

Labor/Community ALLIANCE

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VOLUME 3, ISSUE 5



MAY 1998

Broad coalition announces opposition to Proposition 226

Sacramento—Anne Henderson, the legislative director of the California League of Women Voters, was joined at a recent news conference by the Congress of California Seniors and the California Consumer Federation to voice their strong opposition to Proposition 226.

The three groups are part of a broad coalition that has come together to oppose the out-of-state funded initiative that created two sets of rules, one for employee groups and one for all others who participate in the political process. These groups are opposing Prop. 226 because they see this is not real campaign reform—it is a national effort by a few individuals whose real agenda is well documented. They oppose public education and want to gut Social Security and Medicare.

.....

“It alarms us that Prop. 226 creates a new set of rules that are clearly intended to shut working Californians out of effective participation in the political process, rules that are not imposed on everybody else.”

Anne Henderson, League of Women Voters

.....

These groups ask, why the sudden interest by outsiders in California’s working men and women?

The same individuals who put 226 on the ballot are working on proposals like this in at least nine other states. Not because they care about the future of workers, but because they “want to change the world” so that it benefits them.

That’s unfair.

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Rally and speak out!

Friday, May 1

(International Workers Day)

At the site commemorating the 1910
Fresno Free Speech Fight

12–1 P.M.

Fulton Mall

(by the Clock Tower)

Defend workers’ rights!

Si se puede!

No on Propositions 226 & 227!

★ ★

SITE OF THE FRESNO FREE SPEECH FIGHT

AT THE CORNER OF MARIPOSA AND P STREETS, FROM OCTOBER 1910 TO MARCH 1911, THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD FOUGHT FOR THE RIGHT OF FREE SPEECH IN THEIR EFFORTS TO ORGANIZE FRESNO’S UNSKILLED LABOR FORCE. THIS WAS THE FIRST FREE SPEECH FIGHT IN CALIFORNIA AND THE FIRST ATTEMPT AT ORGANIZING THE VALLEY’S UNSKILLED WORKERS.

CALIFORNIA REGISTERED
HISTORICAL LANDMARK NO. 873

PLAQUE PLACED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION IN COOPERATION WITH FRESNO PARLOR NO. 25, N.G.O.W., OCTOBER 19, 1974.

“It alarms us that Prop. 226 creates a new set of rules that are clearly intended to shut working Californians out of effective participation in the political process, rules that are not imposed on everybody else,” said Henderson.

Sixty percent of the funding to put Prop. 226 on California’s June ballot has come from out-of-state interests. Major backers are J. Patrick Rooney, an insurance tycoon from Indiana who has donated \$49,000, and Grover Norquist, a D.C. lobbyist who gave \$441,000 through his nonpartisan Americans for Tax Reform. ATR is currently under investigation for violating its nonpartisan status and accepting millions of dollars from the Republican Party.

Speaking out about another provision in 226 and representing the Consumer Federation and CALPIRG, Andy Igrejas said, “Despite what the authors of 226 would have you believe, there are no real new limits on foreign contributions in Prop. 226. The section on foreign contributions is merely a restatement of federal law on candidate contributions.”

(continued on page 3)

The purpose

of Labor/Community Alliance is threefold: (1) to strengthen and unite the labor movement and the progressive community in the Central San Joaquin Valley through information sharing, (2) to promote and defend the rights of local working people, and (3) to help organize the unorganized. This publication is printed monthly and includes a calendar of events.

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Proposition 223 just doesn't add up

by Michael J. Parks Fresno Field Director, California School Employees Association
Proposition 223 (the 95/5 Initiative) would require 95 percent of all school funding to go directly to the classroom and limit administration to 5 percent of the budget. Why is that such a bad idea? Because, the way Proposition 223 is written "administration" means accounting, payroll, data processing, food service, transportation, bus maintenance, bus driver training, payroll, maintenance and operations, warehousing, inventory control, purchasing, human resources, financial services and many other functions not performing "direct services to students."

Proposition 223 threatens every local school district with the potential loss of almost \$200 per student (\$4,000 to \$7,000 per classroom), even for minor violations. In fact, Proposition 223 mandates a 5 percent penalty of the entire annual school budget (total revenue limit)! And, there are no exceptions, not even for natural disasters! As written, over 90 percent of the school districts in California would be out of compliance with Proposition 223.

Analysts now predict Proposition 223 will transfer money from local school districts to the LA Unified School District. This is because the LA Unified School District (LAUSD) economy of scale is certain to meet the Proposition 223 requirements. This should come as no surprise, since the initiative was actually written and heavily financed by a single LAUSD teacher's union.

