



# California Family Resource Association

*Strong Families. Strong Communities.*

## **THE CFRA CAPITOL REPORT**

**February 2008**

### ***New Leaders Chosen in Assembly and Senate***

Proposition 93 would have altered California's term limits law and allowed the current Assembly Speaker and Senate Pro Tem several additional years in office. But Prop 93 failed passage on February 5<sup>th</sup> and within minutes of the final vote count legislators in Sacramento began jockeying to replace the now lame-duck legislative leaders.

After the dust settled two very well regarded and "family friendly" legislators were selected to take over the leadership posts later this year. In the Senate, Senator Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento) easily beat out contender Alex Padilla (D-Pacoima) for the Senate Pro Tem spot. Steinberg, well known for his work in the areas of mental health, child welfare and low-performing schools, will likely take a very active role in shaping policies important to CFRA members.

In the Assembly, up to ten contenders fought a short but vigorous battle to secure the votes needed to become the next Speaker. With the strong support of the current Speaker, Fabian Nunez, the Democrats in the Assembly selected Assemblywoman Karen Bass (D-Los Angeles) as the next Speaker. Bass, a former physician assistant and community organizer, will be the first ever African-American woman to lead the California Assembly. And like Steinberg, Bass will bring to the leadership post her long-standing passion for family issues such as foster care, community development, and education.

CFRA members should look forward to serious policy discussions in the coming years on family strengthening issues. CFRA could not have asked for two stronger family advocates to lead the legislature.

## ***California's Budget Crisis: Taxes Hikes May be Considered***

Legislative budget committees have just begun digging into the Governor's 2008-09 Budget but already Democrats are calling for new taxes while Republicans reaffirm their pledge never to vote for new taxes. The lines in the sand have been drawn by legislative leaders but Governor Schwarzenegger has been careful to keep the option of new taxes open.

Schwarzenegger's unwillingness to denounce new revenues has led a large coalition of advocacy organizations forming for the specific purpose of seeking new taxes. The coalition currently has no name and the full membership is not yet public but the organizations are joining forces to explore possible tax increases that could garner the necessary 2/3 vote to pass the legislature.

A few of the group's members are known: Health Access, a statewide health care consumer advocacy group; Western Center for Law and Poverty; The California State Parks Association; and the California Teacher's Association.

CFRA will be meeting with the coalition leaders to explore whether joining the group would help advance the interest of CFRA priorities.

## ***New Legislation Introduced to Help Address Immigrant Needs***

SB 1094 by Senator Gil Cedillo (D-Los Angeles) would establish the Office of Immigrant Affairs to ensure the integration and civic participation of new citizens in the state. The director of the Office would work with local organizations to ensure the success and availability of services provided through the Naturalization Services Program. The bill would also authorize the office to enter into agreements with nonprofit organizations that serve immigrants and would authorize these organizations to be reimbursed by the office.

CFRA has not yet taken a position on SB 1094 but will be monitoring it closely to ensure family resources centers are eligible service providers.

## ***Legislation Seeks to Create Child Abuse Prevention Month***

Senator Jim Battin (R-Palm Desert) had introduced SCR 81, a Senate Resolution, seeking to designate the month of April as "Child Abuse Prevention Month." Resolutions such as SCR 81 are mostly symbolic acknowledgement by the legislature of a particular cause or issue but can help bring media attention to important causes.

## ***CFRA Working for You***

- CFRA's lobbyist met with Senate Budget Committee staff to review several important state funding sources which flow to many CFRA members. Below is a snapshot of the Governor's proposal for key funding streams:
  - CAPIT (Child Abuse Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment) – No cuts proposed.
  - Child Welfare/Differential Response: 10% across the board cut.
  - EPSDT (Early Prevention Screening, Detection, Treatment): Several cuts proposed with Prop 63 backfill.
  - Juvenile Justice/Crime Prevention: No cuts proposed in this area at this time.

These are not to be confused with Federal funds that are “passed through” the State, which the State has no discretion to cut (e.g., CBCAP, PSSF, Federal Title IV-E Child Welfare, etc.)

- CFRA's lobbyist is making the rounds with several key Assembly members who are known allies (or lieutenants) to incoming Speaker Karen Bass. These Assembly members will likely take over key committee posts once Bass becomes Speaker therefore it is important for CFRA to begin establishing relationships with them. The Bass lieutenants are:
  - Ted Lieu (D-Torrance)
  - Noreen Evans (D-Santa Rosa)
  - Patty Berg (D-Eureka)
  - Sandre Swanson (D-Oakland)
  - Mary Hayashi (D-Hayward)

## ***Legislator Profile***

*This is part of a continuing series of California legislator profiles aimed at providing CFRA members insight into who is making decisions in on their behalf in Sacramento.*

Assemblymember Sandré Swanson proudly represents the vibrant East Bay communities of Oakland, Alameda, and Piedmont. An area native with deep ties to the community, Mr. Swanson was elected to his first term in the California State Assembly in 2006.

