

Few Calif. lawmakers release budgets; others say they'll wait

By Jim Sanders, Sacramento Bee

Assemblyman Roger Dickinson does not plan to release his office budget without a nod from Assembly leaders.

The Sacramento Democrat, noting that Assembly Speaker John A. Pérez is creating a task force to consider updating disclosure policies, said, "I'm going to respect that process."

Republican Assemblywoman Beth Gaines of Roseville said she supports disclosing budgets for all 80 members. She doesn't want to release hers, however, unless the entire house does so.

Meanwhile, tough luck for Californians who want to know if Assembly members are exceeding their budgets in a year of fiscal distress.

None of eight capital-area Assembly members argued that office records should be kept confidential, but only one – Dan Logue – has agreed to join a handful of colleagues in bucking Pérez by disclosing their spending immediately.

"The bottom line is, it's the people's money," said Logue, R-Linda.

Logue released his office's expenditures for the year thus far, \$262,795. Unlike some colleagues, however, he did not release projections for coming months that would show whether he'll end the year with a surplus or deficit.

The Assembly currently waits 12 months after the end of each legislative year to release a list of each lawmaker's

expenditures by category. This year's statistics, for example, will be unveiled after Thanksgiving week of 2012.

Bob Stern, president of the Center for Governmental Studies, said the Assembly's longtime practice of releasing year-old spending summaries each Nov. 30 curtails public interest. "It's past, it's old, and they do it at a time when they're out of session," he said.

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