

Now, suddenly, we find ourselves tugged in three directions. We have Republicans who are perfectly willing to continue the government assault on our people, we have Republicans who want to dismantle the apparatus of government oppression and, finally, we have the smallest group which wants to develop a coherent Republican alternative to philosophical liberalism.

With a bare 40 members in each Assembly caucus, there are no votes to spare. Both sides are dealing, quite literally, with the lowest common denominator. The best we can hope for is to see the Assembly move away from that which has been most offensive to outside observers: the notion that the Legislature has become a sophisticated extortion ring playing one special interest off against another. We need to move debate on major issues from the committees to the floor.

We should insist that a limited number of issues be scheduled for full floor debate, with each caucus assigning various members to present the respective caucus positions on the floor. This would create a house that was more partisan, but less petty — and certainly less subject to the corruption of individual members.

Many do not realize that the old order is dead. Term limits means that two-thirds of the Assembly will usually be freshmen or sophomores. Long-term relationships among committee chairmen and lobbyists are a thing of the past and that means, practically speaking, the diffusion of power. The Party caucuses will eventually organize that power, but they can only do so by developing a philosophically coherent platform. That's what parties are. Without philosophy, they are not parties, they are gangs.

Steven Hayward

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There is, alas, no "Contract with California" that legislative Republicans can point to as a road map and mandate for this legislative session, but a California version of the Contract with America would surely include the following items:

- Reform of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). This legal-procedural nightmare, which routinely produces delays of several years along with 1500-page Environmental Impact Reports that have little to do with environmental protection, is one of the chief obstacles to affordable housing and reasonable development. Its legitimate purpose — protecting sensitive environmental resources — can be accomplished more cheaply and quickly through some modest reforms including a criteria-based evaluation process, a higher threshold for projects that come under its purview, and limitations on third-party rights to tie up projects in endless litigation.

- Other regulatory reform. California should adopt strict cost-benefit guidelines for proposed regulations, and should further require that regulations be implemented in order of their cost-effectiveness — something regulators (especially air

quality districts) often refuse to do because more costly regulations often generate higher fees for the regulatory agency.

- Adopt zero-based budgeting and abolish "current services budgeting," just like the Contract with America. In California, "current services budgeting" leads to as much fiscal flim-flamery as in Washington D.C.

- Tort reform. California is one of the most litigious states in the nation, with more than 800,000 civil suits filed each year. In addition to giving the "loser pays" idea a tryout, we should also place reasonable limits on class action suits and shareholder suits.

- Property rights protection. California should follow the lead of other states in requiring "takings implication assessments" on proposed laws and regulations, and should define a threshold beyond which property owners must automatically be compensated.

- Education. Short of a full-fledged school choice program, Republicans should at least be able to gain a majority in favor of lifting the cap on the number of charter schools that can be set up in the state. Bowing to teachers' union pressure, that number is presently restricted. Charter schools, essentially deregulated public schools, offer the best intermediate hope for educational reform ideas and competition to be tried out.



William D. Eggers

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Do:

1. Cut income taxes by 15 percent.
2. Pass an ambitious welfare reform that includes: work requirements, reduced benefits, a time limit, family cap, and group homes for teenage mothers.
3. Remove legislative and constitutional barriers to state and local privatization.
4. Enact an Infrastructure Privatization measure.
5. Give top priority to Tom Campbell's education reform package.
6. Lift the cap on charter schools.
7. Finish the job on workers' comp reform (remove stress claims).
8. Reform environmental and land-use regulations.
9. Return to constitutional limits on spending and borrowing.
10. Rein-in asset forfeiture law.

Do Not:

1. Quibble among yourselves.
 2. Shift costs to local governments.
 3. Be "moderate" and "responsible."
- For some time now California, long thought of as being on the cutting edge of public policy innovation, has represented the cutting edge of everything wrong with government: high taxes, crippling regulations, deadening bureaucracy, and a Legislature bent on maintaining the status quo and protecting

the monopoly position of the state's powerful public employee unions.

In November, taxpayers said in no uncertain terms they wanted smaller, better government. California state government needs to be downsized. Governor Wilson and the Assembly Republicans should study the success that governors like Tommy Thompson, John Engler, and William Weld have had in cutting taxes, abolishing programs, privatizing services, and enacting bold welfare and education reforms. They succeeded because they were willing to take risks, stand firm on principle, and push the boundaries of what is considered politically acceptable.



