

DEMOCRATIC NEWSLETTER

A monthly newsletter
by the Assembly
Democratic Caucus

ASSEMBLYMAN GEORGE N. ZENOVICH, CHAIRMAN

OCTOBER 1969

VOLUME 1 NO. 5

A growing economic tax issue faces Reagan Republicans as the 1970 election nears.

The latest tip-off: a study of the Commerce Clearing House, an organization which compiles reports of legislative activities on taxes and business.

Per capita, state and local taxes in California spurted \$74 last year under the Reagan Administration -- more than in any other state. In contrast, eight states registered declines. Others had smaller tax gains than California.

Total state and local taxes in California in 1968 soared to \$9.4 billion. That topped runner-up New York by \$300 million.

The per capita burden under Reagan in California reached \$488. New York's was higher at \$503, but increased only \$3 last year in the face of the Reagan-influenced \$74 advance in California taxes.

The Reagan Administration could have tightened its economic belt if it had allocated to the California Water Plan the tax rebate monies that Reagan Republicans insisted should be mailed out during the election year. Instead, some \$100 million in inter-agency borrowing is slated to bail out the water plan.

A critical economic crisis thus faces the state if the loans can't be paid off later. That possibility of a default exists if voters reject a Reagan proposition on the June ballot for higher interest rates on state bonds.

Further, Governor Reagan has announced a tentative reduction in state public works projects in line with President Nixon's program for a 75 percent cutback in government construction projects.



'Greetings: You have been chosen by your fellow workers to fight inflation . . .'

Reagan says some \$200 million in capital outlay projects may be delayed in California -- but thus far has refused to say which ones.

It means that the Reagan Republicans and Nixon Republicans have singled out building workers and the construction industry for a man-made depression.

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Caucus Bulletin Board

A detailed case history of how the level of hospital care has slumped during the Reagan administration appears in this month's canary-colored Perspective Section.

Your Democratic Newsletter -- now in its fifth month of publication -- is gearing up for the 1970 legislative session. Do you like the present newsletter? Send any suggestions or comments to John A. FitzRandolph, chief consultant, Assembly Democratic staff, 5016 State Capitol, Sacramento, California 95814.

STRAWS IN THE WIND

The Republican leadership recently revealed 62 assemblymen's joint committee assignments -- some assemblymen landing as many as three committees. Eighteen other assemblymen, including a few who obviously wanted to concentrate their work load elsewhere, didn't get any joint committees. Among the GOP assemblymen shut out by their own leadership from a joint committee: Robert E. Badham, Charles Conrad, Tom Hom, Don MacGillivray, Kent Stacey and Floyd Wakefield. . . . MORE TAXPAYERS' DOLLARS will be required in the long run due to the construction delays ordered by the Reagan Administration, according to Samuel Nelson, a former state director of the Department of Public Works. Nelson warns that inflation will add to the cost of the projects and says the delays are being done strictly for propaganda purposes. . . . GOVERNOR REAGAN USED THE CALENDAR for a half veto of AB 1726. The measure by Assemblyman John Quimby extended until Sept. 1 the filing deadline for property tax relief. Reagan did sign the bill -- but not until August 28 -- so late that few taxpayers had proper notification of their rights. . . . THOMAS L. PITTS, secretary-treasurer of the state AFL-CIO, recently gave this candid assessment of Campaign 1970: "Next year's elections will largely determine whether the next decade is to become one of progress or of pussyfooting. This is because of reapportionment. If the political complexion of the Legislature and Congress is preponderantly reactionary, we can expect that such issues as student unrest and law and order will be met by the massive over-kill solutions of those who believe that the only way to solve a problem is to pave it over or obliterate it."

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THOSE QUOTEFUL DEMOCRATS

Assemblyman Bob Moretti, commenting on the Democratic budget victory that was clinched when the controller estimated that Democratic-imposed control language in the school bill means that \$79.8 million in excess state funds will be available for school aid -- "This completely vindicates our position that the California school crisis was a more pressing state problem than any other -- including approval of a budget by the July 1 deadline."

Senator Alfred E. Alquist, commenting on the failure of the Republican-controlled Legislature to provide tax reform -- "Tax reform involves technical as well as policy decisions and cannot be achieved without strong leadership by the chief executive."

Assemblyman Kenneth Cory, commenting on the passage of Governor Reagan's record \$6.25 billion budget by the GOP-controlled Legislature -- "We are never going to get real economy until the governor and the majority of the Legislature are willing to take a hard look at every item. . . ."

Ex-Governor Edmund G. Brown, commenting on Governor Reagan's handling of campus unrest -- "Some of the things he's done have precipitated the situation. . . . he's made a political football of the Regents' meetings and in some ways has challenged young people to violate the law. . . ."

Economist John Kenneth Galbraith -- "It is only a matter of time until the Nixon Administration will have to face the choice between inflation and wage restraint -- or intolerable unemployment."

