

Primary Puzzle



March 5, 2007

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The next issue of
Capitol Journal will be
available on March 12th.

Top Story

The race for the 2008 presidential nominations is already well under way, and several delegate-rich states are working hard to give themselves more say in who will eventually earn those spots.

SNCJ Spotlight

Big states could reshape presidential races

For the last two decades, the presidential nominating process has kicked off in January or early February with the IOWA caucus and NEW HAMPSHIRE primary and, for the most part, basically ended with the multiple state primaries on “Super Tuesday” in early March, well before the parties actually made their official selections in mid to late summer. But several of the nation’s biggest states are currently engaged in a game of calendar leapfrog that could make next year’s effective primary season even shorter.



Last year, in an effort to gain more influence in the presidential nomination process, ALABAMA shifted its primary from early June to Feb. 5, the earliest date allowed for states other than IOWA and NEW HAMPSHIRE by the Democratic and Republican national committees. The strategy has paid some dividends for the state this year, with several presidential hopefuls having made visits, including Republicans U.S. Sen. John McCain of ARIZONA, former MASSACHUSETTS Gov. Mitt Romney and ARKANSAS Gov. Mike Huckabee, and Democrats U.S. Sen. John Edwards of NORTH CAROLINA, retired Gen. Wesley Clark and IOWA Gov. Tom Vilsack.

But ALABAMA was bumped down a couple of places in the primary sequence last summer when the DNC authorized a Jan. 19 caucus for NEVADA and a Jan. 29 primary for SOUTH CAROLINA, in response to longstanding complaints about IOWA and NEW HAMPSHIRE having so much influence over the process. And as of early last month, it was already clear that the Heart of Dixie wasn't going to be the only belle at the ball on Feb. 5 either. According to the DNC, at that time, seven other states — ARIZONA, ARKANSAS, DELAWARE, MISSOURI, NEW MEXICO, NORTH DAKOTA and OKLAHOMA — had tentatively scheduled primaries for that same date.

That so-called "Mini-Tuesday" is about to get super-sized, however, as the nation's most populous state, CALIFORNIA, is poised to pass a measure (SB 113) that would move the state's presidential primary to Feb. 5 from June 3. (Primaries for statewide offices will still be held in June.) "We'll get a brand new Super Tuesday,"

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said Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata (D). "It will be CALIFORNIA and others. I don't much care about the others. I care about CALIFORNIA. We're the biggest dog in the kennel, and when we say something and start barking, people are going to pay attention."

CALIFORNIA Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez (D) mentioned a couple of things the state was likely to be barking about at a recent press luncheon in Sacramento. "Some national issues, including immigration and coastal oil drilling, are issues that disproportionately impact states like CALIFORNIA,"

The week in session

States in Regular Session: AK, AL, AR, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DC, FL, GA, HI, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, MA, MD, ME, MI, MN, MO, MS, MT, NC, ND, NE, NH, NJ, NM, NV, NY, OK, OH, OR, RI, SC, SD, TN, TX, US, VT, WA, WI, WV

States in Budget Recess: DE, PA

States Currently Prefiling or Drafting: AL, FL, LA

States Projected to Adjourn: AR, WV, WY

States in Special Session Projected to Adjourn: AL "a"

States Adjourned in 2007: UT, VA

States in Special Session Adjourned in 2007: FL "a", WI "a"

Letters indicate special/extraordinary sessions
Source: State Net, 03/01/07

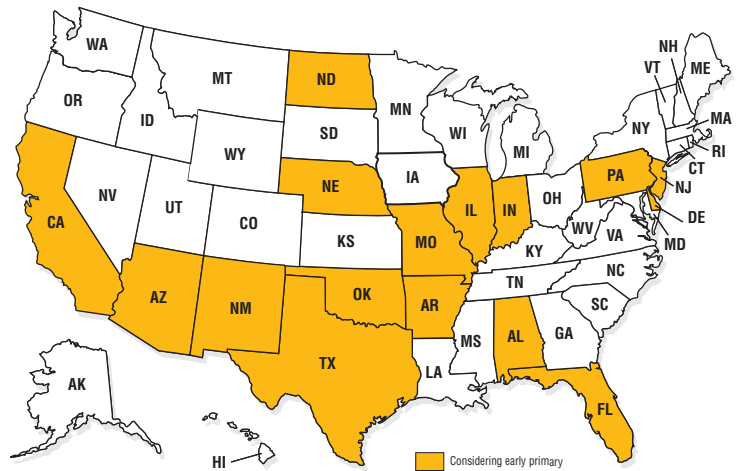
he said. “I think prospective nominees should be vetted on their views on these issues sooner rather than later.”