Most professional educators oppose Proposition 223. Included in the coalition opposed to Proposition 223 are the California State PTA, League of Women Voters, California Taxpayers' Association, California Chamber of Commerce and many teacher associations, schools boards, school employees and others. In fact, both the California Republican Assembly and the California Democratic Party are opposed to Proposition 223. Locally, the Coalition of Organized Labor (COOL) has donated \$500 to help defeat Proposition 223!



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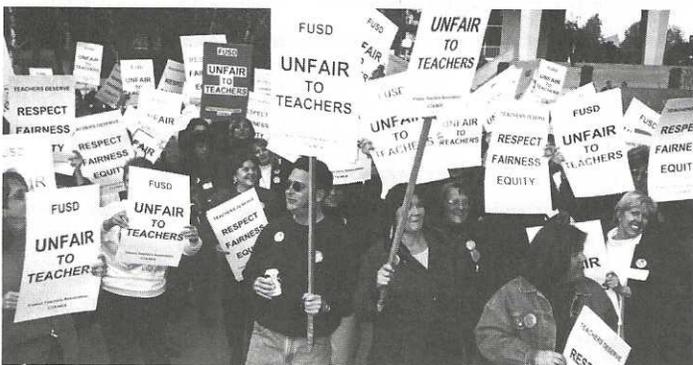
Call Shirley Kirsten (FASTA) at 435-5715 or
Pam Whalen (SEIU 535) at 277-6703 to find out
how you can help form a union for subs.

Prop. 226, cont. from page 1

Lois Wellington with the Congress of California Seniors said, "Norquist, the measure's largest donor, advocates massive privatization of the services relied upon by many seniors, such as Social Security."

Employee group members participating in the press conference were skeptical of the sudden concern for workers' rights by wealthy out-of-state interests. They did not believe that the authors of 226 put this initiative on the ballot with their best interest in mind.

"Proposition 226 out-of-state sponsors claim I need protection from my own union," said Patricia Dourthey, a nurse from Los Angeles. "What I do need is protection from 226. Nurses like myself rely on the representation of unions to speak out about unsafe working conditions, patient-to-staff



Fresno teachers stand up for their rights in ongoing salary negotiations.

ratios in hospitals, and health dangers to staff and patients in medical facilities."

Connie Gallegos, a grocery clerk from Gilroy, had this to say about being shut out of the political process by the proponents of Prop. 226. "My political participation is directly related to the protection of my wages, hours, and working conditions at my worksite. For 60 cents a month, I get to participate in the political process. I think that is a good investment for me."

Sacramento civics teacher Steven Gatewood closed the conference by pointing out why teachers oppose Prop. 226, a ballot measure supposedly constructed to benefit them. "We didn't ask for Prop. 226, we don't need it and we won't let our voices be silenced," said Gatewood. ~ *Combined Sources*

Things YOU can do to DEFEAT PROPOSITION 226

- ☞ Come to the rally at noon on May 1 (see calendar for details).
- ☞ Come to a speakers training workshop.
- ☞ Participate in a phone bank to call your fellow union members (call your union or the number below for more information).
- ☞ Put a bumper sticker on your car, a button on your shirt, and yard sign on your lawn.
- ☞ Tell everyone you know: Vote NO on Proposition 226!

**Call 276-1004, 226-0477, or
(800) 989-8226 to get involved.**

The Unz Initiative

Extreme, irresponsible, and hazardous to California's future

On June 2, 1998, California voters will face a critical choice. Their decision on the so-called "English for the Children" initiative is certain to affect the future of every student, every parent, every teacher, and every taxpayer in the state. And the impact could be enormous. This ballot measure goes far beyond the symbolism of previous English-only campaigns and strikes at the heart of public education.

Don't believe the sponsors' false advertising. This proposal is not about selecting the "best way" to teach English. It's about gambling with children's lives and placing radical restrictions on the schools—all to promote the political ambitions and ideological agenda of a millionaire named Ron Unz. A software developer with no expertise in education, Mr. Unz has either failed to think through the implications of his initiative, or he just doesn't care.

Here's what the Unz initiative would do:

- ☞ Impose an inflexible, state-mandated curriculum for all limited-English-proficient (LEP) children—regardless of the wishes of parents, the recommendations of educators, or the decisions of local school boards.