Assemblyman John L. Burton, in condemning as "heartless" the Reagan Administration decision to repeal the educational trust provision for welfare children -- "It will condemn a whole generation of needy children to a poverty cycle."

Assemblyman Leroy F. Greene, in criticizing Governor Reagan for slashing \$450,000 from the school lunch bill of Senator Moscone -- "School is not meaningful to children gnawed by hunger pains."

SCANDAL AT NAPA -- IN PERSPECTIVE

Governor Reagan steadfastly has held that the level of care and treatment has not been lowered in state hospitals for the mentally ill and retarded. In fact, the governor has argued, patient population has declined with resulting higher staff/patient ratios.

On the other hand, Reagan's critics, who range from the superintendents and professional staff of the hospitals to national and international health experts, have maintained that Reagan's economy drive, which resulted in large staff cuts, have produced a rapidly deteriorating hospital system which was once considered to be among the best in the nation.

The governor's glib explanations and rationalizations aside, the tangible results of the administration's state hospital policies are now being realized with the recent uncovering of a number of tragic and brutal incidents at Napa State Hospital.

In letters to both the governor and Democratic Assemblyman Leo Ryan of San Mateo County, the mother of a 13-year-old mentally disturbed child hospitalized at Napa State described how her son was homosexually gang raped by other patients. A pool cue later was forced up his rectum. He was beaten until unconscious, his teeth chipped and glasses broken. The boy was wrapped in a blanket and then beaten and kicked.

The mother also related how her son's head was shoved in a toilet. Cigarettes were used to burn various parts of his body.

After listing the tortures, the mother posed a series of questions. "We are questioning you, governor," she wrote, "not only as the governor of this great state but also as the father of an adolescent boy. In similar circumstances, would you place your son at this center? Would you feel he would receive nothing but the best of care? We did."

Referring to her son, the mother stated: "He is alive physically. Who knows what emotional repercussions this will have for my son now and/or the rest of his life? Who's to blame, governor? Who's at fault?"

The governor never answered.

Ryan also wanted to know why these despicable events had been allowed to occur in a state hospital. His first action was to make a personal visit to the governor. Reagan, of course, was not even aware of the problem nor had he read the letter.

Upon being made aware of the Napa incident, the governor vaguely promised to look into the matter. Not content to let the matter die at this point, Ryan decided to investigate the mother's allegations himself. He and the chairman of the Assembly Health and Welfare Committee, Assemblyman Gordon Duffy, a Republican, made an immediate and unannounced visit to Napa. Hospital administrators as well as personnel working in the children's units readily admitted the truth of the mother's statements and then proceeded to inform the two legislators of many other incidents which were occurring on an every day basis. Homosexual activity was rampant in many of the hospital's wards as well as illicit drug use by numerous patients, they were told.

When the two legislators asked why such things could occur in a hospital charged with the responsibility of caring and treating sick children, the answer was consistently the same: there are not enough staff to give even minimal custodial care on the wards.

Ryan was furious. After three years of listening to the administration's claim that staffing standards were being continually improved with resulting better care for patients, Ryan realized that what was happening at Napa wasn't simply a matter of the administration's usual harmless and ineffectual paper economizing which mainly

consists of shuffling a few bureaucrats around or cutting down on typewriter ribbons, but that these so-called "economies" were inexorably turning what had heretofore been a fairly decent hospital system into an 18th century lunatic's asylum.

On the basis of what he had learned at Napa, Ryan decided that the public should also be made aware of the conditions existing at the hospital. In conjunction with Assemblymen George N. Zenovich and John Dunlap, whose district includes Napa State Hospital, Assemblyman Ryan released to the press his copy of the mother's letter. The three legislators then charged the Reagan administration with gross negligence in not providing adequate care and supervision for the hospital's patients. Dunlap, who has long been attempting to improve conditions at both Napa and Sonoma State Hospitals, minced no words. "If there is negligence or responsibility involved, this rests with the Department of Mental Hygiene in Sacramento and the Reagan Administration," he said. He cited the hospital's own statistics that the patient population in the children's unit had remained constant since January, 1967, instead of declining as the administration maintained. But what was even more important was the actual staffing situation in the children's units. Reagan has repeatedly assured the public that staffing levels are continually being improved. But in the children's units the staff/patient ratio was actually 18 percent lower in July of this year than it was when Reagan became governor. A further problem brought out by Dunlap was the declining number of male nursing personnel, almost 50 percent less than in the beginning of 1967.

Confusion marked the administration's reaction. The Department of Mental Hygiene immediately closed the ward where the attacks occurred and began to increase staff in the other wards of the children's unit. Publicly, however, they denied that the Napa situation was due to any staffing deficiencies.

The hospital superintendent, Dr. Robert J. Spratt, who is frequently at odds with the administration on hospital policy, told reporters an entirely different story. He said the situation at Napa has been deteriorating since the 1967 budget cutbacks and that violence such as the attack on the child was less likely before the cuts. Also brought to light was the huge increase in other incidents involving injury to a patient or property damage. Reports of such incidents increased from 49 in November of 1967 to 130 in June, 1969.