But some critics say CALIFORNIA’s Democratic legislative leaders have an ulterior motive for holding an early presidential primary, expected to cost the state upwards of \$50 million: they want to get voter approval for easing term limits in time for them to avoid being termed out of office in 2008. “It’s not about relevancy,” said state Sen. Dave Cox (R). “It’s about changing term limits... We should not be spending \$50 million or \$60 million to add a primary election.”

CALIFORNIA may not be the only big state spending millions on a Feb. 5 presidential primary next year, however. The second most populous state in the country, TEXAS, which currently holds its primary in March, is also considering a move to soon-to-be Super Mini-Tuesday. TEXAS state Rep. Roberto Alonzo (D), the sponsor of a bill authorizing that switch (HB 993), made no apologies about moving in on the primary territory of the less populous states. “It only makes sense that smaller states should not serve as a presidential candidate’s first test or gauge of national electability,” he said.

ILLINOIS is yet another big state currently weighing a primary switch to Feb. 5, in part, to bolster the chances of favorite son candidate Barack Obama. Back in January, before the U.S. Senator had declared his candidacy, House Speaker Michael J. Madigan (D) introduced legislation to push the state’s primary forward from March 18 (HB 426). “If Barack is a candidate, recent history tells us that the selection

Bird’s eye view



Source: State Net

Jockeying for position

The race for the 2008 presidential nominations is already well under way, and several delegate-rich states are working hard to give themselves more say in who will eventually earn those spots. At least 16 states are now considering bills to move their presidential primaries into late January or early February, with more likely to soon follow suit (See *SNCJ Spotlight* in this issue). Supporters contend that the current system allows smaller states like IOWA and NEW HAMPSHIRE to have too much influence over the nomination process. Earlier primaries, they say, will force candidates to spend more time campaigning in heavily populated, diverse states like CALIFORNIA and FLORIDA — and to more deeply address issues they consider to be important. Some political analysts, however, argue that a poor performance in the primaries could prematurely force some candidates from the races. The accompanying map shows the states that are considering moving their presidential primary.



process may be finished before it reaches the ILLINOIS primary,” he said at the time, adding, “I expect he’s going to run so we’re going to move the bill.”

NEW JERSEY has also joined the big-state stampede to Feb. 5, despite having moved its primary date from June to February just two years ago. The man who signed the bill effecting that change, Senate President Richard J. Codey (D), who was the state’s acting governor at the time, is also the chief sponsor of the current legislative effort (SB 2193).

FLORIDA, meanwhile, is looking to one-up its fellow big states. A pair of bills are pending in the Sunshine State (HB 537 and SB 1010) that would move its presidential primary to the first Tuesday in February or the first Tuesday after the NEW HAMPSHIRE primary, whichever comes first. With next year’s NEW HAMPSHIRE primary slated for Jan. 22, passage of the measure would mean that FLORIDA’s primary would be held on Jan. 29, in violation of the national parties’ Feb. 5 rule.

Political analysts say one of the main reasons for the early primary rush is the unusually wide-open nature of the 2008 presidential election, with no incumbent president or vice president in the running. They also say the heavy front loading could mean a primary season that’s basically over three weeks after it begins, because candidates who failed to impress on Feb. 5 would have a hard time finding money to continue campaigning.

And that, say the experts, would not be good for the nominating process. For one thing, it would give party members too little time to evaluate the candidates. “They may find out things about the anointed nominees that they don’t like, but find them out too late,” which was very nearly the case with the Democrats’ early front-runner in 2004, Howard Dean, said Jack Pitney, a political science professor at Claremont McKenna College in CALIFORNIA.

A primary season so heavily front-loaded with big states would also likely reduce the size of the potential candidate pool. With the strategy of building a candidacy by stringing together strong showings in small states no longer an option, only those with the biggest war chests would need apply.

There is also the issue that a nominating process that is over the first week of February would mean an election season that’s nine months long. “We are about to have the most extended presidential campaign in American history, and that is the last thing the public wants,” said Larry Sabato, a professor of political science at the University of VIRGINIA.

