

Opinion: Calif. lawmakers not truthful with ballot measures

By Dan Walters, Sacramento Bee

As the ballot measure evolved into California's primary public policy tool over the last three-plus decades, clever people were paid large sums of money to figure out how to persuade voters. They adopted deception – there's no other word for it – as a technique.



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Measures were written that purported to do one thing while semi-secretly doing another, based on a cynical, although perhaps realistic, assumption that a significant number of voters would ignore details and act on first impulse.

Proposition 25, placed before voters in 2010 by Democratic politicians and their allies, principally unions, was one of many examples.

Its true underlying purpose was to change the legislative vote requirement on state budgets and so-called trailer bills from two-thirds to a simple majority, thus cutting Republicans out of the process. But the wording of the measure implied that its major purpose was to punish the Legislature for missing a June 15 deadline for passing a budget.

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