

Brown negotiating tribal gaming deals as they fill his campaign fund

By David Siders, Sacramento Bee

Gov. Jerry Brown is raising hundreds of thousands of dollars for his tax campaign from California Indian tribes at the same time many tribes are seeking to renegotiate lucrative gambling compacts with him.

The Democratic governor, who proposes increasing the state sales tax and income taxes on California's highest earners, is considered more accommodating of tribal interests than his predecessor, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, and his administration is in compact talks "on various levels" with 15 to 20 tribes, Brown's tribal negotiator, Jacob Appelsmith, said Tuesday.

Any compacts Brown signs could significantly affect a gambling industry that generates more than \$7 billion annually and millions of dollars in payments to the state.

More than nine months ahead of the November tax election, a handful of tribes have contributed more than \$300,000 to Brown's tax campaign, a quarter of the \$1.2 million Brown on Tuesday reported raising in 2011.

Tribes donated \$925,000 to Brown's gubernatorial effort in 2010, and they contributed more than \$200,000 last year to two charter schools he started in Oakland.

Brown spokeswoman Elizabeth Ashford said there is "no connection between any sort of donations and decision-making on this issue or others."

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