- ☞ Require an English-only methodology that's politically fashionable but has no support in scientific research and no quality controls to ensure that students are learning.
- ☞ Create chaos in regular classrooms by "mainstreaming" 1.4 million LEP students after just one year of English instruction—overtaxing teachers and holding back English-proficient students.
- ☞ Cost taxpayers up to \$4.5 billion annually, while risking the loss of an additional \$2.5 billion in federal funding.
- ☞ Deny parental choice by making it practically impossible to obtain a "waiver" of the English-only rule.
- ☞ Intimidate teachers and administrators, with threats of lawsuits and financial penalties, for using any language but English to assist a child.
- ☞ Restrict foreign-language instruction for all California students—including native English speakers.
- ☞ Straitjacket the California legislature by requiring a two-thirds vote to amend the English-only mandate, making this radical experiment virtually impossible to modify or repeal.

If the Unz initiative is adopted, the impact will be costly, chaotic, and perhaps irreversible. Worst of all, millions of children will suffer.

~ *National Association for Bilingual Education (www.nabe.org)*

May Day in the USA

A forgotten history

by Michael Thomas

Every year on May 1, for over a century, workers around the world have marked Labor Day with rallies and speeches, picnics and celebrations, demonstrations and riots. Traditionally, these May Day events have provided a primary occasion for workers, especially in Europe, to collectively express their unity, their enthusiasm, and their commitment to social change. Today, the United States stands virtually alone among the industrialized nations in officially ignoring the historical and political significance of May Day for the labor movement.

When Americans do look past the occasional rites of spring, our responses are usually dominated by fearful Cold War images of May Day riots in Europe or tanks and mobile missile-launchers parading before the Kremlin. Few Americans realize that the seemingly foreign celebrations of labor held worldwide on May 1 actually commemorate historical events here in the United States.

During the late 19th century, while corporate power was growing at an unprecedented rate, American workers faced a political and legal system that failed to recognize even the most basic rights of workplace safety, community sanitation, and child protection, let alone the right to organize and strike. On May 1, 1886, the American Federation of Labor declared a national strike to demand an eight-hour work day, and 350,000 workers across the country responded.

In particular, the city of Chicago was virtually paralyzed; railroads, stockyards, and other businesses were forced to close. Two days later, police fired randomly into crowds of fleeing strikers, killing four and wounding many more. Angry workers began to call for armed retaliation.

The next day, when police attempted to disperse a peaceful rally in Haymarket Square, a bomb was tossed into their midst, wounding nearly 70 officers, some mortally. Again firing randomly into the crowd, police wounded another 200 citizens, killing many. With no clues as to the source of the bomb, police arrested eight revolutionary labor leaders, seven of whom had not even been present in Haymarket at the time. In the absence of any evidence linking them to the bomb, the "Chicago Eight" were tried solely on the basis of their political beliefs. All eight were sentenced to death; most were eventually executed.

News of the trial electrified labor groups everywhere; protests were held around the world. In 1889, the Socialist International declared May 1 a day of demonstrations, and since 1890 these have been held annually worldwide by a variety of labor movements, in many cases eventually forcing official recognition of the holiday. Soon, labor advocates in the United States, too, pressed for a national holiday recognizing workers. Although by the 1890s, May 1

was already being celebrated as Labor Day in some states, other states celebrated in early September.

Proponents of the September date emphasized that this filled a long gap between the Fourth of July and Thanksgiving holidays. Presented thus, flanked between patriotic celebrations of national origin and family unity, this Labor Day was attractive to business and government leaders opposed to labor militancy, and had the additional advantage of being as far away as possible from the "subversive" May Day, while still promising good summer weather for outdoor festivities. Thus, the first Monday in September received official recognition.

Mention a Labor Day picnic in May to most people today and they will assume that you have misplaced your calendar. Sadly, what has really been lost, or should I say stolen, is a powerful symbol of the historical struggle by average working Americans for freedom and democracy.



Tune in! *Street Heat*, every fourth Friday, 5-6 P.M., KFCF 88.1-FM. Features Central Valley labor/community activists!

Let's get organized!

1997 was the year of the Strike in Fresno. More than 1,000 county workers went on strike in April, 400 Zacky Farms workers struck in May, the Kaiser nurses staged numerous short strikes over the past year, and, of course, the Teamsters struck UPS. The most inspiring part of all is that workers won!

But thousands of workers in the San Joaquin Valley have no union to back them up to improve their working conditions. Salaries in the Valley are very low, and many workers live in poverty.

This year many Valley unions are starting organizing departments or beefing up existing ones. Organizing victories in the past few months include Madera County (SEIU 752), Rite Aide/Thrifty (UFCW 1288), and Clovis TV and Appliance (IAM 654). There are currently campaigns at Saint Agnes with the Nurses (CNA), Madera County Professional (SEIU 535), City of Visalia (Carpenters 701), and Fresno Unified Substitute Teachers (SEIU 535).

