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State Senator Wolk praises Governor Brown as she takes on new responsibilities
by Tim Fenton



...not any good choices.

[Gov. Brown]..breath of fresh air..right person..smart, unpredictable, unorthodox..working hard...is everywhere

...first honest and tough budget...

...pension reform, important to state and local government...

...gradually sending responsibility and funding to the local level

...less expensive way to provide better services...

...better way to fund water projects...

ensure guarantees for the delta if the canal is built..water quality, guarantees for agriculture, enough water for fish runs and habitat

Parks do not have lots of advocates in budget battles.

First the good news...our State Senator, Lois Wolk, is thrilled to have Jerry Brown sitting in the governor's office and believes strongly that he's the right person to take on the huge challenges our state is struggling with.

Now for the bad...Sen. Wolk describes California's budget crisis as "the worst I've ever seen" in her many years of government service. "There are not any good choices," she says. But she adds that Gov. Brown has proposed "the first honest, tough budget that has been presented [to the legislature]".

We met with Sen. Wolk recently as she shoulders a new mega responsibility in the Senate as Chair of its newly formed Governance and Finance Committee. It is tasked with restructuring the relationship between state and local governments and reforming our obviously broken budgeting process. The committee will be looking for ways state government can devolve appropriate functions and funding from its

Sacramento bureaucracy down to county and municipal governments where they will "bring government closer to the people" and have potential to be more effectively and efficiently delivered.

Key to reforming the budgeting process will be developing a performance leadership and accountability system that both supports existing performance measurement efforts and articulates a vision for how performance measurement can be used to better manage government going forward. Wolk says this is needed because, "now we just don't know if funds are effectively spent."

Wolk is one of the capital's most industrious legislators, having introduced 28 new bills in the first quarter of 2011 alone. One she is especially vocal for pursues "data sharing." State agencies serving the same clients often can not cooperate even to benefit clients because they're forbidden to share information. Her bill will enable the sharing of select data while assuring clients' privacy. Another proposes the concept of "solar gardens" whereby individual electricity users and businesses can buy a piece of the generating capacity of large solar farms such as the one just north of Davis on Pole Line Road.

Also high among Wolk's priorities is her Delta Protection Act, SB 200, that builds on proposals advanced in

1980 by Gov. Brown during his first term in office. The bill sets up conditions that must exist prior to building a canal that would divert Delta water, thus providing assurances of sufficient water for local agriculture.

In response to Gov. Brown's proposal to decommission local governments' redevelopment agencies, Wolk has offered SB 214 setting up Infrastructure Financing Districts to replace the RDAs. Her bill would not allow diversion of funds away from schools as RDAs now do. She noted that currently some \$3 million is being diverted from Davis schools to other uses.

In March Lois Wolk was named Legislator of the Year by the California Park and Recreation Society recognizing her history of support for parks, in addition to her recent introduction of SB 580. This bill would preserve the integrity of California's state park system and protect taxpayers' investments in parks by prohibiting developments that cost the state valuable parklands. Wolk added that, while local and federal parks have such protections, our state parks do not.

Looping back to the budget crisis as our conversation ended, Wolk commended the job Gov. Brown is doing to get state government on a sustainable basis. **(Sen. Wolk interview continued page 2.)**

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Calendar of Events

Tues., May 3, 7:00-9:00 pm, regular DDC Board business meeting Davis Branch Yolo County Library, general members and public welcomed

Sun., May 1, 5:30-7:30 pm, Congressman Mike Thompson's Annual Pasta Dinner, Veteran's Memorial Hall, Davis, Wine tasting, silent auction, great pasta personally served by Congressman Mike Thompson providing a chance to say "thank you." Contact Maggie Burns 707-967-9202 or <burns.margaret99@gmail.com>

Sun., June 5, 11:00 am-3:00 pm, Champagne Brunch, hosted by Bill Julian and Robin Kulakow at their home, 43556 Almond Lane, Willowbank. A buffet brunch with refreshment will be followed by presentations featuring state and local elected officials.

April-May 4: Volunteer for Measure A (see below)

Richard Harris explains Measure A's importance by Carl Schmid

Davis School Board President Richard Harris (shown r. with DDC Pres. Arun Sen) explained the emergency now confronting Davis Schools and the importance of passing Measure A to the DDC Board at its April meeting. Due to ongoing cuts in state funding, the school district will have to lay off 70 highly, qualified people, who are devoted to our schools, and cut classes for children at a critical time in their education unless it secures the funding provided by Measure A. Since the previous edition of the Newsletter was devoted exclusively to Measure A, the reasons in favor of voting yes will not be repeated here.