For those and other reasons, the DNC announced at its winter meeting last month that it would award additional convention delegates in 2008 to states with traditionally late primaries that agreed not to move them forward. But that measure is unlikely to have much of an influence on any of the big states, judging from the comments of lawmakers like PENNSYLVANIA Rep. Ron Buxton (D), who’s state is also considering a primary move — from late April to early March. “The question is,



if we wait until April, are we going to need any help from the Democratic National Committee in obtaining additional delegates if the decision already has been made?” he said.

The National Association of Secretaries of State is pushing an alternate plan: four regional primaries — one each month between April and July — with every state in a given region holding its election on the same day and the order of the regional contests rotating each presidential election year. But the association has been advocating that proposal for nearly a decade and as Professor Sabato put it, “It makes so much sense, it will never happen.”

There’s always a chance that things won’t go according to plan for the big states that move their primaries and no clear winner will emerge on Feb. 5, leaving states that opt to stick with later primaries to decide the nominees. Which is certainly something for the potential primary shifters to think about. “Moving up could just put you in the fog with all those other states there in the beginning, and by holding off you become the linchpin,” said Tim Storey, an election analyst for the National Conference of State Legislatures. “It’s all kind of Rube Goldberg — if this, then that. Who knows what’s going to happen?”

(LOS ANGELES TIMES, NEW YORK TIMES, CQPOLITICS.COM, CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, CENSUS.GOV, CHICAGO TRIBUNE, TUSCALOOSA NEWS, STATELINE.ORG, ST. PETERSBURG TIMES)

— *Compiled by KOREY CLARK*

Budget & Taxes

STATES ON SPENDING SPREE: Lately, the view of the Bush administration, fiscally speaking, has been that aside from matters of national security, it’s time for some serious belt-tightening. But state lawmakers appear to see things quite a bit differently. While the president’s budget plan for fiscal 2008 called for a meager 1 percent rise in domestic spending, governors and legislators across the country have gone on a spending binge.

Last year, MASSACHUSETTS approved a universal healthcare plan with a price tag of over \$1.5 billion, and at least 10 other states are considering similar programs this year. MONTANA Gov. Brian Schweitzer (D) has proposed a 26 percent spending hike over the next two years, including \$100 million for new prisons for those convicted of methamphetamine-related crimes. VERMONT Gov. Jim Douglas (R) is seeking to borrow \$40 million to make free wireless broadband available statewide. And ARIZONA Gov. Mike Bebee (D) and the state’s Republican-controlled



of Reform — to submit a ballot measure last week that would turn over redistricting authority to an 11-member independent commission, made up of randomly-selected voters.

The initiative had actually been in the works since the end of last year’s session. But the reform groups’ decision to officially file the measure last week came only after the deadline for submitting new legislation for the session passed Feb. 27 without a redistricting reform bill having been filed. (Redistricting reform can still be accomplished, however, through alteration of pending legislation.)

The groups’ action also appears to have been prompted by the news a week earlier that CalChamber and the CALIFORNIA Teachers Association are planning to place a term-limit reform measure on the ballot. Because most of the recent discussion about redistricting reform among legislative leaders had been tied to term limits, the reformers saw the announcement about the term limit initiative as a sign that lawmakers were giving up on redistricting. “When term limits moved out,” said former Democratic legislator and Voices of Reform co-chairman Fred Keeley, “we were grateful for having put all the work in so we weren’t caught flat-footed.”

But the backers of the redistricting reform proposal realize that, with the task of having to obtain over a million signatures in a few months in order to qualify the measure for the November ballot, the effort is more likely to be accomplished legislatively. “If the Legislature puts an initiative on the ballot with the governor’s signature, it makes it a lot easier to pass,” said the other Voices of Reform co-chair, GOP strategist Dan Schnur.

And while Schnur’s group and the other backers insist that their initiative is not intended solely to pressure the Legislature, they acknowledge that is one of their aims. “Our hope is it creates an additional incentive and some leverage on legislative leaders,” said Schnur.

What could prove particularly motivating for lawmakers about the reformers’ plan is that it calls for the drawing of Congressional districts as well as legislative districts by independent commission, something CALIFORNIA’s Democratic legislative leaders and Congressional delegates will be very anxious to avoid, given their party now controls the U.S. House.

