



VOLUME 2, ISSUE 7



JULY 1, 1997



## United Health Centers clinic workers fight to survive

by Pam Whalen

On May 30, employees of United Health Centers walked off the job in an effort to save seven rural health clinics. The workers called SEIU Local 535 to help them protect their jobs as they called for the resignation of the Board of Directors.

By the time the call was made the only hope of saving these much-needed medical services lay with the collective action of the workers. The Board of Directors continued its refusal to resign even as it became apparent that this stance would mean the demise of the health clinics. The tragic lesson of this story is that the workers may have waited too long to make the decision to unionize. Many clinic workers have expressed the feeling that it is too late to organize.

(continued on p. 2)

## Kaiser nurses: "Strike!"

Phone report from Don Nielson, California Nurses Association

"We're going to strike Kaiser Permanente for from one to three days, beginning July 7 at 7 A.M. 'Strike Central' will be at Kaiser Park on Alluvial (in north Fresno). There will be a noon rally with speakers, food and solidarity.

"We had a strike vote June 19. There was an overwhelming turnout at that meeting, and 98.4 percent voted to strike. This will occur not just in Fresno but all over the Northern California region.

"Our April 16 one-day strike was a huge success: 7,500 nurses went out, as well as 19,000 Kaiser workers represented by other unions [SEIU, OPEIU, Engineers & Scientists...] for a total of 26,500 employees. We shut down 45 facilities.

"This time, like last time, we're striking for quality patient care, trying to stop the tide of reductions—of registered nurses and other health-care workers. The reductions are harming not only the careers of these workers but also the patients.

"Kaiser was recently fined over \$1.5 million in Texas because of its practices—denying care, cutting back too much. California and the federal government are looking seriously at rescinding the license that allows Kaiser to get Medicare business because of eliminating acute care beds and down emergency rooms in the inner city. Also, CNA has filed a lawsuit against Kaiser for allegedly red-lining minority areas, older populations, and high use areas. The elderly and inner city populations are being subjected to insurmountable barriers to care.

## CNA's Kaiser Strike rescheduled for July 14 & 15

(continued on p. 2)



### **The purpose**

*of Labor/Community Alliance  
is to strengthen and unite the  
labor movement and the progressive  
community in the Central San Joaquin  
Valley through information sharing.  
This publication is printed monthly and  
includes a calendar of events. In addition  
to providing the basis for mutual support  
between labor and community groups,  
this newsletter will be used to promote  
dialog on the subject of creating an  
independent political party for the  
U.S. working class.*

### **Project Coordinators**

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### **United Health Centers, cont. from p. 1**

At this point in history more health and social service agencies depend on their employees to fight for their survival. Frequently, elected officials and boards are willing to sacrifice the integrity of these agencies for their own private gain. It is the workers who believe in the mission and provide services to the poor and working families. It is the workers who fight to defend these services and who protest the greed of the powerful elite that controls the health care system.

How can workers protect their agencies in this environment of downsizing and greed? The answer is that they must take the step to unionize before they find themselves in a crisis. They must band together and take charge of their fate while there is still time.

As this newsletter goes to press, the Board of Directors of United Health Centers is finally talking about resigning. Community groups, elected officials, and the union all pitched in to save the clinics. It is the workers themselves, however, who put their jobs on the line and provided leadership to maintain health services to the rural areas of the Central Valley. We salute them!

### **Organize!**

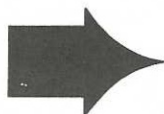
**SEIU is actively organizing  
workers in the Central Valley.**

*Interested? Call Pam Whalen,*

*277-6700.*

➤ **SEIU Local 535:** Thanks for your crucial support of our "Corporate Power" workshop May 10. We couldn't have done it without you!

~Labor Party



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### **Kaiser strike, cont. from p. 1**

"Recently a woman with chest pains was transported from the Richmond Kaiser to the Oakland facility and she died en route. They didn't treat her in Richmond because they don't have emergency facilities, despite what their advertising says. They couldn't accommodate her. They tried to keep her there to stabilize her so they could send her home, but she didn't stabilize. If she had been at a true emergency room she would not have died. Her condition was completely treatable under most emergency room conditions.