Michael S. Fredenburg

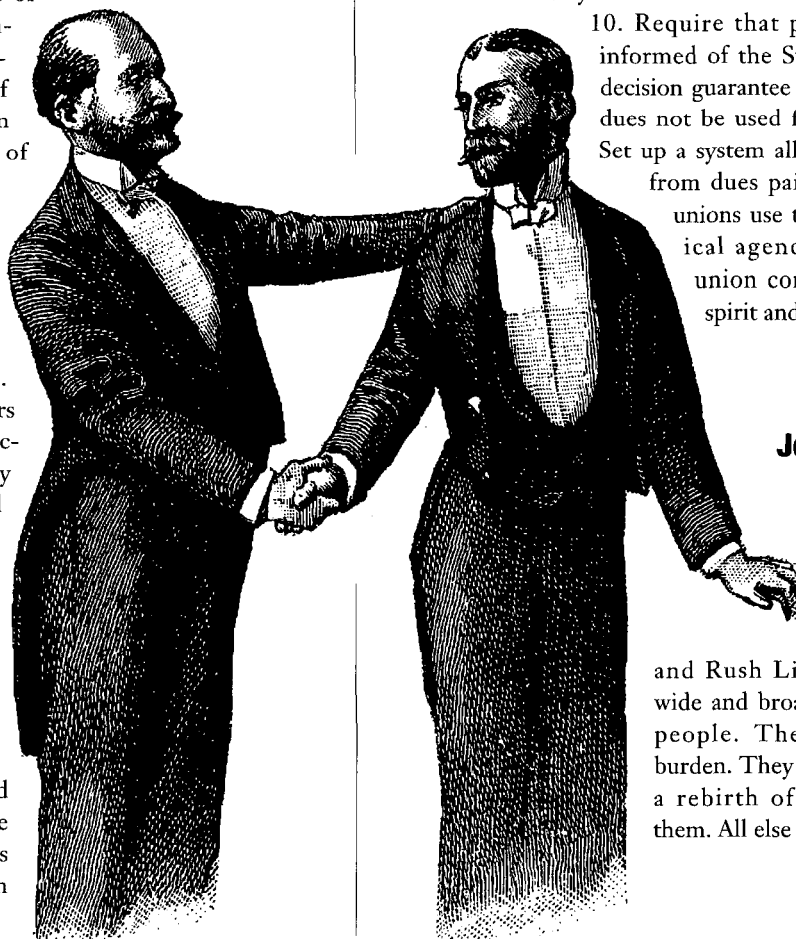
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An iron triangle of public employee unions, trial lawyers, and socialist/Democrat legislators dominates California politics, expanding the size of government, creating more public sector jobs, income for trial lawyers, and power for lawmakers. Ten steps to break this iron triangle would be:

1. Put a constitutional amendment on the ballot requiring that special assessments receive a 60 percent majority vote of the people. Since the passage of Proposition 13, local governments have used special assessment districts to levy billions of dollars in additional taxes from homeowners without a vote of the people.

2. Eliminate the state-mandated and state-run Workers' Compensation System and allow private companies to insure employers and employees. Private insurers and employers would come up with a fee structure far below that currently paid by employers and would be able to supply at least the same benefits.

3. Eliminate the state Department of Education, which has largely co-opted the power once reserved to local school boards, returning control to the local level. Soaring costs and falling academic performance can be linked to California's centralization of education policy and curriculum.



4. Eliminate CALTRANS as a primary vehicle for building and maintaining roads and bid out the work to private contractors on a competitive basis. This is a no brainer. It will save taxpayers millions every year.

5. End public funding for anti-smoking and anti-tobacco company ads. Smoking is legal. Maybe it shouldn't be, but that is another debate. Tobacco company executives are not criminals and their moral standing certainly cannot be judged by health department bureaucrats. The government's millions collected in "sin" taxes generated by tobacco sales add hypocrisy to this campaign's reprehensible moral arrogance.

6. Take a hard line on state employee contract renegotiation to bring public employee salary and benefit packages down to comparable private sector levels. (This might be too generous. Considering the risk value of money, private sector workers' relative lack of job security should insure them higher remuneration.)

7. Comprehensively review all state regulatory agencies. Conservatively, half of them could be eliminated completely as redundant, unnecessary, or simply morally repugnant. Start with AQMD and the California Coastal Commission.

8. Following Montana's lead, tell the federal government to take a flying leap and increase some of California's rural speed limits to 80 mph.

9. Repeal the motorcycle helmet law and especially the bicycle helmet law.

10. Require that public employees be informed of the Supreme Court's Beck decision guarantee that mandatory union dues not be used for political purposes. Set up a system allowing easy deduction from dues paid of any portion the unions use to advance their political agenda. Closely monitor union compliance with Beck's spirit and letter.



John Kurzweil

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Learn from
Ronald Reagan

and Rush Limbaugh — develop wide and broad support among the people. They bear liberalism's burden. They will benefit most from a rebirth of freedom. Mobilize them. All else will follow.

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