

## LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE

### Go Vote!

The Primary Election is a few days away. Across California, voters will go to the polls on Tuesday, June 7 and decide who will advance to the General Election. They'll also make a decision on one initiative.



Todd Bloomstine

We discuss some of California's hot races, Proposition 50 and the importance of the Primary Elections in this newsletter. The SCCA PAC even contributed to candidates in three out of the five hot races mentioned below. But first, a quick depressing note.

Weather, traffic, sports, family life and a whole host of other excuses will prevent voters from going to the polls on June 7. And get this -- only 18% of eligible voters actually voted in the June 2014 Primary. That's an abysmal showing -- only 18%! We'll probably see a similar rate on Tuesday's election.



So consider this your public service announcement of the day: Go vote, and maybe bring a voter with you. (Please don't vote twice though. You can go to jail for that.)

And if you aren't registered to vote or if you didn't change your registration information when you recently moved, don't worry. You can vote by provisional ballot. Read more about provisional ballots by [clicking here](#). There truly is no excuse not to vote.

And while we're talking about voting, consider switching to permanent absentee ballot status. Michelle and I found ourselves working on campaigns in the 1990s so we couldn't go to our polling place on Election day. So instead, we applied for permanent absentee ballot status in our county. Now we vote by mail for every election. We haven't missed an election since! [Click here](#) for more information about voting by mail and applying for permanent absentee ballot status.

I'm not going to be so cliché as to say voting is a civic responsibility, but it really is. **Please go vote!**

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### Rumor Has It...

That Treasurer John Chiang is going to run for Governor.

### Fact Check...

Truth! Four days after addressing the SCCA General Membership Meeting at the Castaway Restaurant, Chiang announced his candidacy for Governor in 2018. John Chiang said, "As your next Governor, I have a blueprint for expanding and renewing the California dream through fixing our crumbling infrastructure, making retirement security our generation's call to arms, and rebuilding California's middle class through better jobs and improved educational opportunities." A fiscally conservative Democrat just might attract moderate and Republican Californian support.



# Does the Primary Election Really Matter?

The Primary Election occurs each June of an election year and it is the opportunity for the political parties to choose their candidates for General Election in November.

But, yes. It does really matter.

In recent years, there have been a lot of changes to how California runs its Primary Elections. First, we need to remember that Proposition 14 changed everything related to primaries. Proposition 14 was authored by then-Senator Abel Maldonado, a moderate Republican. It created a “top-two” primary and was approved in 2010. This style of Primary Election means that if there are several people running for the same office, those who are the top two vote-getters go onto the general election in November, regardless of party. Previously the top vote-getter from each party would advance to the General Election. This is a significant change.

One quirk in the primary system is that no-party preference (NPP) voters (voters that choose no party registration, formerly called “declined-to-state”) can not vote in the Republican, Green and Peace and Freedom Presidential Primaries, but NPPs can vote in the Democratic, American Independent and Libertarian Presidential primaries. This was a decision made by the national parties and only applies to the Presidential Primary. NPPs (they make up 23.9% of the registered voters) can vote in all other (Assembly, Senate, BOE, etc.) contests.

The intent behind Prop 14 is to lessen the number of candidates from the political extremes and allow for more moderate individuals to be elected to the Legislature, which should ultimately moderate the whole Legislature.



Another recent change to how elections are conducted was the passage of Senate Bill 202, authored by Senator Loni Hancock (D-Berkeley) in 2011. This measure moved all voter placed initiatives to the November ballot only. The theory being that the general election typically attracts more voters. In fact, there have been more than 2 million votes cast in General Elections than Primaries since 2000. Of course the unintended consequence is that the General Election will now be very crowded with many propositions. One of the general political theories with propositions is that the more one the ballot, the higher chance the voter will simply vote “no.”

For whatever reason, less people vote in Primary Elections than Generals. This is not OK. Primaries are even MORE important than ever since the passage of Proposition 14.

## Proposition 50: What Happens when a Legislator is Suspended?

There is one initiative on the June ballot, Proposition 50. This proposition deals with the ability of the California Legislature to suspend its members — including suspending their pay and benefits.

Under current law, the Legislative Counsel’s Office (essentially the legislature’s lawyers) notes that members can be suspended from their chambers but their salaries and benefits can not be suspended. While this doesn’t seem like something that would be dealt with on a regular basis, the Senate actually suspended three members (two for corruptions charges and one for not “residing” in the district he represented) in 2014. This was the first time in the Senate’s 164 year history that members were suspended.

**What a Yes votes means:** Supporting this measure means that you approve of the Legislature having the ability to suspend mem-

bers along with their pay and benefits. The League of Women Voters states their support of Prop 50 by saying they “support measures that promote an open governmental system that is representative, accountable, and responsive.”

**What a No vote means:** Opposing this measure means that you support the current resources available to the Legislature in suspending and monitoring its members. Senator Joel Anderson is opposed to this measure and he states, “Rather than accepting what legislative leaders want you to believe, I encourage you to look closer that the history of Prop 50 to understand how it will perpetuate the culture of corruption in the State Capitol, deny millions of Californians their voice in Sacramento and allow capitol insiders to stifle political opposition.” Senate Anderson believes Proposition 50 will be used to censure legislative dissenters.

