

**200 Significant Statutes and Constitutional Amendments  
of the 20th Century**

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***Preface by John Burton***

From low-fee public universities to toll-free highways, from civil-rights protections to environmental safeguards, state laws and constitutional provisions over the last 100 years have helped define California and its people.

Even today, at the gateway of a new era, freedoms set in motion by reform-minded Progressives in the century's second decade continue to mold California's public character.

The remarkably productive Legislature of 1911, spurred by Governor Hiram Johnson, asked voters in October of that year to approve 23 constitutional amendments, from women's suffrage to the rights of initiative, referendum and recall. Voters agreed to nearly all of the changes designed to wrest control of California from the machine politics of the railroad industry. Theodore Roosevelt considered these public-spirited reforms "the greatest advance ever made by any state for the benefit of its people."

Voters' signatures began putting citizens' initiatives on California ballots with the next election of 1912. Some, including 1978's Proposition 13, captured some of the biggest lawmaking headlines of the century. But a long continuum of Capitol legislating created rights, civic structures and a government framework that most Californians probably accept today without much thought of how they came to be.

This document highlights some of the laws and constitutional changes of the 20<sup>th</sup> century that helped form modern-day California. Illustrated here are the trends and ideas that spawned the state highway and park systems, labor and civil-rights protections, safety nets for the elderly, disabled and the poor. Here is the evolution of California's multifaceted tax structure and environmental protections, its open meeting laws and privacy standards, its policies on conserving and transporting water, its building boom for education and its increasing focus on crime as the end of the century drew nearer.

At its best, the work of California's Legislature remains a testament to what is achievable when dreamers and doers join forces. You'll find in these pages Senate President pro Tempore Arthur H. Breed arguing in the 1920s for creation of a state park system: "What is the use of spending millions on

our splendid highway system if the roads lead us to the blackened stumps of what once were mighty forests, and along a shoreline fenced off from the public, with signs: 'Private Property – Keep Out!?'"

California government in the 20<sup>th</sup> century had its low spots, too, when the actions of governors, legislators and voters restricted rather than expanded civic freedoms. Even reformist Governor Johnson promoted – over the active opposition of President Woodrow Wilson – a California ban on land ownership by the Japanese. This and other minority restrictions eventually were repealed or overturned by the courts, sometimes after decades on the books. Other low points include the required loyalty oaths of the 1950s that applied even to University of California faculty and voter repudiation in 1964 of the Rumford Fair Housing Act's goal to protect renters and homebuyers from racial discrimination.

Courts, voters and Capitol policy-makers sometimes have been at odds over the years. This chronology offers a brief look at how some of those conflicts sorted out. Sometimes laws foundered on the quicksand of the day's changing issues; sometimes they were timelessly imbedded in concepts that endure.

While hundreds of laws are enacted each year, this pamphlet offers only a sampling of some that may have marked turning points. It omits far more than it includes. These are but a few of the significant legal changes -- whether by statute or constitutional amendment, by citizens' initiative or legislative vote, whether signed into law by the governor or enacted by the electorate – that helped shape California's civic landscape during the past 100 years.

**--John Burton**  
**President pro Tempore**  
California State Senate  
December 1999

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## 1900

· **Tax Exemption for Churches** -- Church property is exempted from taxation with the approval of a constitutional amendment by 53 percent of voters. In 1944, voters expand the property-tax exemption to facilities devoted to religious, hospital or charitable purposes.

## 1901

· **Pauper Act** - The forerunner of today's county-provided General Assistance for those ineligible for other welfare aid, the Pauper Act of 1901 requires every California county to "support all pauper, incompetent, poor, indigent persons and those incapacitated by age, disease or accident, lawfully resident therein, when such persons are not supported and relieved by their relatives or friends, or by their own means, or by state hospitals or other state or private institutions." (The reference to pauper was deleted in 1937, but otherwise this wording, now known as Section 17000 of the Welfare and

Institutions Code, remains essentially unchanged.) The 1901 law also made it a misdemeanor to bring indigent or incapacitated people into a county or to leave them there. Family members, if possible, were required to pay the county a sum set by the county board of supervisors to support an indigent relative. Any excess money was to be returned to the family after the death of the person, once burial expenses were paid.

## 1905

- **Corporate Taxes** -- The Legislature adopts an annual license tax on corporations doing business in California, and a state tax on the gross incomes of corporations is enacted in 1910.
- **Yosemite Valley** -- Responding to 15 years of pressure from John Muir and his supporters, the Legislature turns over Yosemite Valley to the federal government. A year later Congress approves merging the valley with a national forest reserve it previously had designated around the area, creating a unified Yosemite National Park. Yosemite Valley remains a federally protected gem of California's early conservation movement.

## 1907

- **Community Colleges** -- The governing boards of public high schools are authorized by law to establish courses for education beyond high school, paving the way for development of California's community college system. The first public junior college in the country opens in Fresno in 1910. The California State University system traces its beginnings to 1862 and the University of California to 1868.

## 1909

- **Direct Primary** -- The Legislature, its membership reconstituted by reformists in the 1908 elections, enacts a direct primary law to give control over nominating state party candidates to voters instead of machine politics. Using that power for the first time, voters in 1910 make Republican Progressive Hiram Johnson their governor and give Progressives control of the Legislature. This opens the way for a series of political and social reforms that cast off the old system of Southern Pacific's control over California government and politics.
- **Banks** -- The Bank Act of 1909 defines and regulates the banking industry with the goal of assuring its soundness. It remains the state's fundamental banking law until the 1930s. An assessment on banks to pay for a system that would have insured deposits is defeated.

## 1910

- **State Highway System** -- Voters ratify the 1909 Legislature's State Highway Act to create a system of highways in California. By a vote of 53.7 percent, they authorize \$6 million in bonds to pay for highway construction, improvements and land acquisition.

- **Property Taxes** - Voters give cities and counties a right to impose, collect and allocate property taxes, ending the state's reliance on the property tax as its major revenue source since the tax first was imposed by California's inaugural Legislature in 1850. (Constitutional amendment offered by the Legislature; approved by 59.4 percent of voters.) In 1968 voters endorse a property-tax exemption of \$750 (now \$7,000) for homeowners in a constitutional revision proposed by the Legislature. Lawmakers and Governor Ronald Reagan in 1972 enact a renters' income-tax credit to offset a sales-tax increase financing the homeowners' exemption..

## 1911

- **Women's Suffrage** - Voters grant California women the right to vote in state and local elections nine years before women win the federal franchise. California becomes the sixth state to give women voting rights, but approval is by the narrowest margin of 22 constitution amendments approved on the same ballot. A similar measure had been defeated in 1896. (Constitutional amendment, proposed by the Legislature, approved by 50.7 percent of voters.)

- **Right of Citizens' Initiative** -- Proposition 7 gives citizens the right to propose ballot initiatives by collecting sufficient signatures from voters. It also gives voters the right to petition to put referendums on the ballot to rescind laws or parts of laws enacted by the Legislature. (Constitutional amendment, proposed by the Legislature, approved by 76.4 percent of voters.)

- **Recall from Office** -- Proposition 8 permits voters to remove from public office, or recall, elected officials including judges. (Constitutional amendment, proposed by the Legislature, approved by 76.5 percent of voters.)

- **Regulation of Public Utilities** -- The nation's most comprehensive system of public utility regulation is created with enactment of the Public Utilities Act. The state Railroad Commission is given power to regulate the rates charged by all public utilities except those owned by municipalities. The name is changed to Public Utilities Commission in 1946 and state Senate confirmation becomes a requirement of the governor's appointees to it. (Constitutional amendment, proposed by the Legislature in 1946; approved by 59.7 percent of voters.)

- **Board of Control** -- The state Board of Control is established to provide California's first consistent system of supervision over state finances. The board gives California its first comprehensive state budget and inventory of state property, and proceeds to ferret out graft, embezzlement and other government corruption.

- **Labor Reforms** -- A package of labor laws includes an eight-hour day for working women, although farm labor and the canning and packing industries are excluded. Children under 18 are prohibited from working between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m. Wages must be paid at regular intervals. A voluntary workmen's compensation program will provide benefits in the event of on-the-job accidents. Workmen's compensation

becomes mandatory in 1913.

