

Wilson

The New Administration

AFTER A DECADE of expanding economic opportunity and personal freedom through the Reagan-Deukmejian policies of lower taxes and limited government, we more recently have

Mandate for Conservative Change

James W. Robinson

seen an unfortunate resurgence of the old tax and spend mentality in the nation's state houses and in Washington. Yet in 1990, voters across the country consistently rejected this liberal trend, showing a broad desire to return

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THE CHIEF PROBLEM facing the Wilson administration is the progressive unaccountability of the government of the state and of the nation. The secondary problem is the vast inefficiency and wastefulness, and the swollen scope and scale, of the gov-

The Test of His Life

L. P. Arnn

ernment's every operation.

Gov. Deukmejian fought as hard as a man has fought in that job in memory. He vetoed more

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to an era of conservative change. One fourth of all governors running for reelection lost, most because they raised taxes.

In California, voters rejected virtually every measure on the ballot to raise taxes or increase government debt, spending and regulation. They struck forcefully at the legislative establishment by enacting term limits, and passed Gov. Deukmejian's plan to put prison inmates to work, a concept vociferously opposed by the liberal establishment.

For the first time since 1954 voters are replacing an outgoing governor with a new governor from the same party. Clearly, Californians like George Deukmejian's common sense leadership — after the Jerry Brown

bills and stood firm on more controversial issues than any recent predecessor. Nonetheless, government grew at the accustomed rapid pace, outstripping growth in population, or growth of the gross state product, or of any relevant comparative measure. In the end it had increased its size by well over 100 percent. We are firmly established as a leader among leaders in high-taxed states. Yet we have too little money for roads, bridges, school buildings, water recovery, or waste disposal.

Our education system — now much larger than the whole state government when Deukmejian

debacle — and see in Governor-elect Wilson a capable leader who can build on its successes.

What are the key elements of the conservative change begun under Gov. Deukmejian's leadership? California is changing from a high tax to a moderate tax state. We are transforming an over-regulated economy into a job-producing deregulated economy. A liberal judiciary and criminal justice policy have been largely supplanted by a conservative approach. A philosophy of welfare dependency has been replaced with a workfare policy and 2.8 million new private sector job opportunities. Our state, known in 1982 for budget deficits and fiscal irresponsibility, is now respected by the financial community for budget surpluses and budget reform.

IT IS NO secret that some California conservatives have in the past cast a skeptical eye on Pete Wilson. But I believe conservatives should take great comfort

took office and guaranteed in the Constitution a fat portion of new revenues — continues to deliver putrid, though in some respects slightly improved, results. We compete with the likes of Poland; the worst school in Hong Kong rivals the best in California. Red tape and central administration multiply. And we go toward year-around schooling.

OF COURSE THE welfare system continues to encourage unwed motherhood and divorce. Local government, partly driven by the avarice of central authority, continues to regulate the middle class out of the housing mar-

in his election and in the message voters sent through their actions on the ballot measures.

No two governors hold exactly the same priorities and emphases, and that is as it should be. But if conservatives are hoping for a governor who will continue to unleash private enterprise, hold the line on needless government, pursue significant budget reform, appoint judges who are tough on crime, and perhaps most importantly, hold out for fair redistricting, I predict we will find kindred spirits in Pete Wilson and his administration.

TO SAY IT will not be easy could be the understatement of the year. The Wilson Administration will be as lonely as we have been in Sacramento, surrounded by opponents in government and the media. We often felt we were doing battle alone. During disputes with the Legislature, the liberal interest groups were extremely vocal — demonstrations were held, letters to the

editor and op-ed articles appeared, and the lobbyists and public relations firms were unleashed. Supporters of our position seemed to fall silent.

Those who want to see Gov. Wilson *and* our common sense ideals prevail must make the political and policy playing fields competitive. After eight years in Sacramento's big government cocoon, I can tell you the drum-beat demands for higher taxes and bigger government are relentless. Even after an election that proved the people reject that philosophy, it is easy for an administration all alone in Sacramento to lose its perspective.

As the new administration assumes office, the responsible conservative course is not to nit-pick every decision made by the new governor, but to provide him with critically needed backing for our philosophy and for his efforts to stand up to his many opponents in Sacramento and win both fair redistricting and budget reform.

ket. Rent control becomes more dominant; for the young, home ownership is a fading dream.

THE FESTERING OF these problems gives rise constantly to calls for more taxation. In truth, we are already taxed massively too much, and what we do not waste, we deploy in causes that do harm to most people affected.

The people know better than the politicians. Term limits are a crude instrument that will probably strengthen the bureaucracy. But they show the people know the system is no longer in their control. If Wilson can make the good opinions of the citizens a

weapon in his arsenal, he could do what must be done.

The urgent requirement is reform. Deukmejian was elected to limit and to change the government. Wilson was not. And Wilson will deal with a Legislature more hostile, and its minority less aggressive and coherent, than his predecessor.

We do not, then, face a happy outlook. Wilson is a good man, and able, if wrong on several important issues. He will find the governorship of California to be the test of his life. Let us hope, for all our sakes, that he passes. Let us fight for the best, but be prepared for the worst.

The New Legislature

THE EFFECTS OF term limits and newly drawn districts will ripple through the Legislature in 1992 like the aftershocks of a political earthquake. Assuming Prop. 130 survives legal challenge, which is likely, every legislator now faces departure from

The Political Earthquake

Robert Naylor

office in 1996. All incumbent senators face only one more reelection. But massive turnover will likely begin well before 1996 as legislators depart to seize career opportunities, whether arising outside the Legislature or from redistricting. Legislators presented with opportunities for attractive employment will take them before their six years of remaining service expire rather than risk being limited to less attractive offers.

But redistricting will cause the first departures. California will gain seven Congressional seats in 1992 (with others opening up as both Republicans and Democrats seek the two U.S. Senate seats up for election that year). There will be an unprecedented musical-chairs-like scramble as members of both houses seek Congressional seats, Assemblymembers seek the vacated Senate seats, and some incumbents run against others because of dramatic shifts in district lines.

The partisan political effect of

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