"Just last week the agency that oversees Medicare issued a scathing 104-page report about Kaiser, how their practices are harming patients, are fraudulent and deceptive. The registered nurses at Kaiser are the last line of defense. Kaiser's not helping and the doctors there aren't doing anything about these issues. The nurses are the ones saying, enough is enough. This is dangerous!" The strike will affect both the Fresno Street and First Street Kaiser facilities.



State workers (members of SEIU Local 1000) and supporters demonstrate at the Clovis DMV June 14. They were protesting Gov. Wilson's failure to fill 24,000 vacant state positions, and his announced intent to privatize many public services.



## Simple Question

"The question seems fairly simple. If 15 percent of the people in the Valley can't find work now, how will all the people that we're trying to get off welfare find jobs?"

Jim Boren, *The Fresno Bee*, 6/8/97

## What does it take to live in California?

**Basic living expenses for a single parent with two children:** \$2,497 per month, \$29,960 per year. A bare bones monthly budget (minus restaurant dining, emergency savings or recreation money): \$1,924 per month, \$23,092 per year.

**Earnings for a full-time worker** earning \$6.50/hour minus payroll tax, plus earned income tax credit: \$1,236 per month, \$14,836 per year.

~California Budget Project

## The Martinez Public Works Jobs Bill

### A Matter of Survival in 1997

The "Job Creation and Infrastructure Restoration Act" (H.R. 950) was introduced into the Congress by Congressman Matthew Martinez (D-CA) at the request of the National Labor Coalition for Public Works Jobs. The Coalition's primary purpose has been to work for passage of emergency employment legislation at the federal level. This legislation is intended to provide much-needed jobs at union wages to crisis-ridden cities by putting people to work rebuilding our nation's infrastructure (schools, hospitals, libraries, parks, bridges, highways, etc.)

This year the need for the Martinez Jobs Bill has become more urgent. The destruction of the welfare safety net has created an emergency crisis nationwide. Hundreds of thousands will lose welfare benefits, and there is an insufficient number of good paying jobs to meet the demand. It is in this context that the passage of the Martinez Jobs Bill with massive public works jobs that pay a living wage has become the emergency solution to the most challenging problem of the nation.

An organized campaign for the bill will challenge the workfare dead-end solution which increasingly moves in the direction of anti-Labor policy. Workfare jobs do not provide wages that will take welfare recipients out of poverty, and these jobs are not being used to replace union workers. We are intent upon building a national movement to meet this crisis. We must pressure the 105th Congress to pass the Martinez Jobs Bill in this session.

The Martinez bill is a life-saving bill that will provide \$250 billion for emergency public works jobs over a five-year period. It has strong labor provisions that will put hundreds of thousands of people to work with priority for jobs given to victims of plant and base closures, welfare recipients, youth, the long-term unemployed as well as unemployed building trades workers.

This bill is unprecedented in what it will do to build the ranks of organized labor and in rebuilding our nation's hard-hit communities. This is one of the most significant pieces of legislation to be introduced to Congress since Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal, which established the Works Progress Administration, unemployment insurance and social security.

For more information, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the Labor Party, Frank Little Chapter, PO Box 5077, Fresno, CA, 93755. Or call the National Coalition for Public Works Jobs at (310) 806-9928.

## Parents on Welfare

*What will they do when their time runs out and there aren't enough jobs?*

A total of **750,000** adult parents now receive welfare payments. The state could exempt 20 percent of them or **150,000** from work or work training requirements. That means jobs or training slots would be needed for **600,000** within a few years. The governor says private employers, with support—such as child care and better distribution of job opening information—and **incentives**, can absorb the recipients.

The state's private employers are now creating about 350,000 jobs a year. The governor says that will reach 400,000 soon. But two-thirds of new jobs are being absorbed by increases in the state's work force caused by population growth and demographic changes. The remaining one-third comes to 136,000 projected jobs. **More than a million workers are listed as jobless, not counting welfare recipients.**

Wilson is counting on endless economic expansion. But unless California sees an increase in private jobs creation far beyond anything ever experienced, there's no way for private employers to hire that many welfare parents.