- **Nonpartisan Elections** -- The election of judges and school officials is made nonpartisan statewide. Two years later county elections become nonpartisan. Nonpartisan elections were first applied to cities in the Berkeley city charter in 1909.

## 1912

- **Free Schoolbooks** -- Proposition 2 for the first time makes textbooks free to schoolchildren. It also requires the Legislature to reorganize the state Board of Education, then composed of the governor, state superintendent of public instruction, president of the University of California and the principals of "normal schools," which are post-secondary schools for training schoolteachers. (Constitutional amendment, offered by the Legislature, approved by 66.7 percent of voters.)

## 1913

- **Industrial Welfare Commission** -- The Industrial Welfare Commission is created and charged by legislation with investigating wages and working conditions, hours and the general welfare "of the working women and children of California."
- **Immigration and Housing Commission** -- A state commission on immigration and housing is created to prevent, in the words of Hiram Johnson, the kinds of "dreadful conditions of poverty" that could be found in the immigrant ghettos of East Coast cities. The commission also examines farm-labor camps and promotes housing standards for migratory workers.
- **Alien Land Act** -- Aliens ineligible for U.S. citizenship are banned from owning land in California. The ban is aimed at the Japanese, who cannot naturalize as U.S. citizens under federal laws of the time. (The Chinese had been excluded from immigration by Congress since 1882.) Japanese ranchers, the first to plant rice in the Sacramento Valley, begin transferring holdings to their American-born children to get around the state law. The Alien Land Act is on the books 39 years, overturned by the state Supreme Court in 1952, the same year the federal government ends its practice of denying naturalization by race.
- **Cross-Filing** - Under a "crossing-filing" system developed by Johnson Progressives to weaken political parties, a candidate can run for his or her own party's nomination as well as for the nominations of other parties. Californians must vote within their own registered parties, but candidates can file for all party nominations. The system is in place more than 40 years.

## 1914

- **Minimum Wage for Women and Children** - Voters authorize legislators to set a minimum wage for women and children and to pass laws to "provide for the comfort, health, safety and general welfare of any and all employees."

Proponents argue a minimum wage will discourage working women from turning to prostitution to maintain their economic self-sufficiency. (Constitutional amendment offered by the Legislature, approved 56.2 percent.) In a series of later constitutional revisions, voters in 1970 officially include all employees, not just women and children, in the Constitution's minimum-wage protections (although minimum-wage laws at the time were covering men, too).

- **Per-capita or Poll Taxes** -- A constitutional amendment placed on the ballot by initiative prohibits poll or per-capita taxes for any purpose. The California State Federation of Labor argues that California, "the richest state per-capita in the Union," doesn't need to pay for its schools with a "head tax" dating from feudal times, when barons were taxed based on the number of serfs they owned. Fifty-two percent of voters agree with the Federation of Labor, but the issue remains alive for 32 years. In 1920 voters adopt a constitutional amendment proposed by the Legislature ordering an annual tax of at least \$4 on "every alien male" over 21 and under 60, "except paupers, idiots and insane persons." Proceeds are earmarked for schools. Winning 82 percent approval but quickly struck down by the courts, the 1920 measure remains one of the most popular California ballot proposals of the century. In 1924, voters endorse a tax of at least \$5 on every male over 21 and under 50, again as a legislative constitutional amendment to finance schools. But the Legislature refrains from levying it and in 1946 puts a constitutional amendment on the ballot to abolish the per-capita tax for good. Seventy-one percent of voters agree.

- **Tax Exemption for Universities** -- Nonprofit colleges and universities are exempted from property taxation. (Constitutional amendment, proposed by the Legislature, approved by 53 percent of voters.) A 100-acre cap on their tax-exempt property is expanded in 1962 to include all lands used for higher education.

- **Water for Workers** -- All employers are required to provide workers with drinking water, an outgrowth of rioting in Wheatland in Yuba County the year before. Among vile conditions in Wheatland's farm-labor camps, workers in the fields were denied water or permission to rent their own water wagons.

## 1915

- **Vehicle Act of 1915** -- The Department of Motor Vehicles is created to take over the rapidly escalating job of registering vehicles, a task previously handled by the state treasurer and earlier by the secretary of state. Vehicle registrations have climbed to 191,000 from 17,015 just 10 years earlier. (The first permanent license plates were issued in 1914.)

- **Nonpartisan State Offices** - The reformist Legislature votes to make all 120 legislative seats and the state's 11 constitutional offices (including governor and lieutenant governor) nonpartisan. This statewide sweep advocated by Hiram Johnson and the Progressives still is considered "the most extreme measure of its kind ever enacted in an American

state." Using their four-year-old referendum power, voters reject the statewide nonpartisan law on the ballot later that year.

## 1916

- **Sentencing** -- The indeterminate-sentencing law puts authority over sentencing in the hands of local parole boards. Sentences previously were set by the courts.

## 1918

- **Workmen's Compensation** -- Voters narrowly, by a tally of 50.6 percent, authorize legislators "to create and enforce a complete system of workmen's compensation, by appropriate legislation, and in that behalf to create and enforce a liability on the part of any or all persons to compensate any or all of their workmen for injury or disability, and their dependents for death incurred or sustained by the said workmen in the course of their employment, irrespective of the fault of any party." (Proposition 23 is a constitutional amendment proposed by the Legislature.)

## 1919

- **Criminal Syndicalism** -- Amid a popular fear of subversives in the aftermath of the first World War, the Legislature adopts a law defining "criminal syndicalism" as "any doctrine or precept advocating... unlawful acts of force and violence...as a means of accomplishing a change in industrial ownership or control, or effecting any political change." Some 128 persons, mostly members of the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW), are sent to prison under the law in the next few years - largely to discourage the IWW from organizing migrant farm workers. The U.S. Supreme Court declares the law unconstitutional in 1968.
- **Child Labor** - The Child Labor Law is enacted to regulate employment, hours, kinds and conditions of labor by children. Those under 18 cannot work more than 48 hours in a week. Among other restrictions, youngsters under 16 are prohibited from working on dangerous machinery such as circular saws, carding machines, printing presses and steam boilers or around dangerous acids. Those at least 16 years old may be employed more than 48 hours a week in farm or domestic labor.
- **Agriculture** -- The state Department of Agriculture is created to oversee the protection and promotion of the state's agriculture.

## 1920

- **Kindergarten** -- Kindergarten is added to the public school system. (Elementary schooling had been made compulsory in 1874.)

## 1921

- **Department of Education** - The state Department of

Education is created to centralize many of the state's education activities by developing the curriculum for elementary and secondary schools, preparing an official list of approved textbooks and administering the various teachers' colleges in the state. However, this law perpetuates a conflicting organizational structure for carrying out education policies in California that continues today - an elected state superintendent of public instruction and an appointed state Board of Education.

### 1923

- **Gasoline Tax** -- California enacts its first excise tax - the gasoline tax. Two cents per gallon will be collected to build and maintain local streets and state highways. An unpopular tax based on horsepower is replaced with a flat registration fee of \$3 per vehicle.

### 1924

- **Municipal Courts** -- Local voters get authority to establish municipal courts in cities of 40,000 or more. These new courts have jurisdiction over misdemeanor crimes and civil cases involving up to \$1,000 within city boundaries. (Constitutional amendment, proposed by the Legislature, approved by 63.9 percent of voters.) There are 90 municipal court districts in the state and one superior court per county by 1998, the year 64.5 percent of voters approve a constitutional amendment proposed by the Legislature to permit municipal and superior courts to merge with the approval of county judges.

### 1926

- **Seats in the Senate** -- An initiative constitutional amendment designed to block the growing influence of populous Los Angeles County apportions seats in the state Senate at no more than one per county. (Approved by 54.6 percent of voters.)