A long time activist, Assemblymember Sandré Swanson worked for five years as Congresswoman Barbara Lee's Chief of Staff after working for 25 years as the District Director and Senior Policy Advisor to former Congressman Ron Dellums. In these capacities, Assemblymember Swanson earned a reputation as a dedicated and hardworking public servant with an impressive record of accomplishments on behalf of the people of the district. Most recently, Assemblymember Swanson was the Chairman

of the Alameda County Retirement Board and a Trustee for the successful \$5 billion pension organization.

Whether crafting legislation or receiving input from his constituents on prospective bills, Assemblymember Sandré Swanson relies on his many years of experience dealing directly with the East Bay communities he now represents. Mr. Swanson is excited and honored to have the opportunity to continue working in partnership with the residents, community-based organizations and small businesses that are the fabric of the East Bay.

Mr. Swanson came to Sacramento with a dynamic legislative agenda that reflects a long history of working with broad coalitions for the interests of the community. He is driven by a passion for the health, education, and safety of our children; for justice and equality in and outside of the workplace; and a deep commitment to improving access to healthcare. Through out his life's work, Mr. Swanson has believed that problems are best solved when all of the stakeholders are brought to the table. As a legislator, he continues to use this collaborative approach in tackling complex problems in a comprehensive, practical way.

As Chairman of the Labor and Employment Committee, Assemblymember Swanson embraces the fight for a living wage, good benefits, and decent working conditions. Mr. Swanson grew up in a union home, and knows first hand the debt of gratitude we owe to unions and the labor movement in California. He believes that California must continue to set the standard for the nation when it comes to workplace rights.

Another key priority for Mr. Swanson is an aggressive, common sense approach to reducing prison inmate recidivism through job training programs. He believes the state must begin to find better ways of helping young people in probation facilities return to society better equipped to be productive and prepared to live meaningful lives.

Rounding out his legislative agenda, Mr. Swanson is committed to reinvigorating the economic vitality of the Bay Area. Assemblymember Swanson has extensive experience creating new opportunities for good paying jobs, and is always sensitive to how economic development impacts the environment.

The first bill that Mr. Swanson introduced, AB 45, was in response to the Oakland community's outspoken desire for a return of local governance and accountability to the parents, students, teachers, and children of the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD).

The OUSD has been in State receivership since 2003, having at that time received a \$100 million loan from the State upon the discovery of severe financial disarray. A State Administrator was appointed by Superintendent Jack O'Connell and empowered to assume total control of all aspects of the OUSD. As a result of being in receivership, the governing board of OUSD had all of its rights, duties and powers removed. The OUSD has diligently complied with the Fiscal Crisis and Management Assistance Team (FCMAT) recovery plans and has submitted all required progress reports. The district's compliance and solid academic improvements prompted a recommendation from

FCMAT's latest report, issued on September 30th, 2006, to restore specific administrative and managerial functions to the School Board. To date, however, FCMAT's recommendation to give the Oakland School Board authority over community relations and governance has not been granted by Superintendent O'Connell as recommended in this report.

AB 45 will resolve the desire and need for an orderly and sustainable transfer of governance that ensures that parents can hold the School Board accountable for the educational decisions of their children. AB 45 will provide a quantitative way to measure improvement of the district, automating the process of transition to local authority, and creating a system that is clear to all and has credibility.

Mr. Swanson serves on two very important Budget Subcommittees. **Budget Subcommittee 2** has jurisdiction over Education Finance and is responsible for the expenditures and allocations relating to K-12, Community Colleges, and both the California State University and University of California systems. **Budget Subcommittee 4** has jurisdiction over State Administration. Subcommittee 4 oversees and allocates the finances of State Government agencies as well as state prisons.

In addition to the powerful Budget Committee, Mr. Swanson was assigned to three other committees of special importance to the 16th Assembly District. The **Assembly Committee on Banking and Finance** has jurisdiction over financial institutions, real property finance, and corporate securities law. The **Assembly Committee on Housing and Community Development** has jurisdiction over building standards, common interest developments, eminent domain, homeless programs, housing discrimination, housing finance (including redevelopment), housing, natural disaster assistance and preparedness, land use planning, and rent control. Finally, the **Assembly Committee on Arts, Entertainment, Sports, Tourism and Internet Media Committee** has jurisdiction over programs and policies affecting the entertainment industries, tourism, arts programs and museums, professional and amateur sports, and internet media.

### *What's Next in the Capitol?*

Legislative policy committees will begin hearing bills in early-March and resume in earnest after returning from Spring Recess from March 13<sup>th</sup> through the 24<sup>th</sup>. Meanwhile, budget committee staff are readying alternatives to Governor Schwarzenegger's 2008-09 budget which will be revised again in May. The Legislature must pass a state budget by June 15<sup>th</sup>.