

COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEAGUE OF CALIFORNIA



November 3, 2010

Dear Martha,

While the news across the country was of a major political tide, we wake up to a California that is not much different. Blame it on special interest spending, gerrymandered districts, or candidate selection.

Democrats appear to have swept California's statewide offices, after a 5:17am update from Los Angeles County put Kamala Harris nearly 52,000 votes ahead of Steve Cooley in the attorney general's race after trailing all night.

Three community college districts appear successful in their local bond campaigns--**Imperial** (\$80m) **Ohlone** (\$349m) and **San Jose Evergreen** (\$268m), while one--**Mt. San Jacinto** (\$47m to build a campus in Banning and only before a portion of the CCD's voters)--appears to have failed.

Foothill-DeAnza's effort to pass a six-year, \$69 million parcel tax to mitigate state budget cuts appears to have failed with only 58% of the votes in favor (two-thirds are required). Classified union leaders openly frustrated with collective bargaining joined anti-tax opponents in criticizing the measure over the last week.

While we won't have a tally for a few weeks, local trustee elections appear mixed. In most cases, incumbents (both elected and appointed) appear to have fared well.

At the **Southwestern** and **Coast** districts, former college presidents were elected to sit at the board dais (**Norma Hernandez** and **Dave Grant**, respectively). In **Santa Barbara**, anger over the state's direction to reduce courses outside of basic skills, transfer and career-technical appears to have cost three veteran trustees their jobs.

In the State Assembly, Democrats may pick up one seat in the Sacramento area, which would give the majority 52 seats in the 80-seat house. Four races that had Democrats worried earlier this year (Block, Buchanan, Huber, and M. Perez) were easily won by the incumbents. The State Senate is likely to maintain its composition of 26-14 favoring the Democrats, as the one competitive seat (SD12) appears to have stayed in the Republican column.

A new community college face will join the Assembly, as Republican **Don Wagner**, a trustee at the **South Orange County** CCD was elected to an open seat.

Jerry Brown--who got his start on the **Los Angeles** CCD board--will arrive with the need to close a budget deficit that makes the post-Proposition 13 changes seem easy. Meanwhile, we say farewell to **Arnold Schwarzenegger**, who truly fought for community colleges, but rarely had a fiscal hand to play in our favor. We also say goodbye to **Denise Ducheny**, the former San Diego trustee who chaired the Senate Budget Committee and similarly defended our colleges.

The League is nonpartisan, as are community colleges. And, California will need bipartisan solutions to solve its significant problems.

Indeed, Proposition 25 passed, which will make passing a state budget procedurally easier, but not necessarily fiscally or morally easier to bring revenues in balance with expenditures. As I wrote last week, the upcoming forecast from the Legislative Analyst's Office is expected to project a deficit of

over \$10 billion next year and huge deficits in each of the next several years.

Most Capitol insiders believe the next election is not far off, with a possible (likely?) special election in the spring to ask voters to extend temporary taxes that are sunseting beginning December 31.

On the federal scene, the biggest disappointment for community colleges with the transition back to Republican leadership in the House of Representatives will be the loss of **George Miller** as chair of the Committee on Education and Labor. The new chair is expected to be **John Kline** of Minnesota, who is generally perceived as good for community colleges.

If House Republicans follow through with their promises to cut discretionary spending (which even Democrats concede is necessary to reduce the deficit), many popular programs supporting community colleges could be on the chopping block. Further, the balance of power may shift a bit from community colleges to for-profit proprietary colleges, which have spent heavily on lobbying and campaigns in the last year.

Anyway, that's the early read on last night's election. In closing, I'd like to offer a personal thank you to **Helen Benjamin**, chancellor of the **Contra Costa** CCD, who answered the late night and early morning phone calls over the last four years to use her friendship and credibility with George Miller to effectively advocate for our community colleges.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Scott".

Scott Lay
President and Chief Executive Officer
Orange Coast College '94

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