Adapted from Dan Walters' column, *The Fresno Bee*, 5/13/97

## A goal for the future

### The Labor Party has another idea

This "welfare reform" attacks all working people—not just those whose benefits are cut. Despite its proponents' claims to the contrary, this bill's so-called workfare provisions will allow for replacing regular jobs that pay wages and provide benefits with slots filled by recipients of public assistance who will work in exchange for their meager grants instead of wages.

Not only are these grants much below the minimum wage—in some states less than \$200 a month for a family of three—but states may also avoid cash payments entirely in favor of an in-kind arrangement in which aid recipients will work in exchange for food stamps, commodity foodstuffs or other noncash benefits.

This amounts to creating pools of labor inside the American economy that are in effect coerced and forced to work for subsistence or less. This will effectively depress other workers' wages as well. **The lowest 30 percent of wage earners can expect a 13 percent reduction in income as a result of this legislation**, according to a recent analysis by the Economic Policy Institute. This will push more working people to, and over, the brink of poverty.

The Labor Party resolutely opposes this sort of "welfare reform" and its agenda of dividing the American working class by demonizing those people who have been pushed to the margins of the corporate-dominated economy. We expose this abominable legislation for what it is: a veiled attack on all American workers.

Delegates at our Founding Convention adopted a program, "A Call for Economic Justice," that places the needs and interests of the American working class—the vast majority of U.S. residents—at the center of public policy. The critical linchpin of that program is a demand for a **Constitutional Amendment Guaranteeing Everyone a Job at a Living Wage**. Every U. S. resident must have access to a job that pays above-poverty level wages as a basic human right.

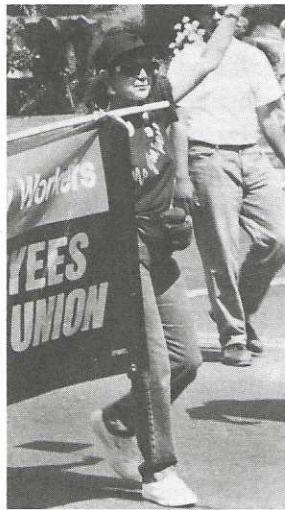


## Why are people joining the Labor Party?

by Mike Rhodes

With this issue of the Labor Party/Community Alliance newsletter, we are starting a series that will ask new, local members of the Labor Party how they heard about us, why they joined and where they think the Labor Party should be headed. We begin by talking with **Marianna Durozo of SEIU 752.**

**LP/CAN:** Can you tell us how you heard about the Labor Party?



**MD:** I met John Veen (chairperson of the local chapter) during our struggle to save Valley Medical Center (VMC). I was very impressed that he was there in support of the workers. Besides marching with us from VMC to the Board of Supervisors meeting he supported other events we had. He helped set up a table at Fresno City College to educate people and gather signatures for our petition. John even collected signatures himself. It is a shame this newsletter was not available to us at that time.

**LP/CAN:** What was it about the Labor Party that got you to join?

**MD:** The main reason I joined was I saw the newsletter as an alternative to the newspaper and a more personal way to reach my fellow workers. The news is about local issues and tells the story from a worker's point of view. It has pictures of people I know, doing things I support. This newsletter has dates and times of upcoming events such as the Martin Luther King March, Watsonville (the strawberry march), Cesar Chavez march and the strike at Fresno County. Besides the stories about these events it encourages people to participate in them. I think we need to support each other in the work we are doing, and this newsletter does that.

**LP/CAN:** What would you like to see the Labor Party do locally?

**MD:** Give support to other unions. Let people know how to get involved and how important you can be. I would like to see other Labor Party members coming out to strikes and picket lines showing support. The workers at Zacky Farms (who were on strike at the time of this interview) would love to see labor/community support. It would be good for Zacky workers to see this support and rewarding for Labor Party members to be a part of their picket line.

### Do you have e-mail?

If so, we would like to have your address so we can send you information about Labor Party and community meetings and events. Please e-mail us at: [clr2@igc.apc.org](mailto:clr2@igc.apc.org)

## Carpenters leaflet Macy's

On May 20, members of Carpenters Local 701 leafleted Macy's in Fashion Fair to protest the use of out-of-town non-union labor to remodel the store. They also leafleted the Macy's exhibit at the River Parkway event in June. These activities resulted in talks between Macy's and the union. For more information, call Dave Ingram, 266-0273.