If you work at a non-union work place and are interested in improving your salary and working conditions, and being treated fairly, consider contacting a local union organizer. The following is a partial list of organizers in the Fresno area:

- Marc Scalzo Machinist Union, 264-2815
- Jerry Hammach Teamsters, 486-5410
- Frank Flores Sheet Metal Workers, 255-0454
- Andy Hout UFCW, 271-1288
- Doug Whipple Carpenters, 268-3895
- Yolanda Guerra, Gerry Vallero,
and Pam Whalen SEIU 535, 277-6703
- Randy Gahn SEIU 752, 237-4791

Calendar of Events May 1998

Friday, May 1: MAY DAY

NO on Propositions 226 & 227 Rally, 12-1 P.M., Fulton Mall (by the Clock Tower). Call 226-0477.

SEIU 535 Reception for Bill Fjelbo, Candidate for Madera County Board of Supervisors, District 5, 5 P.M., Valley Inn in Madera.

Saturday, May 2

Universal Declaration of Human Rights 50th Anniversary Committee, 10 A.M., Fresno Center for Nonviolence.

Visitors' Day, Sun Mountain, 10 A.M.-4 P.M. Guided tours of the Sun House, grounds, and passive solar center. Learn about herbology, gardening, and shamanic medicine. Call George (Elfie) Ballis at 855-3710.

2nd Annual North Fork Spring Contra Dance, Kennedy Hall, 7-11 P.M., North Fork School.

Friday, May 8

Benefit for Chiapas, 6 P.M., American Legion Hall 3509 N. First, Fresno. Music with: Life Force, Basura, Uncle Sham, Larkendue, Chenchá Berrinches. Tickets: \$5 in advance, \$7 day of the show. Sponsored by Food Not Bombs and M.E.Ch.A. de la Tierra. Call 872-1880.

Saturday, May 9

Fresno Center for Nonviolence Board Meeting, 9:30 A.M., 985 N. Van Ness. Guests welcome. Call 237-3225.

Sunday, May 10 (Mother's Day)

Rebozo, Arte Americas, 1640 N. Van Ness. Hilo de Tradiciones Rebozo exhibition, music, workshops. Call 266-9110 for more information.

Tuesday, May 12

Monthly Potluck & Discussion, 6:30 P.M., Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Meets every second Tuesday to discuss what it means to have a personal commitment to nonviolence. Potluck at 6:30; program at 7:30.

Friday, May 15

Deadline for submission of information for the June issue of *Labor/Community Alliance*. Call 226-2078.

Southern Rail Bluegrass, 7:30 P.M., Fresno Art Museum. Call 456-0453 for more information. Sponsored by the Fresno Folklore Society.

Saturday, May 16

Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, 10 A.M., New members' brunch, home of Margaret Hudson. Call 229-9661.

SEIU Mobilization for Judy Case, Fresno County Board of Supervisors candidate from Sanger. Call 277-6700.

HIV Substance Abuse Support Group, 2-4 P.M., Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Call 485-3667.

Sunday, May 17

Local Grassroots Committee on the Various Propositions, 3-6 P.M. Centro Bellas Artes, 1048 E Street. Meet, debate, recommend. (Bilingual: Spanish/English). Sponsored by Labor/Community Alliance and Immigrant Women's Access Project.

Monday, May 18

Amnesty International, 7:30 P.M., Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N. Van Ness. Call 224-0924.

Tuesday, May 19

Central California Citizens Copwatch Committee, 7 P.M., Romero Peace and Justice Center, corner of Mariposa and R Streets. Call 264-3914.

Health Care for All, 7:15 P.M., Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Call 855-2438 for information.

Thursday, May 21

Death Penalty Focus, 7:30 P.M., Fresno Center for Nonviolence, 985 N. Van Ness. Call 323-4871.

Speaking Out at Spectrum, 7:30 P.M., Spectrum Gallery, 1306 N. Wishon. Native son Mark Arax, author of *In My Father's Name*, and Valley correspondent for the *LA Times*, speaks out. Sponsored by KFCF 88.1 FM and the Fresno Free College Forum. Call 233-2221.

Friday, May 22

Central Labor Council Breakfast for Cruz Bustamante. Call 275-1404 for more information.

Coalition of Organized Labor, Noon. Call 275-1129 for location and details.

Street Heat, 5-6 P.M., KFCF 88.1-FM. Featuring Central Valley labor/community activists.

Saturday & Sunday, May 23 & 24

Argentina Beyond Tango, Arte Americas 1640 N. Van Ness. Folk art exhibition, movies, presentation. Call 266-9110.

