

# GOVERNMENT AFFAIRS WATCHDOG

## HEALTH REFORM DEFEATED

On January 25, the Senate Health Committee held a marathon hearing to consider ABx11 (Fabian Nunez, D-Los Angeles), the Speaker's and Governor's healthcare reform proposal. The hearing concluded without a vote – Chairwoman Sheila Kuehl (D-Santa Monica) stating that she did not want to take a vote on the measure after hours and be subject to criticism regarding transparency for an after-hours vote.

The Committee reconvened three days later to vote on the measure and the bill failed to gain the requisite votes to pass on to the Senate Appropriations Committee. The bill was only able to garner one favorable vote – Senator Mark Ridley-Thomas (D-Los Angeles). The remaining Committee members either abstained or voted against the bill.

Members of the Committee voiced deep concerns and doubts about the plan, many of which have grown since the measure was approved in the Assembly last month. The nonpartisan Legislative Analyst's report, released last week, questioned some of the plan's fiscal assumptions – suggesting they are too optimistic. Furthermore, many Senate Democrats expressed concerns about a grand expansion of healthcare at a time when the state is facing a \$14.5-billion budget shortfall that may require large cuts in existing healthcare even before the plan is put into place.

Despite his ability to do so, Speaker Nunez did not ask that the Committee grant the bill reconsideration, noting the clear message sent by the Committee

### **PROP 93 FAILS**

The second attempt to modify California's term limits went down to defeat as voters rejected the proposition allowing dozens of lame duck lawmakers to run for new terms. The measure failed 53 percent to 47 percent.

California's current term limits are among the toughest in the nation. They allow legislators to serve up to 14 years in most cases – six in the Assembly and eight in the state Senate.

The measure would have cut the maximum time from 14 years to 12, but it would have allowed all 12 years to be served in one house or split between the two.

Pre-election polls showed voters supporting those changes, but a transition phase provision in the measure generated opposition. It would have allowed sitting legislators to serve 12 years in their current houses, regardless of how much time they had spent in the other house. That would have allowed nearly a third of current lawmakers to serve more than 14 years.

Supporters said the proposition would have maintained reasonable term limits while easing the exodus of experienced legislators and the musical-chairs atmosphere that take place every two years at the Capitol as termed-out lawmakers scramble to run for other offices.

Yet this mechanism hurt the proposition, since Speaker Fabian Nunez and Majority Leader Perata would have been able to extend their terms in the Assembly and Senate, respectively, if the ballot measure had passed. Without it, they are termed out in their respective body this fall.

Proposition 93 was the second attempt to modify term limits adopted by California voters in 1990. Proposition 45 of 2002 would have allowed termed-out legislators to run for up to four more years if they obtained voter signatures equal to at least 20 percent of the vote in their last election.

members' votes. Moreover, the bill was to be fast-tracked to meet the deadline for inclusion on the November 2008 ballot, which it will now not meet. That initiative was immediately pulled after the failure of ABx11.

Now that funding health care reform is off the table, state legislators have turned

to closing the budget deficit. Senate Majority Leader Perata has gone so far as to suggest a ballot initiative to raise taxes in order to address the ongoing budget deficit.

Although ABx11 was defeated, we can expect to see continued efforts to reform healthcare as the year progresses.



**Affiliated  
Associations:**

**Printing Industries of California**

Printing Industries of Northern California [www.pinc.org](http://www.pinc.org)

Printing Industries Assn. of Southern California [www.piasc.org](http://www.piasc.org)

Printing Industries Assn. of San Diego, Inc. [www.piasd.org](http://www.piasd.org)

**(323) 728-9500**

**(415) 495-8242**

**(323) 728-9500**

**(858) 571-6555**

## LEGAL POSTING

Suppose your company was turned in to various state agencies for not having the correct notices posted? Impossible, you say. Not so, as one of our members found out. All California business must display up-to-date notices, where all employees can see them to be in compliance with federal and state laws.

Every year, it seems, the state amends the language in various notices, thus forcing employers to get new posters. This year is no exception. The 2007 posters do not meet the 2008 federal and state requirements.

Attorneys are soliciting employees to identify employers who do not post current labor law requirements. It's easy money for them, so don't jeopardize your company by not having the current required postings.

PIC is offering the 2008 mandatory workplace posters for sale. The all-in-one poster contains 19 California and federal notices that every California business must post. Because of its length, industry specific wage orders appear on a second poster. The posters (23" x 39") are attorney approved and laminated on both sides and printed in full color.

The set is available to members at a discounted price of \$49.80—which includes packaging and postage. The price is well below the retail price elsewhere for the same compliance kit.

Moreover, if more than ten percent of your employees speak a foreign language, you must offer the notice in their language.

You can order the posters you need by calling Marcos Uribe at (323) 728-9500, Ext. 299.

## GREEN CHEMISTRY INITIATIVE

The California Environmental Protection Agency has released a compilation of policy options that more than 600 participants submitted during Phase 1 of the state's Green Chemistry Initiative.

The Options Report includes the 818 options on ways to reduce the effects

## EYEWASH STATIONS

Cal/OSHA General Industry Safety Orders (Section 5162) requires that an emergency eyewash station, either plumbed or self-contained, be provided whenever employees may come into contact with prepress or pressroom chemicals that can cause corrosion, severe irritation, or permanent tissue damage.

### Eyewash Stations Requirements

Water hoses, sinks, faucets, and showers do not comply with Cal/OSHA eyewash standards. To comply with these standards, the eyewash station must meet the following conditions:

- The station must be no more than 10 seconds walking distance and not over 100 feet from the potential point of hazard and must be free of items that obstruct its use.
- The station's control valve, when activated by the operator, must remain on without further action on the part of the operator until shut off by the operator.
- The station must be capable of delivering water to the affected area for 15 minutes. Water flow rate must be 0.4 gallons per minute.
- The plumbed station must be tested monthly for perfect working order to ensure that there are no rust particles or clogs in the drain, and that the station has not been shut off.
- Finally, the use of eyewash bottles, which are sometimes included in first-aid kits, do not meet Cal/OSHA standards.

of toxic chemicals on people and the environment. They can be found at the following web address: <http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/PollutionPrevention/GreenChemistryInitiative/index.cfm>.

The Department of Toxic Substances Control is now embarking on Phase 2 of the Initiative: the analysis of the various proposed options, which will be discussed in public workshops this spring.

Each workshop in Phase 2 will focus on a particular category of options: data collection and use; economic incentives and markets; statutory and regulatory requirements; voluntary measures and technical assistance; and research.

PIC will be involved in this process to ensure the integrity of a proposed option as it pertains to the printing industry.

## LIVING WAGE

A report from the Public Policy Institute of California examines ten years of experience with local

"living wage" laws and their economic effects. Living wage laws impose floors that are above the federal and state minimum wages standards.

The report found that the net effect of living wages—as a result of wages increases, employment reductions, and how both are spread across families—is to reduce poverty in the urban areas in which they have been enacted.

However, the adverse effects of living wages fall more heavily on the least-skilled individuals, who are the least likely to be employable after a mandated wage increase is enacted.

The conclusion is that even if living wages deliver some benefits to low-income families, they are not a panacea for the problem of low-wage work and poverty.

The full report can be found at the following web address: <http://www.ppic.org/main/publication.asp?i=620>.