## Unions promote citizenship

Teamster Local 980 and SEIU Local 535 are joining together to help immigrants become citizens. The project will be coordinated with the existing program at Colegio Popular. A training session will be held for volunteers who would like to help with the project on July 10 at 5:30 P.M. at the SEIU office at 3485 W. Shaw, Fresno. A citizenship day will be held on July 12. If you would like to volunteer to help at this event, or for more information, call Roberta Ritchie, 453-6526.

## Peace Report

by Jack Welch, Fresno Center for Nonviolence

**From the Marin (County) Peace News, June 1997:**

\* The NRA has formed an international organization to oppose gun control. Also, it now has special advisory status at the U.N. to allow its lobbying against gun controls.

\* The Center for Defense Information, Washington, DC, has put out a graph of U.S. military spending vs. that of "potential adversaries" showing annual U.S. spending of \$265 billion, Russia \$48 billion, China \$32 billion, N. Korea \$5 billion and Iraq \$3 billion. Is all this U.S. defense spending really necessary?

\* The Fellowship of Reconciliation, Common Cause, and many U.S. religious leaders are calling for campaign finance reform, specifically for the support of the McCain-Feingold bill (Senate) in the fall of 1997.

\* Tri-Valley CAREs (Citizens Against a Radioactive Environment) and a number of other action groups have filed a lawsuit against the Department of Energy for its failure to comply with the nation's environmental laws. The suit targets the hugely expensive National Ignition Facility, flagship of the DOE's "Stockpile Stewardship" plan, which will provide the capability for nuclear weapons effects tests and impede global acceptance of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, recently signed by the United States.

**Contact Tri-Valley CAREs, 5270 E. Ave. No. 116, Livermore, CA 94550/(510)443-7148 to support this action against nuclear weapons.**





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# National Labor News

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**Unfair workfare.** Republican lawmakers want to strip away minimum wage and Fair Labor Standards Act protections for workfare workers. The Clinton Administration ruled in May that those laws cover welfare recipients who, under the 1996 welfare laws, must work for their benefits. The AFL-CIO recently ran ads in selected congressional districts asking voters to urge lawmakers to stop this sneak attack on the minimum wage.

**No hearings.** Public employees need not be granted hearings before being suspended without pay, a unanimous Supreme Court ruled June 9 in *Gilbert v. Homar*. "So long as the suspended employee receives a sufficiently prompt post-suspension hearing, the lost income is relatively insubstantial (compared with termination) and fringe benefits are often not affected at all," Justice Antonin Scalia said.

**Moore runs after Nike.** Pro-proletarian director Michael Moore, whose 1989 docu-feature "Roger and Me" vilified General Motors and its CEO, is now targeting Nike in his new film "Big One," reports *Variety*. Like Moore's previous project, "Big One" consists of interviews with downtrodden workers and culminates in a showdown with the company

head—Nike chieftain Phil Knight, asked why his company manufactures its costly footwear outside the United States.

**Unions can close gap.** American working families have experienced stagnant or falling wages since 1973, a new Economic Policy Institute report, *The Prosperity Gap*, documents. "Labor unions are the chief vehicle" to help close that gap through collective bargaining and political action, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney told an EPI conference. "Only by giving workers a voice—and that means unions—can we prevent the rampant downsizing...and worker displacement" that has contributed to the wage gap, he said.

**Pass the salt.** Federal legislation (S. 328) that would severely restrict salting union members signing on at non-union work sites as part of an organizing drive would force workers to pledge they will not try to unionize, Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-MA) said at a June 10 hearing. Robert A. Georgine, president of the AFL-CIO Building and Construction Trades Department, disputed claims that salting harasses employers and costs them money. "The right to organize is our lifeline," he said. The U.S. Supreme Court upheld the legality of salting in 1995.

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## California Labor News

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**Study says cutting daily overtime hits females harder.**

Women in California's work force will be the most vulnerable employees when daily overtime pay is eliminated, according to a recent study. Female workers will be disproportionately affected because they represent 60 percent of the part-time work force and often must contend with child care in order to work, says a report by the University of California and the AFL-CIO titled "Ending Daily Overtime Hurts Women Workers." Earlier this year, the state Industrial Welfare Commission, supported by Gov. Wilson, voted to repeal

laws that require overtime pay for work in excess of eight hours a day. Under the new rules, overtime would be paid only for work in excess of 40 hours a week. The new law will go into effect Jan. 1, 1998.

