

Constitutional Convention in Gov's State of the State

An air of inevitability is starting to settle over the Bay Area Council's push for a citizen-authorized Constitutional Convention. ([Read a four-page Q&A on Convention here.](#)) As the legislature enters Day 72 without acting on the budget problem, costing the state an additional \$8.1 billion to the \$42 billion deficit, it has become rather difficult to argue our government doesn't need serious reform. Were the budget the only problem, the fixes might be relatively simple, but when we add the healthcare, water, prison, transportation and education crises on top, some might say it's obvious that systematic reform is required. Adding insult to injury, just this week, work on the fourth bore of the Caldecott Tunnel and projects across the state were halted possibly disqualifying our state from much of the stimulus funds coming from D.C.



[Governor Schwarzenegger said in his State of the State](#) yesterday: "People are asking if California is governable. They wonder about the need of a Constitutional convention. They don't understand how we could have let political dysfunction paralyze our state for so long... It is not that California is ungovernable; it is that for too long we have been split by ideology."

The Council put out a statement responding to the State of the State that said in part: "In the strongest terms possible, we urge the legislature and the entire state government to prove the Governor's statement true. They should pass a state budget immediately. After that they should pass new policies to help our failing water, education, healthcare, and prison systems, which are wracked by undeniable crises. If our state government can prove the state actually is governable with these actions, with great joy we will abandon the difficult task of convening a Constitutional Convention to reform our system of governance."

As Jim Wunderman has been telling the editorial boards of the state's major newspapers, pushing for a Constitutional Convention is hard and not what the Council was planning on doing, but has become a necessary task. Building towards the [February 24 Summit in Sacramento](#), the Council is now signing up Coalition partners, conducting statewide polling, working with the media and offering profound thanks to the outpouring of seed funding our members are contributing.

Exec. Comm. Member – Major Law Firm Leader – BAC Blogger? Shifting to less devastating topics – at least for Obama supporters – Andrew Giacomini, Managing Partner of Hanson Bridgett, member of the Council's Executive Committee, leader of our Government Relations Committee and pro-bono supporter of the Constitutional Convention will be [blogging](#) on the Council's website about the inauguration of President Barack Obama.

Story of the Week

[The Mercury News](#) lays out what it would take to eliminate the state's \$42 billion deficit with cuts alone. Closing all prisons: saves \$9.6 billion. Layoff all state workers: \$18 billion. Closing every public school for a year: \$39.7 billion.

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