Monday, May 25

Labor/Community Alliance/Jobs with Justice, 5:30 P.M., Fresno Center for Nonviolence. Call 226-2078.

Tuesday, May 26

ACLU, 7 P.M., Fresno Center for Nonviolence.

Wednesday, May 27

Central Labor Council, 6 P.M., UFCW/SEIU offices. Call 275-1151 for details.

Tuesday, June 2: ELECTION DAY

Don't forget to vote NO on Propositions 226 & 227!

This Week in Fresno

E-mail network established

The Labor/Community Alliance has started an electronic mail (e-mail) network to alert Central Valley residents to upcoming events in the organized labor and progressive communities. Announcements are sent at least once a week to inform, mobilize, and increase participation in events. **THIS WEEK IN FRESNO** is an update and expansion of the calendar found in this newsletter. "There are now more than 50 people receiving **THIS WEEK IN FRESNO**" said project coordinator Mike Rhodes. "We are always looking for new people with an e-mail address who would like to be a part of this network."

Unions and the progressive community are just beginning to understand the potential of the Internet. **THIS WEEK IN FRESNO** can be sent to 50 or 5,000 people at no cost. The information is almost instantaneously transferred from the Labor/Community Alliance computer to everyone on the e-mail list. Information is also sent to all local news media in the hope that events listed will get better coverage. One news reporter said: "I had no idea all these things were going on in Fresno."

All you need to begin receiving **THIS WEEK IN FRESNO** is a computer and an Internet account. Simply send an e-mail message to: <clr2@igc.apc.org> and say that you want to "subscribe" to **THIS WEEK IN FRESNO**. There is no charge.

Subscribe to *Labor/Community Alliance* today!

- Yes! Send me *Labor/Community Alliance* every month.
- Yearly rate (circle one): \$35, \$20, \$10—low income
- Hardship? Contact us. We'll arrange something!
- Sustaining: \$10 per month (our foundation)
- Yes! I will help distribute *LCA*. Send me a bundle.
- Yes! Put me on the "Volunteers for Justice/Emergency Response Network" contact list. Alert me when there's a picket line, street action, phone bank, etc. for labor rights and social justice.

Name _____

Union/Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: Home _____ Work _____

Fax _____ E-mail _____

Mail this form to:

Labor/Community Alliance
P.O. Box 5077, Fresno, CA 93755
Call 226-2078 for more information.

The Labor/Community Alliance wants to receive information about your community event, march, or meeting to include in this newsletter's calendar. But if you didn't have time to get information about your event to us in time (the 15th of the month preceding publication) to be included in the newsletter, you can still send details to the above e-mail address or call 226-0477 and we will include it in **THIS WEEK IN FRESNO**.



Jobs with Justice Pledge

I'll be there . . .

- ➔ standing up for our rights as working people to a decent standard of living.
- ➔ supporting the right of all workers to organize and bargain collectively.
- ➔ fighting for secure family-wage jobs in the face of corporate attacks on working people and our communities.
- ➔ organizing the unorganized to take aggressive action to secure a better economic future for all of us.
- ➔ mobilizing those already organized to join the fight for jobs with justice.

During the next year, I'll be there at least five times for someone else's fight, as well as my own. If enough of us are there, we'll all start winning.

Signature _____ Date _____

Your Name (please print) _____

Union Name/Local Number or Organization _____

Home Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Area Code/Day Phone _____ Area Code/Evening Phone _____

Fax _____ E-mail _____

Labor/Community Alliance

(Jobs with Justice)
P.O. Box 5077
Fresno, CA 93755
(209) 226-2078

Dynamic senior convention focuses on progressive issues

by Del Berg, State Board of Directors, Congress of California Seniors

The recent annual convention of the Congress of California Seniors, held in Sacramento April 7-9, was well attended and dynamic. It had representation from all parts of the state. Prominent among its concerns were state Propositions 226 and 227, which it urged its membership to make every effort to defeat.

All candidates running for state office were invited to attend and address the convention. No Republicans responded to the invitation. Among candidates who responded was Phil Angelides, running for State Treasurer, who spoke out strongly against Props. 226 and 227. He also pointed out the strategic position of Treasurer. With his membership on a long list of key state committees, assuring the body of his political credentials (besides being an astute businessman), he claimed to be a part of the progressive wing of the Democratic Party.

Also addressing the convention were gubernatorial candidates Jane Harman and Al Checchi, and candidate for Secretary of State, Michelle Alioto. The applause in response to their remarks was mostly polite. It could be said that the later remarks of Howard Owens, legislative director of the organization, that "the CCS does not make endorsements, but personally I am not going to support Harman," was representative of the general attitude of the crowd.

