

Gaines: Worst California bills in 2009

By Ted Gaines

Here are the "worst 9 bills of the 2009 legislative session," which include some of the most extreme and costly measures that show just how out-of-touch the Legislature is with mainstream Californians.

Assembly Bill 3 3X: Tax Increases

Signed into law by the governor in February, this bill increased the state sales tax by 1 percent, the personal income tax by 0.25 percent and the Vehicle License Fee by 1.15 percent. It also reduced



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the dependent tax credit level to \$99.

To increase taxes at the most financially devastating time for California families is absolutely the worst thing to do. Sacramento got itself into this mess and we need to enact the tough decisions it will take us to get out of it, not pass the burden on to Californians. For too long, Sacramento has irresponsibly spent too much of the people's hard-earned dollars and it's time we stop spending money on programs we can't sustain. You can continue to count on me to fight tax increases.

Senate Bill 572: Harvey Milk Day

This bill, signed into law by the governor, declared May 22 as Harvey Milk Day and encourages schools to conduct commemorative exercises remembering the life of Harvey Milk.

It is not the role of the state government to declare a special holiday for people based on their sexual orientation. Never in the history of state law has the Legislature taken such action and it is reckless to recommend and encourage this type of commemoration into our schools.

Senate Bill 670: Ban on Suction Dredge Mining

This bill imposes a temporary ban on new suction dredge mining permits. The bill, signed into law by the Governor, aims to protect the salmon population, though no scientific information points to suction dredging as the cause of reduced salmon population.

A ban on suction dredge mining permits will only hurt rural small businesses by driving away both miners and tourists. This is another example of a one-size-fits-all regulation that will punish those who rely on suction dredge mining as a way of life.

Senate Bill 2 7X: \$11 Billion Water Package

Signed into law by the governor, this measure will now go before the voters next year. If passed, Californians will pay more than \$11 billion for various water storage and infrastructure projects.

This plan does nothing to help our state by creating more unaccountable bureaucracies that don't answer to those they serve. The plan could take water rights out of the hands of Northern Californians at a time when we should be eliminating boards and commissions and bloated bureaucracies.

Assembly Bill 390: Legalization of Marijuana

This bill would legalize marijuana use and allow those over the age of 21 to grow and sell the gateway drug. The state would be able to tax all sales of marijuana while maintaining no authority to regulate or control it. This bill is scheduled to be heard in the Assembly Public Safety Committee next month.

Sacrificing public safety to increase revenue is a new low for California. This drug is illegal for a reason and putting families at risk to make money is another example of how backwards our state approaches its revenue problems. Drugs like marijuana serve as a gateway to more dangerous, hard-core drugs and will do nothing short of increasing criminal activity and putting our citizens at risk.

Assembly Bill 962: Handgun Ammunition

Signed into law by the governor, this bill makes California the first state to require instant background checks on anyone wishing to purchase handgun ammunition. The bill also requires all handgun ammunition vendors to be licensed with the state Department of Justice and ammunition to be stored behind the counter. The bill also bans Internet sales of ammunition in California.

While we should make every effort to track down and bring to justice those who would commit crimes with a gun, this misguided measure makes it harder for law-abiding citizens to exercise their Second Amendment right and purchase a legal firearm in California. The measure could devastate the ability of gun stores across the state to keep their doors open, while doing nothing to stop the flow of illegal ammunition to criminals who seek to harm our families.

Assembly Bill 1452: Cement Restrictions

This bill, which failed to pass in the Assembly Appropriations Committee, would require the state Air Resources Board to regulate greenhouse gas emissions from the production of

cement, regardless of where the cement originated. The bill would even regulate the emissions from transporting the cement.

Cement is essential to paving and repairing roads across California and improving our traffic infrastructure. Bills like this show how out-of-touch Sacramento is by choosing to impose new regulations during a time when infrastructure and job creation should be our top priorities.

Senate Bill 14: Renewable Energy Resources

Vetoed by the governor, this bill would require all retail sellers of electricity and all publicly owned utilities to acquire at least 33 percent of electricity from renewable resources by 2020.

Californians already pay more for electricity than anywhere else in the country. Yet, some in the Legislature would choose to increase that amount even more. Placing more government mandates on companies would only drive up costs for customers, at a time when they are paying for enough of Sacramento's mistakes.

Senate Bill 18XXX: Early Prisoner Release

This bill, signed into law by the governor, allows thousands of dangerous criminals to be released from prison before serving their terms. The bill also loosens parole provisions allowing easier access to a criminal's early release.

We don't need to compromise public safety to save money. Allowing convicted criminals to get a break on their prison terms because the Legislature cannot spend responsibly is beyond unacceptable. These dangerous felons are in jail for a reason, and they should only be set free when they have completed their sentences and have been properly rehabilitated to return to society.

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