Reagan, stung by public indignation, decided to deny all. The governor, a cunning political animal, utilized the old ploy of a good offense is the best defense and angrily labeled the actions of the three Democratic legislators as ". . .so reprehensible that anyone that has a part in it should be more ashamed of themselves." Calling the whole affair a "deliberate distortion," Reagan asserted: "I believe that as much as can be done has been done." He then told the press how the administration had earlier authorized 19 new staff positions for the children's unit at Napa to achieve 100 percent staffing standards.

What he refused to mention, however, was that the administration had literally been forced into the additional positions two months earlier after personnel on Napa children's wards had presented "crisis statements" to the director of the Department of Mental Hygiene, Dr. James Lowry. Documented in the "crisis statements" were problems due to understaffing in wards caring for "the sickest children in the world."

Acting as if the record of his past two and a half years in office never existed, Reagan smoothly proclaimed that his economy program had never been aimed at the state hospitals and, further, the administration had been merely trying to stimulate the development of community mental health centers to stop the warehousing of patients in state hospitals.

Both of these contentions are untrue. The major issue during Reagan's first year in office was his proposed 10 percent cut in the state hospitals. The attempt to credit the administration with the development of community mental health programs is fantasy. The Legislature consistently has prodded the governor for adequate funding and implementation of community care programs.

This is, however, a typical example of the governor's tactic of continual after-the-fact plagiarism of anything good that happens in state government. With almost complete abandon, the governor can affix the possessive pronoun "our" to any Democratic legislative program that has become law. So blatant are the administration's propagandists that in a slick mail-out during last year's election, almost every major legislative program by Democratic legislators was listed as an administration accomplishment.

But what, after all, is one more lie?

It is obvious that there will be many more future Napa incidents. . . and at other state hospitals. As long as the administration continues to hold its present philosophy toward institutional care and treatment, California's state hospitals can only continue to deteriorate.

The only glimmer of hope is the recent formation of a select Assembly committee to investigate and make recommendations on what action should be taken on state hospitals.

Or, of course, a new governor.

San Francisco Examiner
July 28, 1969

Violence and
Sex in Napa
Child's Ward

Napa Hospital Aide Says
Staff Lack Voids Safety

The Sacramento Bee

Page A16
THE SACRAMENTO BEE
Wednesday, July 30, 1969

Hospital Aide
Links Staff,
Budget Cuts

Oakland Tribune
July 28, 1969

Napa Hospital Order Is
Called 'Smoke Screen'

The Sacramento Bee

In April there was

THE SACRAMENTO BEE
July 27, 1969

Homosexual Gang Attack
In Napa Hospital Is Bared

The San Francisco
Chronicle
July 29, 1969

A Shocking
Napa Incident
--New Frontier

Editorials

State Hospital Shocking Crisis

SFC JUL 31 1969

THE SHOCKING HOMOSEXUAL ATTACK upon a 14-year-old boy patient at Napa State Hospital is only the latest sobering indictment of a State mental health system that is, itself, quite sick. Report after report, accusation after accusation, investigation after investigation, have all confirmed that these institutions are in deep trouble. The Napa incident was almost predictable by those who have made a study of the deteriorating quality of care at that and at other institutions.

Within recent memory, experts retained by the State Department of Mental Hygiene itself have reported that the care of the mentally retarded in all hospitals was little more than warehousing and was, in fact, sometimes harmful. Sonoma State Hospital has been officially described as a place where young and old alike are "herded into huge barracks-like wards . . . and are treated like and consequently behave like animals in a zoo."

AGNEWS STATE HOSPITAL has reported a 50 per cent increase in patient-caused fires, a 43 per cent increase in fights between patients and a property loss increase of 87 per cent, all since the Reagan Administration instituted reductions in the hospital staff employment levels.

A private study by a group of Stanford University Medical School psychiatrists brought the conclusion more than a year ago that "we can no longer say we have good mental care in California."

This distressing, abundantly documented catalogue of State hospital deficiencies stems from the refusal of the State Department of Mental Hygiene and of Human Relations Agency Secretary Spencer Williams to provide or to campaign for adequate and well-trained staffs at the institutions. The time is long overdue when this responsibility should be fulfilled.

EARLIER THIS MONTH, Thomas J. Farrell, a highly regarded Santa Rosa insurance man and, incidentally, a Republican, resigned from the Sonoma State Hospital Board of Trustees. It was too bad, he wrote, "that our retarded children were not born fish because, if they were, they would have the lobbying support of the Isaac Walton League; if they were born animals, that dwell in the woods, they would have the support of the National Rifle Association."

It is Farrell's dreadful comment that no one today speaks clearly and effectively in Sacramento for either the mentally retarded or the mentally ill.