But Assembly Speaker Fabian Núñez’s comments about the issue were measured, as usual. “I believe the legislative process is the best mechanism to ensure that a redistricting plan fully meets the considerations of the Voting Rights Act, communities of interest, boundaries, and dozens of other key legal issues,” he said. “However, we will continue to work with the proponents of the initiative put

Upcoming elections

(03/01/2007 - 03/22/2007)

03/10/2007

**Louisiana
Special Election**
House District 94

03/20/2007

**Massachusetts
Special Primary**
House 14th Worcester



forth today as we continue to move a fair, legal and responsible plan through the legislature.” (CONTRA COSTA TIMES)

AK LAWMAKERS BRIDLE AT SHORTER SESSION: ALASKA voters passed a ballot initiative in November requiring the Legislature, starting next year, to complete its session in 90 days, instead of the 120 days allowed under the state constitution. But it is beginning to look as though the shorter session is not actually going to happen.

Many lawmakers are expressing resistance to the idea because they believe a 90-day session will not give their constituents enough time to voice concerns about pending legislation. “I’m not sure you can do it, frankly: reduce [the session] by a quarter and not reduce the impact to the public,” said Senate Majority Leader Gary Stevens (R).

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Even one of the co-sponsors of last year’s initiative, Rep. Jay Ramras (R), suggested — although somewhat convolutedly — that the 90-day limit wasn’t inviolable. “I can’t build a fence that encroaches on your property. But there is not a law that says that I have to build a fence to the edge of my property. And if I were to choose to build a fence with five feet or 10 feet or within 30 days of the confines of my property, I believe that it would stand up constitutionally,” he said.

The Legislature’s chief legal counsel, Tam Cook, appeared to agree with Ramras, stating at a Senate hearing last week that if next year’s session were to run longer than 90 days and that encroachment were challenged in court, the Legislature would likely prevail, based on similar cases in the past.

But the session-shortening initiative’s other co-sponsor, Sen. Tom Wagoner (R), remains committed to the voters’ mandate. “If we have the resolve to stay here through weekends through the 90-day session, we can have just about as much time as we have now in 90 days versus 120 days,” he said.

House Minority Leader Beth Kertula (D), meanwhile, suggested an approach that lay somewhere between the two extremes: “Instead of just acceptance, I think that we need to try to see how it can work, and then we need to also be very forthright if it won’t work.” (KTUU NEWS [ANCHORAGE])

POLITICS IN BRIEF: Merck & Co. announced last month that it would stop lobbying state lawmakers to mandate the use of its new HPV vaccine. The company’s decision came in response to harsh criticism from some parents, family advocacy groups and public officials (ORLANDO SENTINEL).

— *Compiled by KOREY CLARK*

Governors

SCHWARZENEGGER TELLS D.C. TO LIGHT(EN) UP: Where there's smoke there's fire, but according to CALIFORNIA Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R), that's a good thing. In the nation's capital last week for a meeting of the National Governors Association, Schwarzenegger took time out from meetings and power lunches to chide both parties for their constant bickering, suggesting along the way that President Bush get Congressional leaders to regularly join him for a cigar as a way to end Washington D.C.'s partisan rancor.

As Schwarzenegger sees it, Republicans and Democrats can't help but get along better when they are sharing a good stogie or two. The governor even credited his beloved cigars for helping move along several recent bipartisan success stories in the Golden State, noting that his now-famous smoking tent on the statehouse lawn in Sacramento is a regular hangout for lawmakers of all political stripes.

"People come in there, Democrats and Republicans, and they take off their jackets and rip off their ties, and they sit down and smoke a stogie, and they talk, and they schmooze," Schwarzenegger said, adding that "You can't catch a socially transmitted disease by sitting down with people who hold ideas that are different than yours."

In an address to the National Press Club, Schwarzenegger also challenged both parties to stop pandering to ideological extremes, saying "the left and the right don't have a monopoly on conscience." Schwarzenegger also complained that most Americans believe Washington has become "all about divide and conquer. All of this energy is being spent on bitterness; all this effort is being spent on maneuvering and trying to win and make the other person the loser and so on. Imagine if that same energy were put into working together to build a consensus."

Schwarzenegger even made note of his own disastrous contribution to bloodsport partisanship — his 2005 "Year of Reform" special election that resulted in a quartet of heavily conservative ballot measures he championed being overwhelmingly defeated at the polls. After a torrid start to his political career in 2003, the crushing defeat helped drop his approval ratings from the mid-60s all the way down into the low 30's. Many pundits questioned whether he would recover, but a year of openly working with the state's Democratic leaders on a series of popular legislative measures, coupled with a public apology for calling the special election in the first place, earned him an easy re-election and approval ratings back to where they were in his original heyday.

