

# CALIFORNIA★POLITICAL REVIEW

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## CORRESPONDENCE

### Choosing a future

[*California Political Review's* March/April issue] is a handsome job. I congratulate you.

William A. Rusher  
San Francisco

Congratulations on the March/April issue! A stunning achievement for you and the staff.

Vincent P. Welch  
San Rafael

### UC's new admissions policy

I am writing with the hope of clarifying some issues raised by George Neumayr's Feb. 6 *CPR Online* commentary on admission policies at the University of California ("Backdoor-ing Preferences at UC," *CPR Online*, [www.cppf.org](http://www.cppf.org) — under "Archives," go to "Online Columns," then, under "George Neumayr," to "Older George Neumayr columns").

First, UC's new comprehensive review admissions policy does not reward students for their background but rather for the academic achievements they attained given their opportunities. UC complies fully with Proposition 209 and does not consider race or gender in the admissions process.

Second, UC is not replacing the SAT I with an "easier" test. The faculty is considering a proposed set of testing policies and principles that would enhance the depth, breadth, and rigor of the tests used in the UC admissions process. Students would need to know more about their test subjects, not less. A writing sample would be required as part of the core group of tests, and the math section would require more depth of understanding than is now the case.

Finally, the testing proposal being considered by the faculty would bolster the educational standards movement, not undermine it. Aligning an admissions test with what students should be learning in the state's high schools would provide a clear measure of school performance, an improved gauge of students' ability to master their subject matter and a strong incentive for poor schools to improve.

The University of California's standards of excellence are what drew most faculty members here in the first place. As we consider the best ways to measure students' achievement in the admissions process, our aim is to preserve and even heighten those standards — certainly not to weaken them.

Professor C.R. Viswanathan  
Chair  
UC University-wide Academic Senate  
Oakland

### *George Neumayr responds*

This letter confuses rather than clarifies. The statement "UC's new comprehensive review admissions policy does not reward students for their background but rather for the academic achievements they attained given their opportunities" euphemistically conveys exactly what I asserted: standards are lowered for those students deemed disadvantaged.

As for Professor Viswanathan's second point, does anyone really believe that replacing the SAT test with a test tied to the curriculum at California high schools will "enhance the depth, breadth, and rigor of the tests used in the UC admissions process"? UC President Richard Atkinson hopes to junk the SAT precisely because that California high school curriculum fails to produce students smart enough to do well on it.

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# SACRAMENTO SPECTATOR

If you've been following this space over the last two editions, you know that your *Spectator* has been charting the demise of the four GOP Assemblymen who abandoned their caucus to vote with Gray Davis and the Democrats for last year's tax-raising state budget.

You will recall that half the quartet chose to retire, Assemblymen Dave Kelley and Anthony Pescetti announcing they would not seek re-election.

As for the remaining duo, Dick Dickerson and Mike Briggs, your *Spectator* predicted their defeat in contested March primaries — on the mark! Despite heavy backing from labor groups, Dickerson was walloped by Assemblyman Sam Aanastead in a battle for what was Maurice Johannessen's Senate seat (a Senate traitor who was termed out). Briggs finished third in the 21st Congressional District. The lesson? It doesn't pay Republicans to vote to raise taxes. The danger? All four of these lame ducks could vote for the budget again *this* summer.

Some conservative leaders keep calling for the resignation of Bush California *Cappo* Gerry Parsky from the California Republican Party's board of directors. But sources tell your *Spectator* that

Parsky isn't going anywhere; the president has full confidence in him. The White House does not blame Parsky for the Dick Riordan nebula, and CRP Chairman Shawn Steel was a bigger Riordan cheerleader than Parsky was.

When former CRP Chairman Mike Schroeder called for Parsky's resignation in the *Los Angeles Times*, Simon campaign chairman John Herington essentially tossed Schroeder



overboard, sending a clear indication that the Simon operation has made their peace with Parsky and the White House. Want more evidence? Bush will be out in April to raise big bucks for Simon.

There is growing speculation that Gray Davis is destined for a major public meltdown between now and November. Davis, infamous in Sacramento for a nasty temper, launched into a bizarre outburst with the *San Diego Union-Tribune* editorial board in March. Davis complained that he

hasn't gotten "squat" for "panicking" — his words — and signing more than \$40 billion in long-term energy contracts (which he is now trying to undo). He also told the *U-T* board he "saved this friggin' paper."

Is Davis feeling the pressure as he faces the election? His negative ratings with voters have stayed consistently high, meaning his unpopularity is becoming permanently fixed in the minds of voters. At the same time, Republicans are enjoying their highest approval ratings in California since Reagan's heydays. Worse yet, Davis knows the looming budget crisis will generate weeks of bad press for him while he'll have to cut spending going to core Democrat constituencies.

Meanwhile, Democrat consultants, reputedly tiring of the "hubris" of Davis political strategist Garry South, are openly questioning South's strategy to run ads against Riordan in the GOP primary. Some murmur Davis would have had a better chance against Riordan who turned out to be a lousy candidate. Others question a Davis re-election strategy that seems limited to branding Simon a right-wing extremist.

Bottom line: Davis knows he is in the fight of his political life and Democrats are sniping at him behind the scenes. The man doesn't handle pressure well. Watch for GOP operatives to try to provoke Davis into an embarrassing public outburst.

— A. P. C.