**Mm-mm-good.** Employees at Campbell Soup Co.'s Sacramento plant are working under a new three-year contract. The settlement was approved by members of the Teamsters Local 228 and covers some 1,200 workers. Employees will receive a wage increase, early retirement incentives, higher annual reimbursements for dental and optical care and a health care cost-sharing program.

**Talking trash in L.A.** Hundreds of janitors marched through the streets of Los Angeles June 19 to bestow the 1997 Top Trash Employer award on Pacific Bell. Pacific Bell was picked for its decision to subcontract janitorial services to a non-union cleaning company that refuses to hire union janitors, members of SEIU Local 1877, who had cleaned Pacific Bell headquarters for up to 20 years.

**Get a (card) check-up.** One hundred workers at Oakland's Asian Health Services became members of SEIU Local 790 when management of the private, non-profit health clinic agreed to a card check May 22. The local's lead organizer, Josie Camacho, reports the company also has agreed to work with the union on public policy issues including clinic funding, health care rights for immigrants and language access standards.



C.E. Setzer (X13) for *The Industrial Worker*  
(*Encyclopedia of the American Left*)



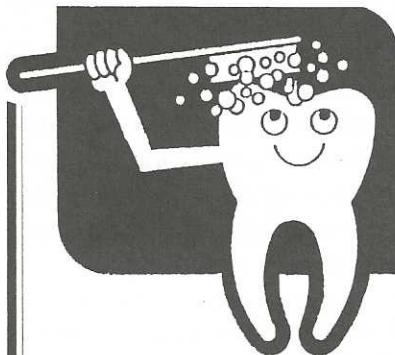
# International Labor News

**Clinton and Mexican government move to gut workplace safety.** The Mexican government has decided to permit privately-owned "verification units" to conduct workplace inspections and, upon "verification of compliance" with regulations, to exempt the inspected companies from further inspections and fines by the government's Secretaria del Trabajo y Previsión Social (STPS). The Mexican government has apparently given up on improving the professionalism and technical capacity of STPS inspectors, who have a widespread reputation for ineffectiveness and corruption. Numerous private companies, including US-owned insurance companies and consulting firms, have submitted applications to be certified by the STPS as official "verification units."

North of the border, both Republican "OSHA reformers" and Clintonian "government re-inventors" have proposed allowing "independent, third-party certification" by private consultants that would also lead, with a positive

"certification," to exemption from OSHA inspections and other benefits for the inspected employers.

This privatization plan has not yet been enacted (unlike Mexico), but is under serious consideration in Washington and has garnered the support of several professional associations whose membership is heavily drawn from private consulting firms. Consultants hired and paid by corporations to conduct "certification inspections" are anything but "independent third parties"; in fact, these firms are entirely dependent on corporate clients for their current and future livelihoods. Any consulting firm that gains a reputation for being a "stickler" for accurately assessing corporate compliance (which might lead to loss of certification and denial of exemptions to its clients) risks seeing its client base shrink into oblivion. In order to maintain their clients, "independent" consultants will be under tremendous pressure to minimize, overlook or simply ignore workplace hazards. ~Campaign for Labor Rights



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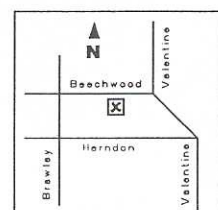
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## Media Notes



### What happened to Valley Labor Forum?

Valley Labor Forum, "Union News and Views, Valleywide-Nationwide" is happy to report that it succeeded in airing six half-hour episodes on KKAG TV-61. It was a very challenging weekly experiment, and what an education! As a result of the lessons learned, the producers and backers (members of the Coalition of Organized Labor) are restructuring the project.

The plan is to create monthly programs on single issues and use them primarily for organizing and member education. By taking more time to produce shorter programs, we hope to improve their quality and usefulness. We may even try marketing them through labor media distribution channels (Labor Beat, Union Producers and Programmers Network, etc.). We need your program ideas! Our first projects will be 1) a video about the recent strike involving county workers; 2) the use and abuse of part-time workers, and 3) UFCW-represented poultry workers (proposed).