Schwarzenegger said his political recovery should serve as proof that voters are weary of constant partisan battling, and long for leaders who will work together. "I'm

"You can't catch a socially transmitted disease by sitting down with people who hold ideas that are different than yours."



not a person that gets all introspective about my failures,” he said. “But I do know when something doesn’t work. And dividing people doesn’t work.” (SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE)

NY OVERHAULS WORKERS COMP: NEW

YORK Gov. Eliot Spitzer (D) overcame a rocky beginning to his relationship with lawmakers last week to help foster the state’s first significant workers compensation reform in 15 years.

The Empire State currently has among the nation’s highest workers compensation premiums while offering some of the lowest benefits to those injured on the job. The weekly maximum benefit for an injured worker is only \$400, less than 40 percent of the average weekly state income. Under the new system, the maximum benefit would climb to \$650 by 2010. It would then be indexed to two-thirds of the average weekly wage, starting in 2012.

Spitzer says the reform package will cut costs by capping the number of years that some injured workers receive weekly benefits while also creating a regulated fee schedule for the prescription drugs and medical care involved in workers’ compensation cases. Spitzer’s office said the changes will shave approximately \$500 million a year from current costs and should result in a 10 to 15 percent drop in workers compensation premiums.

Republican Assembly leader James Tedisco gave Spitzer kudos for brokering the deal, mostly for being able to get more stakeholders involved in the negotiations than had his predecessor, Republican George Pataki. “Governor Spitzer deserves a lot of credit for bringing together disparate groups and leaders to agree on a truly significant workers’ compensation reform package,” Tedisco said. (NEW YORK TIMES)

GOVERNORS IN BRIEF: Discouraged by a pronounced lack of support for his proposal to close down state government for four individual days before the end of the fiscal year on June 30 as a way of mitigating a \$105 million budget shortfall, **RHODE ISLAND** Gov. Don Carcieri (R) is now suggesting an across-the-board 1 percent pay cut for all Ocean State government workers (PROVIDENCE JOURNAL). • Governors from five western states — **CALIFORNIA, ARIZONA, NEW MEXICO, WASHINGTON** and **OREGON** — announced an agreement at last week’s meeting of the National Governors Association that calls for creating a regional goal to reduce emissions and for developing a Western market that could allow companies to buy and sell carbon emission credits (SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE). • **MARYLAND** Gov. Martin O’Malley (D) said last week that he supports a proposed statewide ban on smoking in bars and restaurants. Each chamber of the Old Line State Legislature currently has such a bill pending (BALTIMORE SUN). • **WISCONSIN** Gov. Jim Doyle (D) said last week that he supports changing state law to allow state and local

Upcoming stories

Here are some of the topics you will see covered in upcoming issues of the State Net Capitol Journal:

- An HPV update
- Security breach protection
- Credit scoring



governments to offer health benefits to their workers' same-sex partners (WISCONSIN STATE JOURNAL [MADISON]). • **CALIFORNIA** Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) said he is not in favor of a trio of bills pending in the Golden State Legislature that would prohibit certain agricultural practices and require state health certification and inspection of farms growing leafy greens. Schwarzenegger says he favors a voluntary plan proposed by the agriculture industry over a government-mandated inspection system. There have been 22 E. coli outbreaks nationwide since 1995, many of them traced back to spinach and lettuce grown in **CALIFORNIA**. An outbreak last year killed three people and made at least 200 more sick (LOS ANGELES TIMES). • **VIRGINIA** Gov. Tim Kaine (D) said he would veto the General Assembly's recently approved transportation funding plan if lawmakers don't agree to cut back on the amount of money the plan would take from other services. Kaine is expected to offer amendments to the measure this month (VIRGINIAN-PILOT [NORFOLK]).

— *Compiled by RICH EHISEN*

Hot issues

B **BUSINESS:** The **VIRGINIA** General Assembly approves HB 2954, which bars governments from using eminent domain power to obtain private land for any reason other than to build roads, schools or other public works. It also defines blight to encompass only those dwellings that pose an actual risk to public safety. The measure moves to Gov. Tim Kaine (D), who has not indicated if he will sign it (VIRGINIAN-PILOT [NORFOLK]). • The **GEORGIA** Senate approves the “Merlot to Go” bill, legislation that would allow restaurants to seal up unfinished bottles of wine for their customers to take home from dinner. The Peach State Legislature approved a similar measure last year, but Gov. Sonny Perdue (R) vetoed it. It now moves to the Senate (ATLANTA JOURNAL CONSTITUTION). • The **UTAH** Senate approves HB 365, which would require 80 percent of residential owners or 75 percent of commercial owners in a project area to give their approval before redevelopment authorities can exercise eminent domain to take that property. It goes to Gov. Jon Huntsman (R) for review (DAILY HERALD [PROVO]).