### 1928

- **Bank and Corporate Taxes** -- A constitutional amendment offered by the Legislature establishes a tax on the net income of banks and other financial, manufacturing and business corporations to replace a state bank tax overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court. (Approved by 73.1 percent of voters.)
- **State Park Bond** -- Voters authorize a state park bond act of \$6 million adopted unanimously by the Legislature in 1927 to create a comprehensive system of natural parks aimed at preserving beaches, redwood forests and other areas "of outstanding interest throughout the state." Declares Senate President pro Tempore Arthur H. Breed in his supporting ballot argument: "What is the use of spending millions on our splendid highway system if the roads lead us to the blackened stumps of what once were mighty forests, and along a shoreline fenced off from the public with signs: 'Private Property - Keep Out!?' By approving the state park bonds the voters will make a farsighted investment of constantly increasing value for all of California." (Approved by 73.8



percent of voters.)

- **Aid to the Disabled** -- A constitutional amendment offered by lawmakers empowers the Legislature to grant aid to physically disabled persons. Previously, state assistance was confined to indigent deaf and blind persons. The measure was sponsored by the California Society for Crippled Children and approved by 76.3 percent of voters. A companion amendment proposed by the Legislature permits aid to needy blind persons with the argument this would assist them in becoming self-supporting rather than relying on charity. With 82.5 percent approval, it is one of the most popular state measures ever.
- **Water Policy** -- Voters lay a legal cornerstone for water policy in their arid state, stating that water rights are subject to a requirement that water be used in a "reasonable" and "beneficial" manner. This for the first time establishes the legal principal of water conservation. (Constitutional amendment, proposed by the Legislature, approved by 77.2 percent of voters.)

### 1929

- **Highway Patrol** -- The California Highway Patrol is created to enforce traffic laws on county and state highways. Previously this had been done county by county.

### 1930

- **Pensions to State Workers** -- Voters authorize the Legislature to provide pensions to state employees, based on minimum years of service and age, using funds contributed by the employees. "Without a retirement system, aged and disabled employees are retained in active service while they 'go through the motions,'" suggested Assemblyman Ray Williamson in ballot arguments. (Constitutional amendment, proposed by the Legislature, approved by 51.6 percent of voters.)

### 1932

- **Oil Drilling** - Voters uphold a referendum on a 1929 state law that prohibits any new permits for oil drilling on state tidelands. Proponents argue in the ballot pamphlet, "If you believe that the beaches should be preserved for the people of the state vote YES." (Approved by 59.3 percent of voters.)

### 1933

- **Sales Taxes** -- California, with enactment of the Retail Sales Act, prepares to collect sales taxes to meet its obligation to fund schools in the bleak years of the Great Depression. An income tax also is passed, but vetoed by Governor James Rolph Jr.
- **Taxes on Alcoholic Beverages** -- In anticipation of the repeal of Prohibition, the first state tax on alcohol -- at 2 cents per gallon -- is enacted on beer and wine. In 1935 the Alcoholic Beverage Control Act puts an 80-cent-per-gallon tax on distilled spirits.
- **Other Taxes** -- Proposition 1, regulating

taxation of banks and insurance companies, also empowers the Legislature to levy any taxes not prohibited by the state Constitution. (Constitutional amendment offered by the Legislature, approved by 62 percent of voters.)

- **Earthquake Safety Standards** -- Following a devastating earthquake in Long Beach, the Legislature approves the Field Act to raise standards that remain today for constructing schools and community colleges.
- **Horseracing** - A constitutional amendment placed on the ballot by the Legislature is adopted by 62.9 percent of voters to legalize horseracing. Racing quickly becomes a popular spectator sport.
- **Central Valley Project** - The Legislature authorizes construction of a state Central Valley Project, to consist of Shasta Dam on the upper Sacramento River near Redding, Friant Dam on the upper San Joaquin River near Fresno, and other dams and canals. Fifty-two percent of voters in a referendum uphold the Legislature's action in a December special election that attracts a light turnout of less than 900,000. (More than 2 million had come to the polls a year earlier.) In 1935 the financially strapped state, unable to sell bonds for a state Central Valley Project, surrenders the plan to the federal government, which authorizes construction as the federal Central Valley Project.

#### 1934

- **Unemployment Relief Bonds** - Reeling under the Great Depression, 71 percent of voters approve \$24 million in relief bonds proposed by the Legislature to aid the unemployed, adding to the \$20 million in relief bonds voters had approved a year earlier. They're told the new money, together with federal funds, will create a \$70 million pot to ensure "the employment of every able-bodied citizen during the coming winter." The money is to be administered by a relief commission that includes the state's social welfare director.
- **Civil Service** -- An initiative constitutional amendment prohibits appointments and promotions in state civil service other than by merit, to be determined by competitive examination. (Approved by 76.1 percent of voters.)

#### 1935

- **State Income Tax** -- California begins taxing personal income, which will become the single largest source of state revenue.
- **Food Taxes** -- The sales tax on food is repealed.
- **Pollution Control** -- The Dickey Water Pollution Act, the first of the modern clean-water laws, creates a State Water Pollution Control Board.
- **Old-age Security and Family Welfare** -- California enacts an Old Age Security program as the counterpart to the federal Social Security Act of 1935. The maximum aid under the state-

federal effort in California is \$35 per month. The federal act also establishes an Aid for Dependent Children program, precursor to today's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families jointly funded by the state and federal governments.

- **Vehicle Code** - The Vehicle Code of California is established to supersede city and county ordinances. Motorists were being fined for violating driving laws that varied locally as they crossed county lines.

### 1936

- **Prisons for Women** -- Voters authorize the Legislature to establish prisons for female felons, but permit women prisoners to be punished and treated differently than men even if similarly convicted. (Constitutional amendment offered by the Legislature, approved by 50.2 percent of voters.)

### 1938

- **Administering Welfare** - Voters give the Legislature planning powers over relief and authorize it to enlarge the scope of relief administration. The Legislature is permitted to revise "laws relating to relief of hardship and destitution, whether resulting from unemployment or otherwise." Proposition 7 permits relief to be administered either directly by the state or through the counties, and the counties to be reimbursed by the state. (Constitutional amendment offered by the Legislature, approved by 58.3 percent of voters.)

### 1940

- **Liens on Property of Impoverished Elderly** - Voters release all liens taken by counties as security for aid granted to the aged. It had been the practice to secure the property of elderly persons on assistance and forbid them to sell without county approval. As a practical matter, however, these holdings were small because those on aid were impoverished. (Constitutional amendment offered by the Legislature, approved by 64 percent of voters.)

### 1944

- **Prisons** -- The Prison Reorganization Act creates the Department of Corrections to oversee the state's prison system and also establishes the Board of Trustees of the California Institution for Women, the Correctional Industrial Commission and the Board of Corrections, which develops local jail standards.

### 1946

- **School Segregation and Integration** -- A state law permitting local school districts to practice racial segregation is repealed. In 1972, voters endorse an initiative stating no student can be required to attend a particular school because of race, creed or color and requiring school districts to develop plans to remedy racial imbalances.

### 1947

- **Air Pollution** - The Air Pollution Control Act allows counties to establish districts to combat smog.

- **Daylight Savings Time** - Overcoming previous voter rejections, an initiative wins enactment to institute Daylight Savings Time by advancing the clock an hour on the last Sunday in April through the last Sunday in September. It's approved by 54.6 percent of voters. In 1962, 72.2 percent of voters readily agree to the Legislature's proposal to save daylight for another month, until the last Sunday in October.

## 1950

- **Low-income Housing Projects** - Voters narrowly approve, by 50.8 percent, an initiative constitutional amendment requiring local voter approval of public low-rent housing projects.

- **Emergency Services** - The Office of Emergency Services is established in the state Office of Civil Defense to help coordinate the state's response to its major disasters, including earthquakes, fires and floods.

## 1951

- **Restitution to Japanese Californians** - The Legislature agrees to make restitution to Japanese Californians for losses imposed by denying immigrants ineligible for citizenship a right to hold real estate in California. The state Supreme Court overturns the Alien Land Act in 1952, the same year Congress ends race-based immigration to the United States. In 1998 legislation is adopted to finance education about the internment of Japanese-Americans during World War II. California during the war hysteria had terminated all state employees of Japanese ancestry. The Legislature later formally apologized to Japanese-Americans for their treatment during the war.