**County strikers:** we need **you** to help us make another video. If you participated in the strike and have stories to share, please contact Valley Labor Forum, 221-5338.

### Labor TECH '97

#### Communication Tools for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

Labor communicators will gather July 11-13 at San Francisco State University to show, share and experience the cutting edge of technological tools of 1997—and join them with the current primary goal of labor: **organizing**.

This year we are seeing historic developments for labor both nationally and internationally. The Liverpool Dockers launched a call for an international strike on Jan. 20, 1997. This day of solidarity was built by the launching of the Dockers' Charter on a World Wide Web page. The Korean Workers' use of a general strike web page gained global labor solidarity that has been instrumental in their struggles.

Cost of this year's conference, including optional evening programs, is \$125 per person. For details, contact: LaborTECH '97, PO Box 425584, San Francisco CA 94142/ phone (415)282-1908/e-mail: [labortech@labornet.org](mailto:labortech@labornet.org)/ [www.labornet.org/labortech/](http://www.labornet.org/labortech/).

### Video Resources

**"Workfare, Welfare Nightmare"** takes a hard look at the reality of welfare recipients forced to work for their monthly checks but without the benefits other workers who perform the same tasks enjoy. Includes interviews with WEP Workers Together organizers and labor leaders. Cost: \$30 individuals, \$80 institutions, postpaid.

Order from: Labor at the Crossroads, 99 Hudson St., Third Floor, New York, NY 10013. Phone (212)966-4248 ext. 217; fax (212)966-4589.

**"Would You Cross a Picket Line?"** features the successful 1994-95 strike of newly organized nurses in Port Jervis, New York. It's a good tool for discussion about why workers unionize, women in the work force, and organizing professionals. Cost: \$15 (postpaid).

Order from: Workers Defense League, 275 Seventh Ave., 15th Floor, New York, NY 10001. Phone (212)627-1931; fax (212)627-4628.

### Scalzo Talk

**Mondays & Thursdays 6-9 P.M. on KAAT 103.1 FM.**

*(KAAT is a 25,000 Watt FM station covering the San Joaquin Valley)*

Talk Radio is the fastest-growing radio format in America. "Scalzo Talk" brings a fresh, insightful alternative view to the Central California airwaves. Host Marc Scalzo addresses the issues that concern working Americans.

About the Host: He is currently the mayor pro-tem of the City of Madera, and has more than 18 years of experience in local and state politics as well as 12 years of urban planning and socio-economic research in both the private and public sector. Scalzo was elected mayor of the City of Madera in 1993. In 1994 he ran in the Democratic primary for the California State Assembly.

#### UPPNET: Union Producers & Programmers Network

UPPNET is an international organization of producers of union television and radio programming. For program information and links to hundreds of labor resources, contact:

UPPNET

c/o Labor Education Service

437 Mgmt. & Econ. Bldg., 27119th Avenue S.

University of Minnesota

Minneapolis, MN 55455

Phone: (612)624-4326

E-mail: [uppnet@labornet.org](mailto:uppnet@labornet.org)

WWW: <http://www.mtn.org/jsee/uppnet.html>



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**Fresno, CA 93755**

• Address Correction Requested •

## Welfare reform update and call for urgent action

### Latino Network

Immigrant safety net issues are part of the recommendations of the Conference Committee in Sacramento. We must guarantee that these issues are not negotiated away in the budget process by pressuring the "Big Five." Call the Budget Committee and/or send/fax a letter to the "Big Five" with the following message:

- ✗ Programs that assist immigrants should not be traded away.
- ✗ California cannot let 245,000 legal immigrant families go hungry.
- ✗ Immigrants need naturalization assistance to become active participants in our communities.

✗ The Senate and Assembly budgets contain only \$48 and \$20 million for state-funded food stamps. We need at least \$185 million to restore food assistance to legal immigrants and prevent more damage to local economies.

The "Big Five"	Room #	Phone	Fax
Gov. Pete Wilson		445-2841	445-4633
Speaker Cruz Bustamante	219	445-8514	324-7129
Sen. President Bill Lockyer	205	445-6671	323-2234
Sen. Rob Hurtt	305	445-5831	323-8985
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