

## A New, Consumer Friendly Electric

### Power Industry

By Assemblyman Jim Brulte

**A**FFORDABLE ELECTRIC power is a serious matter in California: all customers — small businesses, residential consumers, and large users — rely on it, not as a luxury, but as a necessity. Assembly Bill 1890 (Brulte), recently signed by Governor Pete Wilson, ushers in a new era of competition, making California the first state in the nation to bust-up its electric monopolies. Implementation of AB 1890 is a significant step in guaranteeing consumers lower rates, increased reliability, and better service. In effect, it will allow Californians to shop for the best electric prices, in a competitive market, to meet their needs — not those of the power providers.

Currently, California electricity customers are assigned an electric generation provider based on whether their location falls within a certain utility's territory. This system, stifling competition, has resulted in rates that are a full 40 percent higher than the national average. The state's three major privately-owned electric utilities are Pacific Gas & Electric, San Diego Gas & Electric, and Southern California Edison. AB 1890 will require these monopolies to restructure, relinquishing their control of transmission facilities and

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*Assemblyman Jim Brulte represents the 63rd Assembly District and is the author of Assembly Bill 1890.*



## Public

### Policy

## Forum

## A Bribe by Any

### Other Name

### Smells

By Gideon Kanner

**C**ALL IT baksheesh or mordida or whatever, but in many parts of the world, crossing palms with silver can work wonders when it comes to facilitating commercial objectives. Here in the good ol' U.S. of A., we have been largely spared all that.

Oh sure, legend has it that there are places where a spot of generosity toward building inspectors can go a long way toward spreading the milk of human kindness in dealings with City Hall. Out here, civic-minded Californians prefer generous contributions to the campaign coffers of elected municipal officials, though legend has it that some have been known to lunch with devoted public servants and leave behind on the dining table a copy of a highbrow magazine with pages generously interleaved with federal reserve notes. It used to be tax-free bearer bonds, but you can hardly get those now.

But that is nasty stuff with criminal-law implications. How much nicer it would be if one could make money change hands, mollify one's opponents and achieve one's development objective without having to worry about being prosecuted, all while assuming a public posture of do-gooderism.

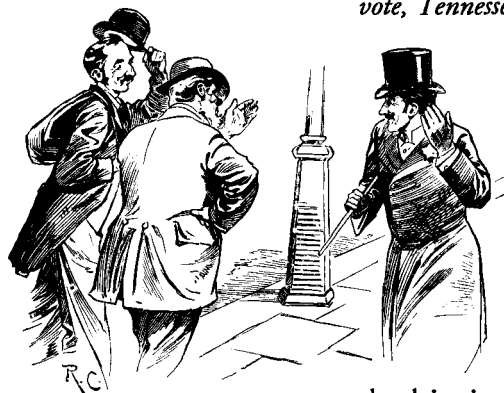
Is that possible? Can you pay off

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*Gideon Kanner is professor emeritus at Loyola Law School. This article first appeared in The National Law Journal.*

DENNIS PRAGER &  
HON. STEPHEN COHEN

# Whose Morality?



*Senator Dianne Feinstein told the Democrats' National Convention that parents should teach their children "the difference between right and wrong." Good idea, but the senator neglected to add that following her advice would mean running head-on into the moral and logical relativism that dominates, and thoroughly confuses, our age. Fruitful moral instruction requires a love of truth strong enough to overcome any impulse to bow to fashionable moral incoherence and, additionally, to persevere through the hard work of serious thinking about morality. It is a difficult, although rewarding, subject, not for the mentally or morally lethargic. This space is devoted to those willing to assume the task.*

*In September, author, teacher, and KABC (Los Angeles) radio talk host Dennis Prager wrote an article, "The Ten Commandments: Given by Ancient Jews, Removed by Modern Jews." Prager cited a resolution, passed by the Tennessee state Senate 27-1, that encouraged "every citizen of Tennessee to observe the Ten Commandments, teach them to their children, and display them in their homes, businesses, schools, and places of work." The article led to a debate, broadcast September 17 on KABC, between Prager and the resolution's lone "nay" vote, Tennessee state Senator Stephen Cohen. Excerpts follow.*

## A Debate: Should the State Encourage Its Citizens to Obey the Ten Commandments?

### I "The United States Government Has Always Encouraged Religion."

**Dennis Prager:** Not encouraging religion is pretty new. The United States government has always encouraged religion. That's why we have chaplains in the armed forces paid for by public funds.

**Senator Stephen Cohen:** I don't think it's new. You know, Dennis, some people argued, "Oh, the country was better when we posted the Ten Commandments." I went to school for two years in Pasadena and I went to school the rest of the time in public schools in Florida and Tennessee. In no place was the Ten Commandments ever posted, and we didn't have a problem with crack or with teens getting guns and shooting each other. I don't think the Ten Commandments control society, and I think all of this stuff about the Ten Commandments making us a better society is malarkey. There are a lot of fundamental problems with society, and you cannot wave a wand and post 10 rules, and all of a sudden crack and machine guns will disappear, and Tupac Shakur would become a good human being and sing nice songs.

**Prager:** I don't think anybody believes that, but there are people like me who do believe that the public school that my father attended in New York City, which did make reference to God and which did allow some degree of religion, did produce better kids.

**Cohen:** I don't think it was the religion that did it. I think it was the time.

**Prager:** So you feel it's a coincidence?

**Cohen:** I think it's a coincidence.

**Prager:** The decline of religion in America and the moral decline that both left and right perceive are coincidental?

**Cohen:** I think it's drugs. I think it's the influence of drugs and crack and cocaine.

**Prager:** Then why don't religious kids take crack and cocaine as much as secular kids?

**Cohen:** Some religious kids do.

*A longer version of this debate, and Prager's original Ten Commandments article, originally appeared in The Prager Perspective, a twice monthly journal written and published by Dennis Prager. For subscription information, call 800/225-8584, or write The Prager Perspective or Ultimate Issues, 10573 West Pico Blvd., No. 167, Los Angeles, CA 90064.*