## 1952

- **Subversives** - Voters prohibit persons to hold public office or public employment who advocate overthrow of the federal or state government by unlawful means or advocate support of a foreign government at war against the United States. (Constitutional amendment offered by the Legislature in 1952, approved by 68.1 percent of voters.)

- **Loyalty Oaths** - A constitutional amendment offered by the Legislature requires public officeholders and public employees - including employees of the University of California -- to take an oath that they neither advocate nor are members of any group advocating overthrow of government by force, that they have not belonged to such a group in the preceding five years and that they will not become members during their time in office and employment. (Approved by 69.6 percent of voters.)

- **Repealing Restrictions on Chinese** - Voters repeal provisions of the state Constitution, as it was adopted in 1879, that direct the Legislature to impose "conditions on residence of certain aliens and to provide for their removal from the

state." The California Constitution prohibited Chinese employment by corporations and on public works unless as punishment. It ordered lawmakers to restrict Chinese residents to certain portions of cities and forbid entry of more into the state. (Constitutional amendment offered by Legislature, approved by 77.3 percent of voters.)

### 1953

· **Brown Act** - The Brown Act requires meetings of governing boards of cities, counties, school districts and other local agencies to be "open and public." The law's preamble states, "The people, in delegating authority, do not give their public servants the right to decide what is good for the people to know and what is not good for them to know." A 1967 law requires that notices of the regular meetings of state bodies be provided to anyone who requests them.

### 1954

· **Alcoholic Beverages** - Voters establish a Department of Alcoholic Beverage Control to administer liquor licensing laws, and make offenses involving moral turpitude an additional ground for denial or revocation of liquor licenses. (Constitutional amendment offered by the Legislature, approved by 66.3 percent of voters.)

· **Personal Property** -- Voters abolish a provision of the state Constitution dating to 1879 that permits only non-citizens "of the white race or of African descent" to have the same rights as citizens for "acquisition, possession, enjoyment, transmission and inheritance" of personal property. This was designed to leave out Japanese, Filipino, Korean and other Asian Americans. The Legislature placed this constitutional amendment on the ballot without dissent; it was approved by 71.9 percent of voters.

### 1956

· **Local Sales Taxes** -- Local governments are authorized to vote to collect a 1 percent sales tax. By 1967, all cities and counties are imposing the tax.

· **Bars and Saloons** -- Voters repeal a requirement dating from the end of Prohibition in 1933 that alcoholic beverages could be served publicly only in eating places, paving the way for the restoration of bars and, opponents loudly complained, "hard-liquor saloons." (Constitutional amendment, offered by the Legislature, approved by 50.6 percent of voters.)

· **Legislative Staff** - The electorate with the support of the League of Women Voters agrees to end a limit that dates to 1924 on expenses for legislative staff of \$300 per day per house. The Legislature, skirting a direct confrontation with the limit, for years had a created a special "interim" committee to pay for staff. (Constitutional amendment offered by the Legislature, approved by 62.3 percent of voters.)

### 1959

- **Fair Employment Practices Act** -- Years ahead of the similar protections guaranteed by the U.S. Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Legislature at the urging of Governor Edmund G. "Pat" Brown enacts a Fair Employment Practices Act in 1959 to prohibit race discrimination by employers and labor unions. The Unruh Civil Rights Act prohibits racial discrimination by those engaged in business activities, including real estate brokers. The Legislature follows up with laws to prohibit job and/or housing discrimination based on marital status (1976), pregnancy (1978), and sexual orientation (1999) and to prohibit sexual harassment on the job (1982).
- **Cigarette Taxes** - The Legislature adopts Pat Brown's proposal to impose a state tax on packs of cigarettes.
- **Consumers** -- A state Office of Consumer's Counsel is created to act against false or misleading practices in labeling and packaging, and against deceptive carrying charges on purchases by installment credit.
- **State Water Project** -- The Burns-Porter Act orders construction of the State Water Project, to consist of Oroville Dam on the Feather River, the California Aqueduct from the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta to Southern California, and other dams and canals. The following year, a narrow 51.5 percent majority of voters authorizes the \$1.75 billion bond act that will finance the project. At the time it's the largest bond issue ever approved by a state. Support in more populous Southern California outweighs opposition in the north. Declares Governor Brown of the California Aqueduct: "We are going to build a river 500 miles long... to correct an accident of people and geography."

## 1960

- **Public Higher Education** -- The Donahoe Higher Education Act enacts much of the Master Plan for Higher Education, creating a structure and overarching policies for California's three systems of post-secondary education: the University of California, the California State Colleges and the California Community Colleges. It promises room for "all who have the capacity and willingness to profit by a college education."
- **Anti-smog Devices** -- The Motor Vehicle Pollution Control Act, the first law of its kind in the country, requires installation of smog-control devices on vehicles. Federal laws by the late 1960s were requiring reduced auto emissions, but California's standards were stricter than those of the federal Clean Air Act of 1967. Later versions and amendments to the federal act toughened those standards and gave California's smoggy metropolitan areas deadlines to comply.

## 1961

- **Transportation Planning** - The Highway Transportation Agency is established, consolidating several transportation-related agencies. This is followed in 1972 by the Legislature's creation of the California Department of Transportation, popularly known as Caltrans, to handle all aspects of California's vast transportation network. The California

Transportation Commission is created in 1977 to guide construction policies and projects.

## 1962

- **Higher Education Bonds** - Two-thirds of voters authorize \$270 million in construction bonds, to be followed in quick succession by other successful higher-education bond issues, for junior colleges, the California State Colleges, the University of California and other building needs. Argue proponents: "During the next four years, California's junior colleges, state colleges and universities will face the greatest growth in enrollment that has ever confronted any system of higher education." Opponents vainly call the bonds a blank check. At the same time they were saying yes to higher-education construction, Californians also were approving hundreds of millions of dollars in bond acts for public schools.

## 1963

- **Rumford Fair Housing Act** -- The Legislature and Governor Brown enact the Rumford Fair Housing Act to declare racial discrimination in housing against public policy. Owners of apartment buildings and publicly assisted housing are prohibited from engaging in racial discrimination in rents or sales.
- **Revising the Constitution** -- The Legislature appoints a Constitutional Revision Commission, made up of 60 leaders in a variety of fields, to recommend revisions in the 80,000-word state Constitution, which by 1963 has been amended more than 350 times. The Legislature places these reforms on ballots as constitutional amendments between 1966 and 1980. Most are approved and the Constitution is cut by two-thirds.

## 1964

- **Repeal of Rumford Act** - A constitutional amendment to effectively repeal the Rumford Fair Housing Act qualifies for the ballot by initiative as Proposition 14. Approved by 65.4 percent of the vote, it prohibits the state from "denying, limiting or abridging the right of any person to decline to sell, lease or rent residential real property to any person as he chooses." The state Supreme Court strikes down Proposition 14 as unconstitutional in 1966. The decision is upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court the following year.
- **Free Television** - Voters by a two-thirds tally adopt an initiative prohibiting charges to the public for television programs transmitted to home TV sets.

## 1965

- **Medi-Cal** -- State legislation is signed by Governor Brown to implement the federal Medicaid program. Medi-Cal becomes effective on March 1, 1966, to provide health coverage to 1.3 million needy Californians with funding shared by the state and federal governments. Prior to Medi-Cal, many medically needy persons and those on public assistance relied on charitable institutions, especially county hospitals. In 1978, minors who

apply for limited coverage can receive, without parental consent, services related to alcohol and drug abuse, venereal disease, sexual assault, pregnancy and family planning.

- **Revising Senate Districts** -- Responding to a U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1964 requiring one person's vote to be worth as much as another's in the election of legislators, the Legislature approves an apportionment law that equalizes populations within state Senate districts within a deviation of 15 percent. In the next year's elections, state Senate dominance passes to Southern California.
- **BCDC** -- The Legislature establishes the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission to create a conservation plan and regulate development in a 100-foot-wide band around the bay's shoreline, offering a model for creation of other regional regulatory agencies.
- **Williamson Act** - The California Land Conservation Act of 1965, popularly known as the Williamson Act, permits agricultural landowners to contract with local agencies to keep their property in agricultural use for renewable periods of 10 years. This conserves farmland and allows owners to avoid higher property-tax assessments based on the land's value for development.
- **Lake Tahoe** - California lawmakers propose a bi-state agency to coordinate development in the region of Lake Tahoe, straddling the California-Nevada border. The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is approved by the California Legislature in 1967, the Nevada Legislature in 1968, Congress in 1969 and President Nixon in 1970.
- **Preschool** -- The State Preschool program becomes the state's version of Head Start, the federal early-education program for children of low-income families enacted during the federal war on poverty. State Preschool classrooms for 3- to 5-year-olds from low-income families must be free, educational, and involve parents in policy decisions.

