

Brown argues for his budget plan in State of State address

By Evan Halper and Anthony York, Los Angeles Times

SACRAMENTO – Gov. Jerry Brown told lawmakers Monday that “it would be unconscionable” not to let voters decide whether to pay more taxes to help balance the budget, using his first State of the State address as California’s 39th governor to press Republicans to agree to a special election.

Invoking the democracy movements in North Africa to bolster his bid that the people be heard, Brown warned GOP lawmakers against impeding a referendum that would allow voters to sanction – or refuse – extended income, sales and car levies to help close a \$25-billion budget shortfall.

“When democratic ideals and calls for the right to vote are stirring the imagination of young people in Egypt and Tunisia and other parts of the world, we in California can’t say now is the time to block a vote of the people,” Brown said. “...The state belongs to all of us, not just the people in this chamber.”

The governor, who unveiled no new policy proposals in his 14-minute address to a joint session of the Legislature, stayed focused on his wish to take the tax question to voters in the summer, which would require lawmakers to act by late March. But there has been little movement in the Legislature since Brown announced his idea several weeks ago.

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