CRIME & PUNISHMENT: A **CALIFORNIA** court invalidates Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's (R) plan to transfer thousands of prisoners to private lockups in **TENNESSEE** and **ARIZONA**. The judge said the state of emergency Schwarzenegger declared in ordering the transfer was improper, thus making the transfers illegal. State officials are appealing the ruling (LOS ANGELES TIMES). • **WASHINGTON** Gov. Christine Gregoire (D) issues an executive order barring Evergreen State prison officials from releasing felons early due to overcrowding in the facilities where they

are incarcerated. The order came after the recent unexpected release of dozens of prisoners from King County jails when those facilities exceeded legal capacity (SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER). • The **COLORADO** Senate approves a measure that would allow police to pull over and ticket drivers who are not wearing a seat belt. It crashes into the House (DENVER POST). • Seat belts are also an issue in the **ARKANSAS** Senate, which similarly approves a bill that will allow Razorback State law enforcement to stop drivers solely for not wearing a seat belt. It moves to the House (LOG CABIN DEMOCRAT [CONWAY]). • **WYOMING** Gov. Dave Freudenthal (D) signs SF 93, which bans open alcohol containers in a moving vehicle (WYOMING TRIBUNE-EAGLE [CHEYENNE]).

EDUCATION: The **COLORADO** House endorses HB 1117, which requires school sex-education programs to have science-based standards. It faces one more vote before it can move to the Senate (ROCKY MOUNTAIN NEWS [DENVER]). • The **KENTUCKY** Senate unanimously approves SB 110, which would require all public school students in preschool through eighth grade to get at least 30 minutes a day or 150 minutes a week of moderate to vigorous exercise. It runs off to the Senate (COURIER-JOURNAL [LOUISVILLE]). • The **MONTANA** House kills a proposal that would have forced state education officials to reject the federal No Child Left Behind law. Doing so would have cost the Treasure State about \$120 million in federal education funds (BILLINGS GAZETTE). • The **SOUTH DAKOTA** House approves a measure to require students to stay in school until age 18. It graduates to Gov. Mike Rounds (R), who is expected to sign it into law (ARGUS LEADER). • **UTAH** Gov. Jon Huntsman (R) signs legislation that allows families to receive up to \$3,000 per child in public funds each month to send their children to a private school. Opponents say they will challenge the law's constitutionality in court (DESERET NEWS [SALT LAKE CITY]).

ENVIRONMENT: The **MARYLAND** Senate approves legislation to adopt **CALIFORNIA** rules that require automakers to reduce fleetwide emissions of greenhouse gasses from their vehicles 30 percent by 2016. The measure moves back

In the hopper

State Net's database tracks tens of thousands of bills in all 50 states at any given time. Here's a snapshot of what's in the legislative works:

Number of 2007 prefiles last week:
883

Number of 2007 Intros last week:
10,748

Number of 2006 Session bills enacted/adopted last week: 5

Number of 2007 Session bills enacted/adopted last week: 910

Number of prefiles to date: 26,159

Number of Intros to date: 93,131

Number of enacted/adopted overall in 2006: 33,333

Number of enacted/adopted overall in 2007: 4,712

— Compiled By JAMES ROSS
(Measures current as of 2/28/07)
Source: State Net

to the House, where it was approved earlier, to resolve minor differences. It would then go to Gov. Martin O'Malley (D), who says he will sign it into law. If so, the Old Line State will become the 11th in the last two years to adopt CALIFORNIA's strict new vehicle emissions standards (BALTIMORE SUN).