## 1966

- **Full-time Legislature** -- Voters create a full-time Legislature, adopting proposals offered by a Constitutional Revision Commission. Proposition 1A permits the Legislature to raise salaries for the office but caps increases at 5 percent per year. The number of signatures required to qualify an initiative statute for the ballot is reduced from 8 percent to 5 percent of the votes cast at the last election for governor. Prior to Proposition 1A, the Legislature had been a part-time body since the birth of the state in 1850. General sessions had been held every other year; in-between years were spent on the budget. (Constitutional amendment placed on the ballot by the Legislature, approved by 73.5 percent of voters.)

## 1967

- **Abortion** - Governor Ronald Reagan, acting six years before the U.S. Supreme Court's Roe vs. Wade decision legalizing abortions in America, puts his signature on the Therapeutic



Abortion Act to permit a woman to have an abortion in the first 20 weeks of pregnancy if a physicians' committee finds her life or health is threatened, or if the pregnancy resulted from rape or incest.

## 1969

- **Clean Water** -- The Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act is adopted as one of the nation's strongest anti-pollution laws and becomes a model for the federal Clean Water Act of 1972.
- **Mental Health** -- California moves to de-institutionalize the mentally ill with the Community Mental Health Services Act of 1969, considered a model at the time. Its two components are the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act, establishing standards for involuntary commitments to state mental hospitals and requiring commitments to be carried out in stages, and the Short-Doyle Act, governing the development of community-based treatment programs. These community programs, initially funded 90 percent by the state and 10 percent by counties, are intended to replace confinement in state mental institutions. In 1991 the state transfers funding responsibilities for them to counties under a fiscal realignment.

## 1970

- **No-fault Divorce** - California becomes the first state to pass a no-fault divorce law, meaning neither spouse must prove the fault of the other to gain a divorce. A spouse can obtain a divorce without the consent of the other and no grounds are necessary. Financial support is based on needs and resources rather than linked to fault.
- **Environmental Impact Reports** -- Reacting to an oil spill in the Santa Barbara Channel, lawmakers with Governor Reagan's signature enact the California Environmental Quality Act to require environmental impact reports before any project is undertaken that "could have a significant effect on the environment."
- **State Budget Deadlines** -- Voters agree to require the governor to propose a new state budget each year by January 10 instead of January 30 for the fiscal year beginning July 1. Proposition 3 also sets a constitutional deadline of June 15 for passage of the budget by the Legislature. Although the deadline often would be missed, Proposition 3 is designed to end "flirting with the possibility of chaos, which could result from the starting of a new fiscal year without a budget," proponents argue. Offered by the Legislature, it is approved by 54.9 percent of voters. Legislative procedures are fine-tuned in further constitutional revisions two years later.
- **Board of Regents** -- Meetings of the University of California Board of Regents will be public under a constitutional amendment offered by the Legislature and approved by 67.4 percent of voters. The Legislature successfully proposes additional constitutional amendments in 1972 to require state Senate confirmation of gubernatorial appointees to the Board of Regents and in 1974 to require regents to reflect California's economic, cultural and social diversity, including its minorities

and women. The 1974 measure also requires the governor to consult an advisory committee in selecting regents, and reduces their terms from 16 years to 12.

## 1971

- **Income-tax Withholding** - Governor Reagan signs a budget-balancing measure to withhold state income taxes from workers' paychecks and route the revenues to the treasury. This ends California's status as the lone state among the 38 with income taxes that has no withholding.
- **Discrimination in Granting Credit** -- The Legislature adopts the first of a series of laws to permit women to have credit accounts in their own names whether married or single and to prohibit lenders and credit sellers from discriminating by gender or marital status. A 1977 law prohibits discrimination by mortgage lenders based on gender, marital status, race, religion and similar factors.
- **State Universities** - Legislation renames the "California State Colleges" the "California State University and Colleges" to reflect their growing stature in American higher education. "Colleges" is dropped from the name of the system in 1981.
- **Welfare Reforms** - The Welfare Reform Act of 1971 implements a work requirement for Aid to Families with Dependent Children as insisted upon by Governor Reagan. It also puts into law an annual cost-of-living increase in benefits for welfare families and the aged, blind and disabled tied to a "California Necessities Index," the inflation measure still used today.

## 1972

- **Coastal Act** -- The Coastal Zone Conservation Act, a citizens' initiative, prohibits development 1,000 yards inland from California's mean high tide without a permit from a regional or state coastal commission. It creates a temporary California Coastal Zone Conservation Commission and six regional commissions to develop a statewide plan for coastal protection. Proponents of Proposition 20, approved by a 55.2 percent vote, argue that coastal planning is fragmented among 45 cities, 15 counties and dozens of government agencies. Responding to a directive to implement the initiative, the Legislature in 1976 opens up public access to the coastline and establishes the California Coastal Commission to oversee coastal development.
- **Unsafe School Buildings** -- Proposition 9 lowers from a two-thirds to a simple majority vote the approval required for local bonds to finance repairs of unsafe school buildings. (Constitutional amendment offered by the Legislature, approved by 54.5 percent of voters.)
- **Privacy** -- Privacy is added to the state Constitution as an inalienable right. Among other things, this protection likely would provide a right to abortion separate from the federal privacy protections identified by the U.S. Supreme Court in its Roe vs. Wade decision. (Proposition 11, offered by the Legislature, approved by 62.9 percent of voters.)

- **Death Penalty** -- Responding to a 1972 state Supreme Court ruling that the death penalty is unconstitutional, voters the same year restore capital punishment with an initiative stating it does not constitute cruel or unusual punishment. This constitutional amendment is one of the earliest anti-crime measures put on a California ballot. It's approved by 67.5 percent of voters.
- **Waste Management** - Legislation creates the California Waste Management Board to oversee the safe disposal of California's growing waste. In 1989 the program is revamped and a new board, with the same name, charged with developing plans for reducing disposable waste through reuse and recycling. Goals are set for cutting waste in California's communities by 25 percent by 1995 and 50 percent by 2000. In 1989 the state has 35 municipal curbside recycling programs; by 1995 it has nearly 500.
- **School Funding** - In an effort to respond to court decisions requiring an equitable basis for financing the state's school districts, the Legislature removes authority from locally elected school boards to raise their property taxes district by district. In 1976, the state Supreme Court in the landmark Serrano vs. Priest decision determines the state must supplement school districts' property-tax funds, tied to wealth within districts, to ensure equal funding for schoolchildren statewide.

### 1973

- **Timber Harvesting** - The Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practices Act of 1973 requires state approval of timber-harvesting plans with the goal of preserving forests.

### 1974

- **Affirmative Action** -- Governor Reagan signs legislation giving the State Personnel Board responsibility for evaluating progress toward affirmative-action goals in state civil service. The board's first annual report of its efforts in 1974 calls for achieving "a state work force with each ethnic group and women represented by occupation, responsibility and salary level in proportion to its representation in the labor market." Following up, a 1977 law states, "Each agency and department [in state government] shall establish goals and timetables designed to overcome any identified under-utilization of minorities and women in their respective organizations."
- **Community Property** - The Dymally Community Property Act gives both spouses equal management and control of community property in marriage, divorce and death. Wives were granted a legal right to control their own earnings in 1951. Husbands beginning in 1901 were required to get a wife's consent before selling her personal items or household furnishings.
- **Political Reform Act** - Voters approve the Political Reform Act to require public disclosure and reporting of contributions and campaign spending for state and local offices and ballot measures. Public officials are prohibited from participating in government decisions affecting their own financial interests, and must disclose their assets and income. Lobbyists must

register with the state. The Fair Political Practices Commission is created to oversee the act. Proposition 9, an initiative, is approved by 69.8 percent of voters.