# HOT Primary Races to Watch

Californians will cast their votes for many candidates in this year's Primary Election. Most of the races for the Assembly and Senate are pretty predictable due to voter registration advantages in each district. Many districts have voter registrations differences of 10% (some upwards 40%) or more. Those races are quite predictable. But not all the races are on auto-pilot. Take a look below for a snapshot of a few races to keep an eye on and why they may just surprise you.

**Candidates:** Assemblymember Catherine Baker (R) vs. Cheryl Cook-Kallio (D)

**District:** Assembly District 16, Walnut Creek area

**Registration:** Leans Democrat, 39.2% Democratic and 31.6% Republican registration.

**What to watch:** This is the only Republican held seat in the Bay Area. All other seats are held by the majority party. This seat is the #1 target for Democrats this election cycle. Keep an eye out on this race for how Baker handles herself and to find out what the Democrats want to see in a representative from this district. Speaker Anthony Rendon stated he'd commit a lot of Democratic resources to this race.

**Candidates:** Assemblymember Patty Lopez (D) vs. Raul Bocanegra (D)

**District:** Assembly District 39, Sylmar area

**Registration:** Safe Democrat, 51.1% Democratic and 16.6% Republican registration

**What to Watch:** This is a repeat race from when novice politico Patty Lopez defeated incumbent Raul Bocanegra in the November 2014 election by only 467 votes. This race was the shocker of the 2014 General Election. Then-Assemblymember Raul Bocanegra was an upcoming Democrat that was destined to find a leadership position in the Assembly. But his destiny was thwarted by rookie Lopez. Now Bocanegra wants his seat back and so do some serious supporters. Lopez is being outspent 10 to 1 and independent expenditure campaigns are making their presence felt. Only time will tell if Lopez will hang onto this seat. I'd bet Bocanegra will retake it.

**Candidates:** Assemblymember Cheryl Brown (D) vs. Eloise Gomez Reyes (D)

**District:** Assembly District 47, San Bernardino area

**Registration:** Safe Democrat, 48.6% Democrat and 22.8% Republican registration.

**What to watch:** This race will continue to heat up as it is an intra-party fight between the business-friendly Democrats, current Assemblymember Cheryl Brown and the more liberal Democrat, teacher Eloise Gomez Reyes. Recently, Chevron spent \$1 million on an independent expenditure in support of Brown.

The fight centers around Brown's opposition to SB 350, a bill that would have mandated reduced consumption of petroleum in California.

**Candidates:** Assemblymember David Hadley (R) vs. Al Muratsuchi (D)

**District:** Assembly District 66, Torrance area

**Registration:** Toss Up, 39.6% Democratic and 32.6% Republican registration

**What to Watch:** This is a repeat race from 2014, when Hadley beat the then-incumbent Al Muratsuchi for the opportunity to represent the 66th district with less than 1000 votes separating them. This is a Democrat leaning district, so it will be a race to watch. The standard political thinking is that the incumbents always have the advantage in elections. But that rule was negated when Hadley beat then Assemblymember Muratsuchi. Will there be another upset in the 66th Assembly District?

**Candidates:** Senator Jim Beall (D) vs. Assemblymember Nora Campos (D)

**District:** Senate District 15, San Jose area

**Registration:** Safe Democrat, 44.4% Democratic and 22.7% Republican registration

**What to Watch:** This is another intra-party race. Senator Jim Beall is the incumbent and is being challenged by a current Assemblymember. This is a race to keep an eye on since Senator Beall is the leading voice when it comes to transportation funding and establishing a secure and steady transportation funding structure. Some shenanigans could occur in the race since there are three candidates, two Democrats and one Republican. Will this be a Dem v. Dem or Dem v. Rep race? And if it is Dem v. Rep, who will be the Democrat?

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# 2016 General Election Initiatives

<b><u>Pending Signature Verification</u></b>		
<b>Title</b>	<b>Summary</b>	<b>Status</b>
Death Penalty	Repeals the death penalty as a punishment for those found guilty of murder and replaces it with imprisonment without the possibility of parole.	Random Sample
Firearms. Ammunition Sales	Prohibits possession of large capacity ammunition. Requires background checks for ammunition purchases.	Random Sample
Marijuana Legalization	Legalizes marijuana.	Random Sample
Legislature. Legislation and proceedings	Requires that every bill voted on by the Legislature be in print and available online for 72 hours prior to a vote unless there is an emergency.	Random Sample
Hospitals. Executive Compensation	Prohibits hospitals from paying executives (wages and benefits) more than the President (currently at \$450,000).	Random Sample
Tax Extension to Fund Education and Healthcare	Extends by twelve years the personal income tax increase for education originally enacted in 2012 (income over: \$250,000 for single filers, \$500,000 for joint filers, and \$340,000 for head of household filers).	Random Sample
Death Penalty. Procedures	Changes the procedure governing state court appeals and petitions governing death penalty convictions and sentences.	Random Sample
Carry out bags. Charges	Redirects the monies collected from the sale of carry-out bags to a special fund administered by the Wildlife Conservation Board to support specific environmental projects.	Random Sample
Cigarette Tax to Fund Healthcare, Tobacco Use Prevention, research, and Law Enforcement	Increases the tax on cigarettes to \$2 per pack. Allocates funding to healthcare programs, tobacco use prevention/control, among other programs.	Random Sample
Criminal Sentences. Juvenile Criminal Proceedings and Sentencing	Allows parole consideration for those convicted of non-violent felonies upon completion of a prison term for a primary offense	Raw Count

