

THE FRONT LINE

The March Primary

In an election year, for conservative grassroots activists, the early action is in the state's legislative Primaries. The one real state Senate primary fight is Ken Maddox v. John Campbell in the race to replace Ross Johnson in the central Orange County 35th Senate District.

Campbell is a conservative on all issues. Maddox is a social conservative who has, from time to time, returned to his union roots, voting for minimum wage bills, and project labor agreement legislation. The fight in this safe Republican district has generated some interesting patterns of support, with some traditional Democrat interest groups, mainly public employee unions, lining up behind Maddox. Campbell has garnered the strong support of the district's traditional business interests.

The California Republican Assembly, however, decided Maddox was the man to endorse, apparently to punish Campbell for his early support of Schwarzenegger. An interesting response, given that the unions have been among the chief promoters of all that CRA finds wrong in the Democrat Party. Focusing on the small picture — the guy supported Schwarzenegger — the group ignores every other issue and all the race's implications,

both short- and long-term, for the overall battle between the Parties and between conservatives and liberals in Sacramento and Orange County. It is one of the things that is wrong in the grassroots.

Several Assembly races see conservative candidates in disarray. In the 73rd Assembly district (where incumbent Pat Bates is termed-out), two good conservatives, Jim Gibson and



Mimi Walters, threaten to split the vote, helping the union's guy, Tom Wilson.

In the 70th, now represented by John Campbell, California Republican Assembly decided to go with Chuck DeVore over Don Wagner, both good conservatives. Rumor has it that at the endorsing convention, Wagner had the votes, but DeVore supporters changed the minds of the delegates by telling them that DeVore would be the most effective representative of the conservatives, not because of his principles, but be-

cause he would savage third candidate Cristi Christich (supported by the New Majority) better than Wagner. (Pro-gun groups indicate that Christich has given the best answers on her questionnaire from a pro-gun perspective, but these days, personality, not principles, drive too much of the grassroots activity).

In the Ventura County race to replace Tony Strickland, the local Republican Assembly endorsed Deputy DA Mike Robinson over Audra Strickland, probably because of Tony's vocal support (at least in Bakersfield) of Kevin McCarthy's leadership. Conservatives are all over the map in the race to replace Steve Samuelian and Abel Maldonado in their Fresno and coastal districts. In the race to replace Rancho Cucamonga's Bob Dutton, Elia Pirozzi and Mike Morrell threaten to split conservative votes.

All of this illustrates a glaring lack of unifying principle, and consequent coordinated organizing and action, among conservatives statewide. Each of these Primary battles has degenerated into fights centering on personalities. Combined with non-conservatives' and liberals' active (and seemingly coordinated) candidate recruitment in swing districts, conservatives' disarray could result in their losing influence, and perhaps even in an ideological sea-change, in next year's Assembly GOP caucus.

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nority participation for each trade — 28.3 percent; goals for female participation for each trade — 6.9 percent”) — so managers are on notice that their personnel decisions are monitored for racial and sexual correctness.

AT THE Sacramento Municipal Utility District (“SMUD”), contractors get bonus points on their bids if they’re of the desired color or gender. The discrimination comes with a twist: In prime contracts, preferences go to blacks and Latinos but not Asians, while in subcontracts, Asians and blacks, but not Latinos, are favored. The scheme was struck down by a Superior Court judge, but SMUD has refused to abandon it while pursuing an appeal.

Some school districts are equally obstinate. Even after Prop. 209, the Pasadena Unified District has used skin color to decide which students can attend magnet schools.

Berkeley uses the Orwellian term “controlled

choice” to describe its race-obsessed system to decide where K-6 students will attend school. Students are categorized as “black,” “white,” or “other,” and the district tries to make each school’s racial makeup mirror the overall district population. Parents can suggest the school that they’d prefer their child to go to, but their choice can be overruled if the kid’s color fits better at a different school.

A similar policy in Huntington Beach schools was struck down by a California appellate court. But Berkeley school officials aren’t letting that stop them from treating their students as checkers on a board. “Until I’m told by a higher authority not to, I’m going to continue to use race as a criteria,” one school-board member harrumphed last summer. “Right-wing Nazis are finally after us,” the same official exclaimed, after Pacific Legal Foundation went to court to challenge the district’s policy, which is much more about “control” than “choice.”

In the Los Angeles Unified School District, teachers are the ones treated as color-coded pawns. Jim

WHAT YOU HAVEN’T BEEN TOLD ABOUT GUN CONTROL

By SAM PAREDES

Does gun control work? This is what the scientists at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said:

“During 2000-2002, the Task Force on Community Prevention Services (the Task Force), an independent nonfederal task force, conducted a systematic review of scientific evidence regarding the effectiveness of firearms laws in preventing violence, including violent crimes, suicide, and unintentional injury. The following laws were evaluated: bans on specified firearms or ammunition, restrictions on firearm acquisition, waiting periods for firearm acquisition, firearm registration and licensing of firearms owners, ‘shall issue’ concealed weapon carry laws, child access prevention

laws, zero tolerance laws for firearms in schools, and combinations of firearms laws. The Task Force found insufficient evidence to determine the effectiveness of any of the firearms laws or combinations of laws reviewed on violent outcomes. (Note that insufficient evidence to determine effectiveness should not be interpreted as evidence of ineffectiveness.)”

Even though the researchers felt compelled to hedge their bets at the end with the concluding note, one supposes that if they’d found even a shred of a trend indicating that these laws had any affect on crime or safe-

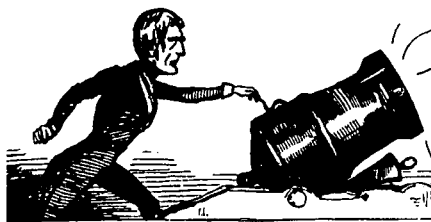
ty the news would have been shouted from the mountaintops. The truth is that the nation’s top eggheads could find *no* impact!

California has every type of law the Task Force reviewed. California is a shining example of gun control failure. But who said gun control was about facts? It’s about emotion. It’s about the heart hoodwinking the brain.

Were California’s Legislature a bastion of truth, a place where common sense, logic, and honesty ruled the day, my job with this column would be over. I would be free to write about any of my other passions — cooking, wine making, hunting, fishing, music ... alas, it is not, which is why liberal Democrats are divining new ways to infringe our God-given rights.

See you next issue.

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