

Endorsement: Bosetti should represent 1st Assembly District

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Two conservatives with solid histories of public service are running against each other in the newly drawn 1st Assembly District. The largely rural district stretches from the Oregon border to Lake Tahoe and west to the Sierra foothills.

Rick Bosetti, a businessman and former pro baseball player, has been a member of the Redding City Council since 2006. Brian Dahle, a third-generation farmer, is a small-business owner who has been a Lassen County supervisor for 16 years. Both are Republicans and both have signed the "no-tax pledge," which is unfortunate. It will make their ability to break through the partisan gridlock in Sacramento to solve the state's serious fiscal problems more difficult.

Of the two, Bosetti is more pragmatic and earns our endorsement for that reason. Born and raised in Redding, he returned to his hometown after nearly a decade in professional sports and started a small technology business. Although he signed the "no-tax pledge," Bosetti said he supports a new law backed by the timber industry that would impose a 1 percent tax on forest products to help cover the regulatory costs of timber harvest plans.

While Dahle opposes the bill on strict anti-tax grounds, Bosetti notes the bill included regulatory streamlining and lawsuit reform that he thinks will help his district's timber industries and the jobs they support.

Redding recently faced a large deficit fueled in part by

ballooning public pension costs. When unions refused to grant concessions, the City Council put a measure on the 2010 ballot that for the first time required city workers to contribute to their own pensions. A second advisory measure asked if voters thought the council should create a vesting period before city workers could qualify for retiree health benefits. Incredibly, prior to that measure, employees vested almost from the day they were hired.

It was an acrimonious campaign. The unions ran three candidates against City Council incumbents, but in the end Bosetti prevailed, emerging as the top vote getter. Voters overwhelmingly approved the pension and health care reform measures. The pension fight helps explain why Dahle has the support of police and fire unions and Bosetti does not.

To correct the many problems that beset Sacramento, elected officials from both parties will need to stand up to powerful special interests. They must also show flexibility on the revenue side. Bosetti has shown he can do both when the public's interest is at stake.