- **Gender Equity in Schools** -- The Legislature and Governor Reagan agree to require the contributions of women to be included in social studies courses in grades kindergarten through 12. It is the first of nearly two dozen laws over the next 25 years aimed at encouraging gender equity in education, from sports programs to vocational counseling. California's Sex Equity in Education Act of 1982 bars sex discrimination in all education institutions that receive state funds.
- **Legislative Proceedings** -- Seventy-nine percent of voters adopt a constitutional amendment offered by the Legislature to make legislative proceedings public except where prohibited by law or by a two-thirds vote of each house of the Legislature.

## 1975

- **Consenting Adults** - The Legislature, with a tie-breaking vote cast by Lieutenant Governor Mervyn Dymally, adopts legislation by Assemblyman Willie Brown to eliminate criminal penalties for adultery and other sexual acts between consenting adults over the age of 18. Governor Edmund G. "Jerry" Brown Jr. signs it.
- **Marijuana** -- The Legislature, with the new governor's signature, reduces the penalty for possessing less than an ounce of marijuana to a maximum fine of \$100. In 1996 voters approve a citizens' initiative, Proposition 215, to legalize use of marijuana for medical purposes.
- **Agricultural Labor Relations** -- The Agricultural Labor Relations Act, personally negotiated by Jerry Brown, creates a five-member board appointed by the governor with quasi-judicial powers to oversee union-organizing elections among farm laborers.
- **Energy Commission** -- Amid a worldwide energy crisis, the Legislature and Governor Brown create the California Energy Commission, which sets energy consumption limits for new household appliances and ultimately adopts the nation's toughest energy-conservation standards for new homes and commercial buildings.
- **Medical Malpractice** - Responding to escalating damage awards in medical-malpractice cases and a corresponding rise in physicians' insurance premiums, California's Medical Injury Compensation Reform Act imposes a cap of \$250,000 on awards for pain and suffering in medical-malpractice cases.
- **Managed Health Care** -- The Knox-Keene Health Care Service Plan Act is adopted to regulate managed health-care plans. The act establishes requirements for licensing and operating health plans in such areas as financial viability, covered services, continuity and accessibility of services, quality assurance, and grievance procedures. It gives the state Department of Corporations powers to enforce standards of

the act.

## 1976

- **Nuclear Energy** -- The Legislature prohibits the California Energy Commission from permitting construction of more nuclear power plants until the federal government approves "a documented technology for the disposal of high-level nuclear waste." The Energy Commission subsequently refuses to permit continued development of the proposed Sundesert nuclear power plant in San Diego.

## 1977

- **Death Penalty** -- After the state Supreme Court in 1976 again finds the California death penalty unconstitutional, the Legislature passes a capital-punishment law over Governor Jerry Brown's veto that conforms with federal guidelines. In 1978, voters approve an initiative to expand the crimes subject to punishment by death. · **Determinate Sentencing** - The state's 60-year-old policy of indefinite sentences is replaced with a determinate-sentencing law that imposes sentences for crimes that are based on fixed ranges, with minimums and maximums.

- **Alternative Energy** -- Governor Brown and the Legislature enact the nation's largest tax-incentive program for encouraging development of solar energy. The following year, the state sets a goal of meeting 10 percent of its electrical needs with wind power by the year 2000.

- **Domestic Violence** - The Domestic Violence Center Act finances shelters for battered women with an increase in fees for marriage licenses.

- **Developmental Disabilities** - The Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act changes the way services are provided to persons with developmental disabilities by establishing an entitlement to these services, creating a system of regional centers to provide and coordinate them and forming a State Council on Developmental Disabilities to advocate for California's developmentally disabled.

## 1978

- **Property-tax Cut** - Voters adopt Proposition 13, an initiative promoted by Howard Jarvis and Paul Gann to slash property taxes by more than half. It rolls real-estate assessments back to 1975 market values, sets property taxes at 1 percent of those values and caps assessment increases at no more than 2 percent yearly until property is sold or undergoes new construction. Nearly identical properties eventually will be taxed differently, depending on when they are bought and sold, an approach ultimately upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. Proposition 13, a constitutional amendment approved by 64.8 percent of voters, also requires a two-thirds vote of the Legislature for tax increases, and two-thirds approval by local voters for increases in local special taxes. The Legislature and Jerry Brown respond by channeling the state's multibillion-

dollar surplus to cities, counties, special districts and schools, which had depended primarily on property taxes for revenue, to help offset losses. As future economic downturns squeeze the treasury, the state's funding emphasis remains on schools and local governments grow increasingly strapped. Meanwhile, voters approve a series of constitutional refinements in Proposition 13 proposed by the Legislature. Homeowners can transfer their residences to heirs without triggering reassessments (1986), those over 55 can transfer their locked-in assessment values to new homes of equal or lesser market value in the same county (1988) or to homes in other counties with those counties' approval (1993).

- **Pregnant Workers** - Women are protected from discrimination in the workplace based on pregnancy, childbirth and related medical conditions.

## 1979

- **Spending Limit** -- Proposition 4, an initiative by Proposition 13 co-author Gann, limits state and local government spending to increases in population and inflation and requires any excess to be returned to taxpayers. It also requires the state to reimburse local governments for costs of carrying out state requirements, or mandates. (This constitutional amendment is approved by 74.3 percent of voters.) The limit is nearly forgotten until state revenues surge past the ceiling in 1987, bringing Californians a \$1 billion Christmas rebate of up to \$136 per taxpayer. But the spending ceiling is modified when voters in 1990 approve Proposition 111, proposed by the Legislature with Governor George Deukmejian's support, with the aim of allowing budgets to accommodate transportation construction and other growing needs. Proposition 111 also doubles the state's gasoline tax to pay for street and highway improvements.

- **School Busing** -- A constitutional amendment proposed by the Legislature is adopted by 68.6 percent of voters with the successful goal of ending court-ordered busing in Los Angeles. It limits mandatory busing to achieve integration to the narrower requirements of the federal Constitution, not the broader state Constitution.

- **Domestic Violence** -- The Domestic Violence Prevention Act gives courts authority to grant temporary restraining orders in domestic-violence cases. Legislation for the first time makes it a crime, punishable as either a felony or misdemeanor, to rape one's spouse. Law-enforcement agencies in 1984 are required to develop written policies governing their responses to calls of domestic abuse.

## 1980

- **Peripheral Canal** -- The Legislature, with Jerry Brown's signature, authorizes construction of a canal around the periphery of San Francisco Bay to connect the Sacramento River with the California Aqueduct, rather than continuing to draw water through the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. The Peripheral Canal is killed by voter referendum in 1982, rejected by 62.7 percent of voters.

- **Freedom of the Press** - A constitutional amendment offered by the Legislature prohibits citations of contempt against newsmen and women for refusing to disclose their sources of information.

## 1981

- **Cleanup of Toxic Wastes** - A year after Congress creates the Superfund program, California establishes its own fund to clean up sites contaminated by toxic wastes. State and federal officials by 1994 identify 265 "high priority" cleanup sites in California.

## 1982

- **Smog Checks** -- Pressured by federal sanctions, the Legislature adopts an anti-smog law requiring car owners to have their vehicles inspected every other year for compliance with emissions standards.
- **Rights for Crime Victims** - The Victim's Bill of Rights grants crime victims a constitutional right to restitution, expands relevant evidence permitted in criminal cases and gives victims and their families a right to express their views at sentencing hearings. Proposition 8, an initiative, is approved by 56.4 percent of voters.
- **State Inheritance Taxes** - Voters embrace two initiatives to repeal state gift and inheritance taxes. The inheritance tax, dating from 1893, ranges up to 24 percent. Proposition 6 receives more votes at 64.4 percent than Proposition 5 at 61.8 percent, so it takes effect.
- **Income-tax Indexing** - Nearly 64 percent of voters approve Proposition 7, an initiative to fully index state income-tax brackets to inflation so cost-of-living pay increases don't move workers into higher brackets. A state law beginning in 1982 was to index brackets to inflation above 3 percent. Inflation in 1982 was projected at 12.8 percent; the extra break was worth \$445 million.