Hal Brown, a member of the Pat Brown "clan" running for insurance commissioner, was impressive with his description of the abuses and discriminatory policies of the insurance campaign in California.

There were a number of workshops on the second day. Especially important was the one on health care, with its emphasis on a California single payer plan. Also of particular urgency at the moment are the several bills currently in the state legislature constituting a "Patient's Bill of Rights."

In general the convention agenda and atmosphere was anti-corporate power. The CCS, organized on the initiative of Auto Workers Union retirees some years back, has as its basic concern the interests of labor and broad ethnic and progressive community groups.

Attention, language interpreters

Indigenous people from the state of Oaxaca, Mexico often exclusively speak their own languages, and have a significant language barrier with Spanish, let alone English. The Frente Indigena Oaxaquena Binacional (FIOB) (Binational Oaxacan Indigenous Front), a not-for-profit organization, recognized the need for interpreters for indigenous Oaxacan speakers of Mixteco or Zapoteco. FIOB therefore created the Mexican Indigenous Interpreter Project to train and coordinate 15 Mixteco and Zapoteco interpreters for statewide service.

Help identify Oaxacan indigenous people monolingual or insufficiently bilingual in Spanish who would benefit from interpreter services. Contact Leoncio Vasquez, Coordinator Mexican Indigenous Interpreter Project at 394-4287, e-mail: Rufino@igc.apc.org for more information on our program or assistance in furnishing an indigenous interpreter.



Fresno, Madera, Tulare, & Kings Counties Central Labor Council (AFL-CIO) election endorsements

United States Senator: Barbara Boxer (D)

Governor: Gray Davis (D)

Lieutenant Governor: Cruz M. Bustamante (D)

Secretary of State: Michelle Alioto (D)

State Controller: Kathleen Connell (D)

State Treasurer: Phil Angelides (D)

State Attorney General: Bill Lockyer (D)

Superintendent of Public Instruction: Delaine Eastin

State Insurance Commissioner: Hal Brown (D)

State Board of Equalization

District 1—Johan Klehs (D)

District 2—No Recommendation (D)

District 3—Mark A. Spiegler (D)

District 4—John Chiang (D)

US Congress 18th District: Gary Condit (D)

State Senate

District 12—Sal Cannella (D)

District 16—Jim Costa (D)

State Assembly

District 29—Naomi Strom (R)

District 30—Dean Flores (D)

District 31—Sarah Reyes (D)

Propositions

220 ~ Yes 224 ~ No 227 ~ No

221 ~ Yes 225 ~ No

223 ~ No 226 ~ No

Fresno City Council

Henry Perea, Dan Ronquillo

Madera Board of Supervisors

District 5 —Bill Fjeblo



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One letter = 100 votes

by *Larry Langford, Labor/Community Alliance*

A common misconception about our elected representatives, on all levels of government, is that they care nothing for what the voters think. Many people believe that politicians are so beholden to special-interest groups with big money that the individual voter could never hope to have any influence over government policy or legislation.

In the logic of government, however, one individual can be more than one voter, especially when that individual makes the effort to contact an elected official to express his or her opinion on an issue.

Communications from constituencies are considered so important in government that if one person writes a letter to a senator or congressman, that letter is assumed to represent at least one hundred votes in the next election. If two people write in about an issue, they represent two hundred votes, and so on.

For this reason, the Labor/Community Alliance Newsletter, as an ongoing service, wants to alert its readers to legislation pending in Washington or Sacramento that is especially important to unions and working people, so that you will contact your representatives concerning these issues.

Here are two pieces of legislation currently under consideration, one in the U.S. Senate and the other in the U.S. House of Representatives:

SB 328

U.S. Senate Bill 328, the so-called "Truth in Employment Act of 1997," is sponsored by Tim Hutchinson (R-Arkansas) and supported by Trent Lott, the Senate Majority Leader.

One particularly effective union tactic has been to target a non-union workplace and have someone hired there who will begin organizing the workers. Although sometimes presented as a bill that would protect "employer rights," this piece of legislation is a blatant attempt to cripple union activities by making it easier for employers to fire union organizers.

The bill's supporters claim that only those who seek employment for the purpose of organizing would be subject to termination, but it offers no safeguards against employers so designating any employee, regardless of length of employment, who seeks to organize his or her co-workers. According to the authors of the bill, "using professional union organizers . . . threatens the balance of rights that is fundamental to the collective bargaining system of the United States."