HEALTH & SCIENCE: A CALIFORNIA court upholds the constitutionality of the Golden State's 2004 voter-approved stem cell initiative, which authorizes the state to sell \$3 billion in bonds to fund all forms of stem cell research, including that on human embryos. Plaintiffs say they will appeal to the state Supreme Court (LOS ANGELES TIMES). • **IOWA** Gov. Chet Culver (D) signs SF 162, legislation that will allow Hawkeye State medical researchers to clone human embryos to harvest embryonic stem cells (DES MOINES REGISTER). • An **ILLINOIS** Senate committee approves a measure that would require all sixth-grade girls to be inoculated with a vaccine to protect against cervical cancer. It moves to the full Senate (QUAD CITY TIMES [DAVENPORT]).

HOMELAND SECURITY: The Bush administration announces it will allow states to postpone the implementation of the federal Real ID Act by up to 19 months. The law, which originally required states to begin issuing new tamper-proof drivers licenses by May 2008, has drawn the ire of numerous states over its potential cost and a lack of guidelines (see *High noon for Real ID?* in Feb 19 *SNCJ*). The announcement came on the same day the federal Dept. of Homeland Security revealed that new licenses must have a driver's home address and other personal information printed on the front and a two-dimensional, unencrypted barcode on the back. The lack of encryption means businesses requiring ID, such as bars, would be capable of scanning and recording customers' home addresses. DHS has given states until October of this year to submit a plan for complying with the guidelines (WASHINGTON POST, CNETNEWS.COM).

IMMIGRATION: The **MISSOURI** House approves HB 269, which would bar illegal immigrants from attending state colleges or universities. Lawmakers must approve it a second time before it can move to the Senate (KANSAS CITY STAR). • **MASSACHUSETTS** Gov. Deval Patrick (D) issues an executive order requiring contractors working with the state to sign a document promising not to knowingly hire undocumented workers. Violators will face fines and the possible termination of their state contract (BOSTON GLOBE). • An **OKLAHOMA** House committee approves legislation that would, among other things, require public employers to verify the citizenship of their workers and bar illegal immigrants from attending Sooner State colleges at in-state tuition rates. It moves to the House floor (ARDMOREITE).



SOCIAL POLICY: A **SOUTH DAKOTA** Senate committee rejects the House-approved HB 1293, which would have banned almost all abortions in the Coyote State. Supporters vowed they would try to bring the bill back this session (**ARGUS LEADER**). • **RHODE ISLAND** officials announce they will legally recognize same-sex marriages validly performed in **MASSACHUSETTS**. The Ocean State becomes the first in the nation to recognize those unions (**PROVIDENCE JOURNAL**). • A **HAWAII** House panel shelves a proposal to allow civil unions for same-sex couples. Supporters say the measure could be reconsidered at a later date (**HONOLULU STAR BULLETIN**). • The **INDIANA** House overwhelmingly approves legislation that would remove from office any elected official who has been delinquent \$15,000 or more on child support payments for more than 30 days. It moves to the Senate (**SOUTH BEND TRIBUNE**). • A **SOUTH CAROLINA** House panel approves a measure that would require women seeking an abortion to first view an ultrasound image of the fetus. It moves to the full House (**GREENVILLE NEWS**).

POTPOURRI: The **VIRGINIA** House endorses legislation that would bar teenage drivers from using a cell phone while driving. The measure now rings up in the Senate, which has already approved a similar measure (**WASHINGTON POST**). • The **ARIZONA** House approves HB 2458, which would bar the Grand Canyon State governor from commandeering firearms and weapons during a state of war emergency. The bill moves to the Senate, which has approved a similar proposal (**ARIZONA REPUBLIC [PHOENIX]**). • The **GEORGIA** House unanimously approves HB 202, legislation that would bar any company that falls more than 25 percent behind on a public works or state transportation construction contract from bidding on a new project. It creeps off to the Senate (**AUGUSTA CHRONICLE**). • The **KENTUCKY** House approves a proposal that would allow the surviving spouse of an accident victim to sue the responsible party for loss of companionship. Plaintiffs are currently allowed to sue only for economic losses. The measure is now served in the Bluegrass State Senate (**LEXINGTON HERALD-LEADER**).

— *Compiled by RICH EHISEN*

Once Around the Statehouse Lightly

PLAIN SPEAKING: That is the mantra of **FLORIDA** Gov. Charlie Crist these days. He wants government agencies to talk straight, so folks in the Sunshine State can understand them. At least one state legislator agrees, arguing that official Florida ought to get rid of the term “alien.” Sen. Frederica



Wilson, a Miami Democrat, thinks the word “alien” is offensive, and she has introduced a bill to prohibit state officials and agencies from using it. “We don’t say ‘alien’” in Dade County, Wilson told *Tallahassee.com*. “We say ‘immigrant.’” Her bill does not include a penalty, in case some official violates the law.

