



Los Angeles Area
Chamber of Commerce

TUESDAY | July 26, 2005

THE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE:

Keep the Special Election



Coming up at the Chamber

[View all upcoming events on our web calendar.](#)

THU | July 28
Economic Development & Land Use Committee Meeting
[more info](#)

FRI | July 29
Mobility 21 Coalition Meeting
[more info](#)

TUE | Aug. 9
Referral Network
A Growing Companies program sponsored by Wells Fargo
[more info](#)

TUE | Aug. 23
Referral Network
A Growing Companies program sponsored by Wells Fargo
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FRI | Sept. 2
Education & Workforce Committee Meeting
[more info](#) | [register](#)

WED | Sept. 7
Health Care Committee Meeting
[more info](#) | [register](#)

TUE | Sept. 13
Referral Network
A Growing Companies program sponsored by Wells Fargo
[more info](#)

The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, with nearly 1,400 members, is the voice of business in L.A. County. Founded in 1888, the Chamber promotes a prosperous economy and quality of life in the Los Angeles region. For more information, visit www.lachamber.org

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Arnold Schwarzenegger was elected governor because the people of California believed our state was adrift. A lack of leadership and the state's inability to address its growing fiscal problems required a change at the top, and the voters decided to elect a new face (to politics, anyway) and a fresh voice in Schwarzenegger.

Throughout his campaign, he made it clear that it would be a new day in Sacramento. He would question everything, blow up the boxes in government, and bring about real reform.

He began in earnest. From his California Performance Review to the workers' comp reforms; from a call to reform (not eliminate) public employee pensions to balancing the budget, the governor has said what needed to be said. He has made proposals to get us back on track. He even got us a budget that was essentially on-time.

But then the special interests took over and have wasted no time (or money) attacking him, following him around California, and exaggerating their claims about his proposals, even before the campaign begins for the special election to decide some of these matters this fall. They even got some of the items taken off the ballot, so voters won't have a chance to express their views.

Over the last several months, Schwarzenegger's popularity with voters has declined commensurate with the dollars spent by teacher unions that unfairly criticize and characterize his proposals as anti-education.

Nothing could be further from the truth. But, when you pay for the air time, you can say just about anything.

In the last few days, reporters have dogged the governor, questioning whether he plans to cancel the special election. He has continued to say no. We hope he doesn't cancel the election. We believe Californians are ready to make a real down payment on reform--and it begins this November.

If voters have the opportunity to learn more about what Schwarzenegger is proposing--rather than just hear the half-truths of special interests' TV ads--we believe his popularity will climb once again.

The governor has taken a big hit by telling it like it is. Unfortunately, we haven't heard the honest truth from Sacramento in recent years. We are now, and it hurts. But instead of swallowing the hard pills of reform and reprioritizing, voters seem to be shooting at the messenger.

Nobody likes to hear bad news, but Californians must accept the fact that the state's spending is mushrooming, while the quality of services continues to decline. For instance, Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata correctly characterizes [Prop. 98](#)--which increases education spending each year regardless of revenues--as an "escalator with no end." That's why we need [Prop. 76](#)--to give the governor the authority to make cuts when necessary.

We must also accept the fact that since term limits were enacted, legislators on both sides of the aisle too often base decisions on politics that benefit them, rather than on sound policy.

It will be too bad for California's future if we squander what may be our only opportunity for real reform. So let's hope we have a chance to make a difference on Nov. 8.

And that's *The Business Perspective*.

Russell J. Hammer
President & CEO
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

The Business Perspective is an award-winning weekly opinion column by Rusty Hammer, President & CEO, LA Area Chamber

L.A. Business THIS WEEK

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