Arun presenting Richard with the Board's endorsement of Measure A reported in the April Newsletter

However, the local budgetary situation is even more dire when placed within the context of the state's ongoing problems and compounded by the fact that Measures Q and W are each scheduled to expire unless they are extended by the voters in yet another future election. To date, Gov. Brown has been unsuccessful in his efforts to persuade any Republican legislators to allow a statewide vote on additional taxes and, presently, there is no cause for optimism that he will succeed in the future (see "Sen. Wolk" immediately below). Without this added revenue, all school districts in California will certainly suffer additional budget cuts. When asked about this situation, Richard frankly replied, "Does this mean that there will not be an emergency next year? No." Viewed in this light, passage of Measure A becomes even more imperative if we are to maintain the quality of our schools.

As Richard further explained, Davis has long cherished high quality education. Our truly "amazing" schools are a source of local pride and truly central to our "community." **Vote Yes on A, and if you wish to help, contact the volunteer coordinator, Leslie_q_hunter@hotmail.com or phone 792-1264.**

*Amazing what we have compared to other school districts.
...about the community...
People move here because of the schools.
...emergency...
..lay off 70 people..
...eliminate 7th period...electives..*

(Sen. Wolk interview continued from p. 1) His proposals for closing the \$25 billion budget gap depend half on programs cuts, which will inflict great pain, and half on revenue gained from extending some temporary taxes for two more years. The cuts are now law, but Republican legislators are blocking the two thirds vote needed to get the tax extension proposals on a June referendum ballot. Wolk indicated that prospects for winning the needed Republican votes are poor.

As Wolk headed back to the capital, we wished better days ahead for her and the state. Oh how they both need them.

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(continued p.3)

John Burton's Letter to Democrats [Ed. Note: This reprinted note, from Chairman John Burton captures the essence of the ongoing debate occurring both here and in Washington.]

Statement of California Democratic Party Chairman John Burton on GOP's Continued Call for Draconian Cuts to Services in Order to Benefit Multi-Millionaires and Billionaires

Republicans in Washington, D.C. continue to push for cuts to housing assistance for veterans, cuts to Medicare, cuts to Social Security, cuts to children's health, and cuts to job training programs all so that they can keep giving tax breaks to oil companies and the richest Americans.

Despite Republican claims to the contrary, the rich are paying less in income tax than they have in decades. The richest Americans today enjoy an income tax rate of 35% maximum and most people pay less than 30%. In the 1960s the richest Americans paid up to 55% in income taxes.

The richest 1% of Americans now hold 40% of our nation's wealth. Thirty years ago the top 1% held only 24% of the total wealth in the U.S. Put another way: for the past thirty years we've lived through one of the largest transfers of wealth from middle-class Americans to the super rich.

Will Republicans only be happy when 60% of our collective worth is in the hands of the richest 1%? How about 85% of the nation's wealth in the hands of the top 1%?

In California and across the nation, people are being asked to do with less and less as Republicans demand even greater cuts to critical services; all so that the billionaires can buy more mansions, yachts, and planes.

The time has come for Democrats to draw a line in the sand: no more program cuts at the expense of the middle class and the poor to benefit billionaires and multi-millionaires. It is time to have them pay their fair share. It is also time to end tax subsidies for oil companies, drug companies, and multi-national corporations.

Enough is enough.

Peace and friendship,

John Burton,
Chair
California Democratic Party

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(cont'd. p.2)

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Join the Celebration: Champagne Brunch on June 5 at 11:00 am



The Champagne Brunch will again be hosted by Bill Julian and Ron Kulakow at their home (see Calendar p.2). The brunch is a very good buffet provided by Club members and served with the help of the Davis College Democrats. In addition to music, the formal program features presentations given by State Senator Lois Wolk, Assemblymember Mariko Yamada, County Supervisors Don Saylor and Jim Provenza, and most other elected county, city and school board officials. Prominent keynote speakers in previous years have included notable statewide officials such as Lt. Gov. John Garamendi and Secretary of State Debra Bowen. We hope and soon expect to secure a speaking commitment from another

constitutional officer as the keynote speaker for this year's event and will make this announcement as soon as possible.

Funding provided from this event is essential for the Club to pursue community activities, such as DDC's recent support for Measure A (see p.2), which was unprecedented for a non-partisan ballot issue. Please join us for an enjoyable event while supporting your community.

**Do not forget:
VOTE YES
Measure A**

June 5, Champagne Brunch

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(last chance)!

Do you have a RED DOT
attached to your newsletter?
If so, please pay your Club dues.

See the website photo
gallery

www.davisdemocraticclubg.org

For Measure A visit
www.yesforourstudents.org

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