 Patron |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> \$275 Benefactor |

Extra Contribution

- \$ _____ Political Account (for endorsed candidates and issues)
- \$ _____ Operating Account (for organizational costs) \$ _____ **Total enclosed**

 Name

Home Phone

 Address

Office Phone

 City

ZIP

 Email address

Mail to ACT, P. O. Box 40074, Pasadena, CA 91114-7074



Calendar

- April 19
Tuesday
Run-off Election for PUSD Seat 6 and Pasadena City Council Dist. 4. Polls open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- May 5
Thursday
7 p.m.
ACT Steering Committee and ADC meeting at the home of Wendy Gordon & Michael Gottlieb, 1535 Ontario Ave., Pasa. All members are welcome and urged to attend. Coffee at 7pm; meeting begins at 7:30 pm.
- May 6
Friday
8-9 a.m.
Friday Morning Progressive Discussion Group at Conrad's Restaurant, NW corner Lake &

May 13
Friday
10 a.m.

Walnut, Pasa. Call Inman Moore for info at 626-795-2201. We meet on 1st & 3rd Fridays.

May 20
Friday

San Gabriel Valley Democratic Women's Club meeting at the home of Sara Carnahan, 2525 Highland Ave., Altadena. Program is **redistricting**. All Democrats welcome.

May 29
Sunday

Friday Morning Discussion Group. (Details same as 5/6.)

ACT Fundraiser with Jack Scott watch for your invitation.



P. O. Box 40074
Pasadena, California
91114-7074