## 1983

- **School Reforms** -- The Hart-Hughes Educational Reform Act of 1983 enacts a longer school day, a longer school year, higher teacher salaries, and new requirements for graduation from high school.

## 1984

- **State Lottery** -- A citizens' initiative sponsored by suppliers of lottery gaming equipment is approved by voters to create a state lottery that earmarks 34 percent of proceeds for schools and 50 percent for prizes. Proposition 37 is approved by 57.9 percent of voters.
- **Prisons** - Nearly 58 percent of voters approve a \$300 million bond issue to build and repair prisons at the urging of Governor Deukmejian, who notes in a ballot argument: "In the last decade, California has enacted more public-protection

legislation than at any other time in the state's history." There were 12 prisons in California in 1984, designed to hold some 27,000 inmates but filled with 39,000. As tough-on-crime laws put more criminals behind prison walls, the figure was projected to grow to 52,000 by 1987, prompting voters to approve \$500 million in prison bonds in 1986 and another \$817 million in 1988. At the end of the century, California had 33 prisons filled with 162,000 convicts.

- **Community-college Fees** -- The Legislature imposes a first-ever enrollment fee of \$50 per semester on full-time students at the California Community Colleges at the insistence of Governor Deukmejian. The fee raises \$66 million in 1984-85, its first year. In 1999-00 the fee stood at \$11 per unit.
- **California Endangered Species Act** - Following the lead of the federal government, California establishes procedures for listing California plants and animals as threatened or endangered and taking steps to foster their protection and recovery.
- **Cutting the Legislature's Budget** - Proposition 24 reduces the Legislature's budget by 30 percent, requires audits of legislative spending and makes membership on state Senate and Assembly committees proportional to partisan representation in each house. The courts find the initiative an unconstitutional infringement on the Legislature's right to conduct its operations. Voters approved it by 57.9 percent.

## 1985

- **Welfare to Work** - The Legislature with Governor Deukmejian's signature enacts Greater Avenues for Independence, or GAIN, a landmark program designed to train and coach welfare parents to move into jobs. For the first time, child-care funding is guaranteed for parents required to go to work; the work requirement is waived if funding is unavailable. Intended to save money over the long term, the program finds unexpectedly high numbers of welfare parents need tutoring in basic reading skills.

## 1986

- **Bottle Bill** - Legislation imposes redeemable deposits on cans and bottles of soft drinks and beer to promote recycling, and requires distributors to encourage the practice. The goal of the California Beverage Container Recycling and Litter Reduction Act, or "bottle bill," is an 80 percent recycling rate for aluminum, glass, plastic and bimetal cans and bottles. After peaking in the earlier 1990s, California's recycling rates by 1998 are 80 percent for aluminum cans, 63 percent for glass bottles, 57 percent for plastic bottles, and 13 percent for bimetal cans. Legislation in 1998 adds deposits to containers for water and for fruit, coffee and tea drinks with the goal of increasing recycling to 12 billion cans and bottles annually, up from 10 billion.
- **Seatbelts** - Legislation takes effect to require use of seatbelts by motorists and their passengers. Violators can be cited for failing to use seatbelts, but only if stopped for another traffic



offense. Beginning in 1993, officers are permitted to stop motorists solely for seatbelt violations. (Seat restraints have been required for children between birth and four years of age since 1981.)

- **Toxics** -- Proposition 65, an initiative approved by 62.6 percent of voters, restricts toxic discharges into drinking water and requires businesses to post warnings when exposing persons to cancer-causing chemicals or reproductive toxins. It requires the state to publish a list of such chemicals. After its passage, posted warnings begin to appear in business establishments noting that alcoholic beverages are linked to birth defects.
- **Local General Taxes** - Voters adopt an initiative statute to require two-thirds approval of a governing body and majority approval of voters for increases in local general taxes. The law doesn't apply to charter cities. Proposition 62 is approved by 58 percent of voters.
- **South Africa** - The Legislature sends Governor Deukmejian a measure to protest South African apartheid by ordering the sale of some \$11 billion in state investments in companies that do business in the racially segregated country. Reversing his earlier opposition to the concept, the governor signs it. 1987
- **Smoking** -- The Legislature votes to ban smoking on in-state flights. In 1993, smoking is prohibited in public buildings. Governor Pete Wilson in 1994 signs one of the nation's toughest anti-smoking laws to prohibit smoking in enclosed workplaces, with some limited exemptions. Voters the same year defeat an initiative backed by tobacco giant Philip Morris to ease the restrictions.

## 1988

- **Campaign-finance Reform** -- Proposition 73, a citizens' initiative, limits campaign contributions to \$1,000 per individual contributor, \$2,500 per political committee and \$5,000 per political party to candidates for public office. Although much of Proposition 73 was struck down by federal courts, it continues to contain the only campaign contribution limits in effect in state elections in California. The limits apply in special elections for legislative office. Proposition 68, a rival 1988 campaign funding initiative that established partial public funding of campaigns, also passed but its provisions were thrown out by the state Supreme Court because Proposition 73 got more votes. In 1996, Proposition 208, also an initiative to limit campaign contributions, won passage but was blocked in federal court pending the outcome of challenges. (Proposition 73 was approved 58.1 percent; Proposition 68, 52.8 percent; Proposition 208, 61.2 percent.)
- **School Spending** -- Proposition 98, a citizens' initiative, narrowly passes to guarantee that 40 percent of the state budget will be allocated for schools each year. (Approved by 50.7 percent of voters.)
- **Regulation of Insurance** - Proposition 103, a citizens' initiative, creates an elected state insurance commissioner and

rolls back rates by 20 percent on auto insurance premiums. It guarantees good drivers will receive lower rates than bad drivers and requires any increases in insurance rates to be approved by the commissioner. Its provisions were upheld by the state Supreme Court, although the court determined the rollback could be less than 20 percent in some cases. (Approved by 51.1 percent of voters.)

- **Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome** - The Legislature and Governor Deukmejian make it a felony for a person to donate blood who knows that he or she has AIDS or tests positive for the AIDS virus. A pilot project is created to train and assist foster parents who are caring for babies born with AIDS.
- **Cigarette Taxes** -- Proposition 99, an initiative approved by 58.2 percent of voters, raises the cigarette tax by 25 cents per pack to finance health programs and an anti-smoking campaign.

## 1989

- **Guns** - Outraged by a gunman's killing of five Asian refugee children and his wounding of 29 other youngsters and a teacher with a rapid-fire AK-47 in a Stockton schoolyard, the Legislature outlaws military-type assault rifles. A "zero tolerance" law in 1995 requires students who carry guns or pull knives at public schools to be expelled. In the wake of another deadly round of school shootings in 1999, Governor Gray Davis signs bills to strengthen the definition of prohibited assault weapons, ban importation or sale of large-capacity ammunition magazines, and require handguns to have safety devices and to pass safety tests. Buyers are limited to the purchase of one gun per month, with the aim of curtailing bulk purchases for resale on the streets. Minors are barred from gun shows unless accompanied by guardians. Weapons at the shows must be labeled with the owner's name, signature and driver's license number.

## 1990

- **Term Limits** -- Proposition 130, a citizens' initiative, limits lifetime tenure in the Assembly to three terms of two years and in the Senate to two four-year terms after the 1990 elections. (Senators who are halfway through their four-year terms in 1990 are permitted only one additional term.) State constitutional officers are limited to two terms of four years each. Proposed 130 reduces legislative spending by about 38 percent and imposes a cap on increases. The measure is upheld in the federal courts. (Approved by 52.2 percent of voters.)
- **Oil Spills** - The Lempert-Keene-Seastrand Oil Spill Prevention and Response Act addresses an environmental problem that has dogged California throughout the century by providing a comprehensive strategy for preventing and responding to damage from oil spills.
- **Pay for State Officeholders** - Voters agree to prohibit elected officials from accepting speaking fees, and establish a

California Citizens Compensation Commission appointed by the governor to set salaries and benefits for legislators and state constitutional officers. (Proposition 112, offered by the Legislature, is approved by 62.5 percent of voters.)