APOSTROPHE ATROCITY: Some things are just so annoying, they cannot be let go. Such is the case for Mr. Parker Westbrook, a self-described “longtime practical ARKANSAS historian,” who, reports the Associated Press, is tired of people goofing up the possessive form of the Razorback State’s name. So beefed over it is Westbrook that he recently convinced a family friend, state Rep. Steve Harrelson, to introduce legislation that would designate “Arkansas’s” as the correct possessive form of the word, not the more commonly used “Arkansas’.” Westbrook says the garbled usage comes from confusion caused by the hordes of English, French and Dutch explorers back in the day that spelled and pronounced the name “70 different ways.” Harrelson says that if the House signs off on the non-binding resolution, he will seek out a sponsor for the measure in the Senate. But don’t expect a long-winded appeal. Harrelson says he plans to spend “about 30 seconds” on swaying his fellow lawmakers before moving on to “more pressing matters.”

CANNON TO THE LEFT OF THEM...The Second Battery VERMONT Light Artillery has lost its battle with the state of Vermont. A group of Civil War buffs and re-enactors, the Artillery must give back their most prized ordinance — a bronze cannon once used by Vermonters in battle with Johnny Reb. According to the *Rutland Herald*, the re-enactors have doted over the big gun for 30 years, including displaying it at events. But now, the state wants it back, and the re-enactors say they have no choice but to comply. Although grumpy about the fate of the cannon barrel, the re-enactors also agreed to give the state the weapon’s wooden carriage and wheels, which the Light Artillery restored. The piece should be displayed and “used,” a spokesman for the Artillery said, not kept in a “mothballed museum.” The harshest item to issue from the gun these days is smoke, caused when a bit of gun powder is used to fire it.

QUICK MOVE SAVES BEER: Beer drinkers in WISCONSIN were saved last week when the state Legislature moved with alacrity to offset the pending consequences of daylight savings time. DST is scheduled to begin early this year — March 11, to be exact — and that promised to cause havoc with elbow benders all across the Badger State. But as the *Janesville Gazette* reports, lawmakers passed a bill that allows bars to stay open until 3:30 AM on March 11. Under normal circumstances, bars must close at 2:30 AM. But without a legislative rescue, bars on March 11 would have had to close at 2 AM because that is when the clocks change, making 2 AM actually 3 AM – a half hour past closing time. Whew. Close one there in Wisconsin. Don’t want

to miss out on that last half hour of quiet sipping.

BIG BROWN: It is CALIFORNIA'S number one parking violator, gathering in nearly 12,000 tickets and paying \$673,334 in fines in San Francisco alone during 2006. And United Parcel Service says there is nothing it can do about it but to keep racking up a ticket about every 45 minutes and forking over the fines. According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, UPS — and similar companies — must double park to make deliveries. “Is it cheaper to pay the ticket, or is it cheaper to...spend time looking for a legal parking space?” says the boss of an electrical company that does business downtown and faces the same dilemma as UPS.

NANNYISM OF THE WEEK comes from ILLINOIS where the state House agreed with a proposal that requires school children to wash their hands with antiseptic before taking a meal at school. “Hand washing is crucial for public health,” Rep. Mary Flowers told the *Chicago Sun-Times*. But not everyone agreed that it ought to be the law. “People are responsible for themselves,” Rep. Joe Dunn said. “Every good idea doesn’t have to be a law.”

ONE MAN'S ROADKILL...is another man's dinner. So say supporters of a CONNECTICUT measure that would have designated state dollars to pay for processing deer that meet their sudden end on the state's rural roadways. According to the *Hartford Courant*, Rep. Antonietta Boucher, a Wilton Republican, wanted the demised does to serve a useful purpose by being, well, served, namely as dinner at local soup kitchens. While eating something found in the road or scraped off the hood of a car would not normally make your mom proud, proponents contend that as long as the critter is fresh, who cares whether it died from a bullet or a Bronco. It isn't against state law and, given the fact that cars take out roughly 18,000 Constitution State deer each year — roughly 49 each day — why not see someone benefit? Alas, Boucher's fellow lawmakers couldn't get past the whole “roadkill” thing. And while this effort went splat, Boucher says she'll resubmit the measure again, this time with the emphasis on deer brought down by hunters rather than bumpers.

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