

Future of pension reform in Calif. remains cloudy

By Jon Ortiz, Sacramento Bee

Public pension reform in California, once a top-shelf cause on both sides of the statehouse aisle, has become something of a political orphan.

While a handful of government pension bills await action when lawmakers return to the state Capitol this week, reformers say the measures mostly tinker at the margins of an unsustainable system that needs fundamental change.

Gov. Jerry Brown has stopped talking about the issue. Although he promised to change pensions when he ran for office and again signaled his support for rollbacks during budget talks this year, Brown spokesman Evan Westrup said last week that the governor has made “no decision on timing” for moving ahead.

That silence – and news on Friday that a Texas billionaire put money into a new report favoring a pension overhaul – has lawmakers wondering what’s next as they head into the last four weeks of the legislative session.

“We don’t know if there’s anything the administration is planning for pensions,” said Sandra Sanchez, chief of staff for Assemblyman Warren Furutani, D-Gardena.

Furutani chairs an Assembly committee that deals with public employee retirement legislation and has several pension bills pending action.

Read the whole story