## 1991

- **Snack Tax** - Struggling to balance the state budget in the face of a multibillion-dollar deficit, the Legislature and Governor Pete Wilson expand the sales tax to include snack food and bottled water. In 1992 voters adopt an initiative to prohibit taxes on food products for home consumption and define "food products" to include candy, snack foods and bottled water. (Proposition 163 is approved by 66.6 percent of voters.)
- **Cal EPA** -- Governor Wilson creates the California Environmental Protection Agency, with cabinet status, to coordinate environmental regulatory programs. A Department of Pesticide Regulation is put under its jurisdiction.
- **Family Leave** - The Family Rights Act requires California employers with 50 or more workers to grant requests by employees for unpaid leaves of up to four months to care for family members. A federal version is enacted two years later.

## 1992

- **Charter School Act** -- California becomes the second state after Minnesota to allow charter schools, designed to foster innovation by avoiding the constraints of most school-district rules and regulations. One hundred charter schools are permitted initially; in 1998 the number is expanded to 250, with another 100 allowed each year.
- **Helmets** -- Motorcyclists are required to wear helmets as of this year, and youngsters under 18 must wear helmets when riding bicycles beginning in 1994.
- **Trade** - The state Trade and Commerce Agency is established through consolidation of the Commerce Department, California World Trade Commission and California Film Commission to bolster state economic-development programs.
- **Death Penalty** - Capital punishment will be carried out by lethal injection and no longer by lethal gas.

## 1993

- **Undocumented Immigrants** - Legislation requires Californians to prove they're in the country legally before getting their drivers' licenses or help from the state Employment Development Department in finding jobs.
- **Presidential Primary** - California's last-in-the-nation presidential primary will be moved from June to March in the 1996 elections under one-time legislation. A later law makes the change permanent.

## 1994

- **Three Strikes** -- Two virtually identical versions of a "Three Strikes" law are adopted by the Legislature and by voter initiative to require sentences of 25 years to life in prison upon conviction of a third felony if the previous two were serious or violent. It's the toughest sentencing law in the country.
- **Undocumented Immigrants** -- Proposition 187, a citizens' initiative approved by 59.2 percent of voters, denies public health services, social services and education to immigrants in the country illegally. Its central provisions are overturned by a federal judge and Governor Gray Davis in 1999 does not pursue an appeal.
- **Incompetent Judges** -- Voters endorse a constitutional amendment offered by the Legislature to permit greater public oversight in disciplining corrupt, biased or incompetent judges. The Commission on Judicial Performance is given authority to remove or censure judges and its disciplinary hearings will be open to the public. (Approved by 63.7 percent of voters.)

## 1996

- **Class-size Reduction** - The Legislature and Governor Wilson enact the Class Size Reduction Program with the goal of limiting public-school classes from kindergarten through third grade to no more than 20 students. The state provides \$530 million in grants to school districts to pay for portable classrooms and other costs associated with creating more classrooms.
- **Open Primary** - An initiative creates an open or "blanket" primary system in which a person registered with any party, or with no party, can vote to nominate a candidate of any party. (Proposition 198 is approved by 59.5 percent of voters.)
- **Affirmative Action** - By a vote of 54.5 percent, Californians approve Proposition 209, a citizens' initiative to amend the state Constitution to prohibit discrimination or preferential treatment based on race, ethnicity or gender in public education, employment and contracting. The previous year, the Board of Regents voted to end racial, ethnic and gender considerations in admissions and hiring at the University of California over the objections of the UC president, the chancellors of the nine campuses, and faculty and student organizations. The U.S. Supreme Court in 1997 lets stand an appellate court ruling that Proposition 209 is constitutional.
- **Human Eggs** - Responding to a scandal at UC Irvine, the Legislature makes it a felony to transfer human embryos, eggs or sperm without the donor's written consent.
- **Special Districts** - Proposition 218 requires voter approval of tax increases by special districts, such as those devoted to fire fighting or mosquito abatement, in the future and retroactively. (Constitutional amendment proposed by initiative, approved by 56.5 percent of voters.)

## 1997

- **Cal WORKs** -- Eleven years after California's GAIN program,

the federal government in 1996 adopts welfare changes that require California to match more welfare parents with jobs and impose five-year limits on cash grants. California responds in 1997 with Cal WORKs (California Work Opportunities and Responsibility for Kids). It sets time limits on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), the successor to Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and puts an up-front emphasis on moving welfare applicants into the workplace. It expands child-care and transportation services for those seeking and securing jobs. Spurred by these changes and a rebounding economy, family welfare rolls fall by 13 percent between June 1997 and June 1998.

- **Retrofitting Bridges** - Governor Wilson signs legislation to finance the replacement of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge's eastern span, supported by 60-year-old Douglas fir pilings, and to retrofit its western span to better withstand earthquakes. Six other state-owned toll bridges will be strengthened against earthquakes. A \$1 surcharge is added to Bay Area bridges (except the separately operated Golden Gate) to help pay the \$2.6 billion cost.
- **Posting Campaign Contributions on the Internet** - Legislation orders the secretary of state to develop an Internet filing and disclosure system for contributions to state campaigns.

## 1998

- **Library of California** - Culminating 10 years of preparation across the state, a Library of California is created to share resources among 8,000 libraries run by counties, schools, universities, private foundations and other systems. The \$5 million effort is hailed as potentially one of the world's great intellectual repositories.
- **Headwaters Forest** - Legislation provides \$245 million to match \$250 million in federal money for public purchase of the Headwaters Forest in Humboldt County, the world's largest stand of privately owned ancient redwoods. The Gray Davis administration closes the deal with Pacific Lumber Co. minutes before a March 1999 deadline.
- **Bilingual Education** -- Proposition 227 curtails the use of public-school instruction in the native tongues of non-English-speaking students. (A citizens' initiative, it is approved by 60.9 percent of voters.)
- **Indian Gambling** - Nearly 63 percent of voters approve Proposition 5, a statutory initiative to set state conditions on Indian gambling on tribal lands as permitted by the federal government. In 1999, the California Supreme Court overturns Proposition 5, contending it would allow casino-style activities such as 21, blackjack and slot-machine video games prohibited by the state Constitution. Governor Davis and California tribes respond by negotiating a proposed constitutional amendment, placed on the March 2000 ballot by the Legislature, to permit tribes to negotiate compacts with the governor, with ratification by the Legislature, for slot machines, lotteries and percentage card games.
- **Cigarette Taxes** -- Proposition 10, an initiative narrowly

endorsed by 50.5 percent of voters, raises the cigarette tax by 50 cents a pack to finance early childhood-development programs.

## 1999

- **Education Reforms** - Governor Davis sponsors and signs legislation to create a state accountability system for public schools based on academic performance, providing \$96 million in assistance for more than 400 schools but penalizing schools that fail to make reasonable progress. Another \$96 million is earmarked for rewarding schools that significantly improve student performance. High school students by 2003-04 must pass an exit exam to graduate. Exemplary teachers are encouraged to assist others in developing teaching strategies. A multifaceted reading-improvement initiative includes institutes in reading instruction and a statewide media campaign.
- **Reforms in Managed Care** -- A series of measures tightens requirements governing managed health care and establishes a Department of Managed Care in the state Business, Transportation and Housing Agency. An Office of Patient Advocate is created to assist plan enrollees.
- **Child Support** - A state Department of Child Support Services is created to manage counties' child-support enforcement offices. This reorganization is designed to improve California's record of collecting child support from delinquent parents, particularly those with children living in poverty.
- **Domestic Partnerships and Gay Rights** -- Domestic partnerships are recognized as household relationships, with some legal effects, between same-sex adults of any age and between persons of opposite sexes over age 62. Discrimination based on sexual orientation is outlawed in housing, workplaces and educational institutions.

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Politics and Public Policies in California by John H. Culver and Lorie L. Shelley (McGraw-Hill, 1997).

A Study of California Ballot Measures, 1884 to 1993, Compiled by Tony Miller, Acting California Secretary of State, January 1994. (Available from the Elections Division of the Secretary of State's Office.)

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