Senate Bill 328 is actually an amendment to the National Labor Relations Act of 1935, the Wagner Act, which affirmed labor's right to engage in collective bargaining. This amendment, if passed, would change the act to state that nothing requires "an employer to employ a person who seeks or has sought employment with the employer in furtherance of the objectives of an organization other than the employer."

In other words, if the objectives of the union are considered to be in conflict with those of the employer, then the union organizers, whoever they might be, can be fired.

HR 16259

Over in the House of Representatives, "The Worker Paycheck Fairness Act" (HR 16259) seeks to establish on a national level the same criteria for collecting union dues as mandated by Proposition 226 on the California ballot in June. Sponsored by Representative Harris Fawell (R-Illinois), and with the full support of the Republican House leadership, this bill would require "any labor organization accepting payment of any dues or fees from an employee . . . to secure from each employee prior, voluntary, written authorization for any portion of such dues or fees which will be used for non-collective bargaining activities."

Under the terms of the bill, any employee may withdraw such authorization at any time, with a 30-day written notice. The bill also makes it easier for employees to sue their union if they don't agree with how union dues are being spent.

Like California's Proposition 226, this national bill is one of the greatest threats facing unions today, for its intent is nothing less than to remove labor organizations from the political process by burying them in an avalanche of paperwork. It would place upon organized labor a bureaucratic burden so heavy that unions would be prevented from effectively participating in electoral politics. It encourages dissension within union ranks, so that workers will spend their time and energy fighting each other instead of fighting for their rights.

Don't stand by and let the hard-won achievements of unions be stripped away by legislation such as this. Write to your senators and congressmen. They'll listen, but only if you raise your voice.

How do I contact my Senator or Congressman? It's easy.

If you want to write a letter, address it as follows:

Office of Senator (Name)/ The Honorable (Name of Representative) United States Senate /House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20510/ Washington, D.C. 20515

If you want to send an e-mail, use the following format: `firstnameofyoursenator.lastnameofyoursenator@mail.senate.gov`. The same format works for your congressman `@mail.house.gov`.

Information about all members of the Senate and Congress, including local addresses and phone numbers, as well as information on legislation currently under debate or in committee, can be found at their respective web sites, **www.senate.gov** and **www.house.gov**.

If you want information about legislation in the California Senate or Assembly, go to their web site at **www.leginfo.ca.gov**.

Wilson gets a pay increase, state workers get the shaft

It has been more than three years since state workers received their last raise, a 3 percent cost of living adjustment in January 1995. The economy is stronger than it's been in decades, but still Gov. Wilson refuses to reward his own workforce.

But that doesn't mean he has any qualms about taking a raise for himself. March 26 he said he will accept the whopping 25.9 percent raise approved by the seven-member Citizens Compensation Commission. The commission members are all Wilson appointees. They also gave raises of up to 34.3 percent to other top state elected officials and legislators.

"This is absolutely outrageous. It's our hard work that helped move California into prosperous times," said Jim Hard, director of the Civil Service Division of the California State Employees Association. "We've dug this state out of natural and economic disasters. We've made many sacrifices for the good of the people. Now it's time for us to see some rewards."

Wilson's pay jumps from \$131,000 to \$165,000 annually. More importantly, the two pay hikes Wilson accepted since Jan. 1, during the last year of his term, will increase his state-paid pension from \$52,000 to \$66,000 a year.

~ Drew Mendelson, California State Employees Association. CSEA is the largest state employee union in California, representing 135,000 active and retired civil service and California State University system workers.

Stingy governor blames the unions

Casting lie upon lie, Gov. Pete Wilson, who has defaulted on his promise of last summer to finally provide state workers with a fair pay raise, is now trying to shift the blame for this failure to the workers he stiffed.

State legislators are moving to pass AB 2462, which would break the logjam caused by Gov. Wilson's refusal to bargain a state worker pay raise in good faith. Wilson's cranky response, given through his press secretary Sean Walsh, was that the bill

