

The Budget Impasse in Sacramento

To paraphrase Kurt Vonnegut, one of my favorite science fiction writer, about being a politician and government official. The position should not be something that people aspire to do or to become, and anyone who wants the job is immediately prohibited from sitting in office. Only the most qualified people are drafted for the positions. When they are drafted, they should be taken kicking and screaming at the top of their lungs to the office. If they do a good job, they are then allowed to go back to resuming their normal lives. If not, then they have to stay there until they get it right. People drafted into a government position will work as hard as they can for the public good so that when their term has ended, *they can leave and never come back.*

The politicians in Sacramento continue to play party politics while the California taxpayers suffer. People who rely on the government for their paycheck still have bills and mortgages to pay even if the budget hasn't been passed. Do you think the bank, credit card company, utility or grocery store care that you can't pay them because the politicians in Sacramento won't cut you a check? I don't think so. The bills have to be paid.

Every year we see the same song and dance and every year the budget is late. It's almost like they are playing a game of chicken - seeing who will fold first. Each side piles on their favorite pork barrel projects and wait to see whether they can get the other side to agree. They want to borrow from future revenues to cover current expenses. The consequence is that every year there is a budget impasse.

The reason why politicians can play this game is because there are no consequences if they do not act in the public's interest. Currently, there are consequences if they don't act in favor of their donors and special interest groups who support them.

In order to change the results, we have to change the rules of the political landscape. We need to hold the politicians responsible for their actions. Just kicking them out of office is not enough when they can be hired by special interest groups for more pay and benefits. We need to make substantive changes in order to make government work for the people. But then we would be putting the lobbyists and special interest groups out of work. This might not be a bad trade.

© 2008 Dennis Wong, Esq.
www.DennisWong.com