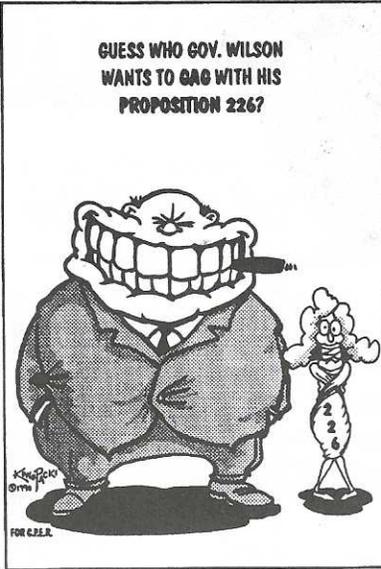
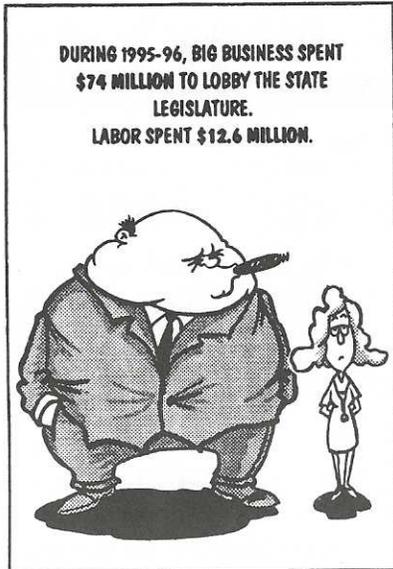
was unnecessary because he had a pay raise on the table if only union leaders had the good sense to take it. The advice from this union-hating governor to state workers: "Don't listen to what your union leadership is telling you (about a pay raise)."

CSEA President Perry Kenny remarked: "Wilson has raided our pension fund. Squeezed our health care benefits. Throttled our wages. He's sworn to contract out half of all our jobs.

For three years he's stubbornly denied us a pay raise and fair contract while watching his own salary rise more than 30 percent. He's moved relentlessly to dismantle the contractual and civil service structures that protect our rights as California state workers. Now he arrogantly claims to speak for state workers."

While Wilson would like state workers to believe that the union's leadership is responsible for turning down money for a pay increase, the fact remains that CSEA members overwhelmingly rejected the governor's bargaining proposal when polled earlier this year by the union. More than 95 percent of members polled said **no way** to Wilson's bargaining proposals, which they agreed would eliminate across-the-board, union negotiated cost-of-living increases, reduce layoff protections, and erode an employee's right to appeal an unjust discipline.

~ Drew Mendelson



Fresnans celebrated the life and work of Cesar Chavez with a march and program on March 28.

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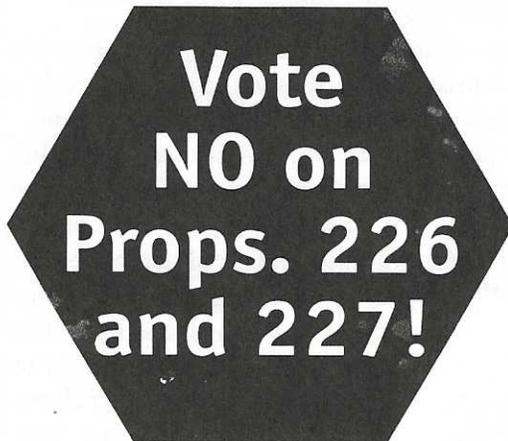
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• Address Correction Requested •



Genocide!

US/UN sanctions kill 4,500 Iraqis each month

While the new UN resolution has eased the US away from a military attack, another kind of war on Iraq continues. UNICEF estimates that 4,500 Iraqis die each month from malnutrition and preventable diseases as a direct result of US/UN economic sanctions. These sanctions, which have had no significant political effect, are a humanitarian disaster.

Many Iraqis have been reduced to destitution and cannot buy what little food is available. The weekly ration distributed by the UN comprises 5 pounds of flour, 1.3 pounds of rice, 0.6 pound of lentils, 0.6 pound of cooking oil, and 25 grams of tea, all of which are painstakingly measured out to each person. Not only is this nutritionally deficient diet dehumanizing and totally inadequate for a healthy adult, it is often lethal for children, the elderly, and the infirm.

The Fellowship of Reconciliation requests that you send to President Clinton one day's allotment of one of the foods in the UN food ration. FOR used a similar tactic in 1950, when China was suffering from famine and the US refused to send aid from our bulging warehouses because of the Cold War. President Eisenhower received 45,000 bags of grain from Americans imploring him to feed the Chinese people. Reportedly, this public outcry was a factor in the Cabinet decision against a Joint Chiefs of Staff recommendation that the US bomb China as a response to the communist revolution there.

FOR believes that the spirit of compassion can, and must, morally undergird the relationship between the people of the United States and all the peoples of the earth. This compassion must not be restricted to a truncated period of time, but be ongoing if it is to affect a transformation of our country's relationship to Iraq.

These people are our brothers and sisters. They are an inextricable part of the fabric of humanity that binds us all in mutuality. We are compelled to end the cause of their suffering, and we call upon all people of conscience and compassion to do likewise. ~ Fellowship of Reconciliation

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