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To expand communications between Washington and California, the California Institute provides periodic faxed bulletins regarding current activity on Capitol Hill which directly impacts our state. Bulletins are published weekly during sessions of Congress, and occasionally during other periods.

HOUSE JUDICIARY MARKS UP FIRST RESPONDER FORMULA BILL; CALIFORNIA MEMBERS WORK TO REIN IN STATE MINIMUM PERCENTAGE

On Wednesday, June 16, 2004, the House Judiciary Committee marked up and approved a bill to revamp the mechanism for distributing homeland security funding to state and local first responders. The version ultimately approved by the Judiciary Committee includes a sharply reduced small-state minimum, thanks to bipartisan efforts by committee members from California and other larger, and arguably more vulnerable, states.

Current homeland security law includes an unusually large 0.75 percent minimum for states. The initial version proposed Wednesday by Chairman Jim Sensenbrenner (WI) included a 0.45 percent minimum for every state. After considerable negotiation before and during the markup, the Committee adopted an amendment to reduce the minimum to 0.25 percent. Members from large states argued that there should be no state minimum at all, but they supported the reduced minimum as a compromise position.

Judiciary was the last of five House panels to consider H.R. 3266, Faster and Smarter Funding for First Responders. The bill originated in the House Select Committee on Homeland Security and was primarily drafted by that panel's Chairman, Rep. Christopher Cox (Newport Beach). After unanimous, bipartisan approval by the Select Committee, and after the Science Committee elected to discharge the bill without revision, the bill was marked up by the Committee on Energy and Commerce and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. (The House Rules Committee is charged with melding a bill for floor consideration.)

The Homeland Security Committee version of the bill included no state minimum of any kind, nor did the version approved by the Energy & Commerce Committee. On the other hand, the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee version included a 0.55 percent state minimum. (At the proposed $3.4 billion authorized total for all programs, a 0.55 percent minimum would guarantee every state $18.7 million per year, whereas a 0.25 percent minimum would guarantee every state $8.5 million.)

CONTENTS:

In addition, the Judiciary Committee bill would change the methodology for applying the state minimum from the atypical approach used currently to a more standard approach. Although most formula grants include no small-state minimum, those that do will typically first allocate funding according to the formula, and then apply the minimum at the end. Current homeland security law, however, calculates the small-state minimum at the outset, and then allocates additional funding by formula. As a result, states that receive excess funds to meet the minimum, are now given additional dollars above that excess amount. The Judiciary Committee version of the bill would eliminate this "double-dipping" by minimum states.

Like every other version of H.R. 3266, the Judiciary bill consolidates state and local first responder grants (funded at more than $2 billion in 2004) with urban area grants (funded at $725 million in 2004), and it would distribute all funds according to need -- threat level, population density, infrastructure assets, and other factors chosen by the Department of Homeland Security. The state minimum would apply to all funds from the consolidated program, a change from current law, where the small-state minimum applies only to the first responder grants and not to urban grants.

(Under the existing 0.75 percent minimum in the formula, every state receives 0.75 percent of the funds, thus allocating 40 percent of funds equally among states and thereby favoring small over large states. California received $5 in grants per capita in 2004, whereas Wyoming received $38 per capita.)

Some larger and target-rich states such as California have been leery of applying a minimum to urban areas. Whereas California's share of formula grants has been less than 8 percent, the state received 20 percent of urban grant funding in 2004.

Getting the primary sticking point out of the way at the start of the markup, Chairman Sensenbrenner began markup of the bill with discussion of the small state minimum to be applied to the first responders program. From the 0.45 percent minimum in the Chairman's Mark, the Committee debated and adopted an amendment by Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-NY) to cut the minimum to 0.25 percent. (It also reduced Sensenbrenner's proposed 0.18 percent minimum for territories to 0.08 percent.) Nadler commented, "We're going to get stuck with something -- 0.45 percent is an improvement, but 0.25 percent is better." Rep. Ric Keller, a Republican from Florida joked that, "For the first time in four years, I have to say that I agree 100 percent with Mr. Nadler."

During the markup, Rep. Zoe Lofgren (San Jose) said she would support the Nadler amendment, despite the fact that she did not believe there should be any state minimum at all. Rep. Maxine Waters (Los Angeles) commented that "security is not an area where we should have to scrimp." In addition, Chairman Sensenbrenner agreed to add to the list of eligible funding uses port container security facilities and court and justice facilities. Homeland Security Committee Chairman Cox, in a joint statement with Ranking Democrat Jim Turner (TX), praised the Judiciary panel for passing a bill that "goes a long way towards correcting the deficiencies in the current system of allocating terrorism preparedness grants to our Nation's first responders."

For an analysis of California homeland security grant receipts in 2003 and 2004 and a detailed discussion of the formulas that drive the funding levels, see "*Federal Formula Grants and California: Homeland Security*," a joint publication of the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) and the California Institute, available on the PPIC website at http://www.ppic.org/main/publication.asp?i=481 .

HOUSE DEBATING 2005 HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS, REJECTS BID TO SEND MORE FUNDS TO HIGH-RISK URBAN AREAS

On Thursday, June 17, 2004, the House Appropriations Committee debated a fiscal year 2005 appropriations bill for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). Debate ended early Friday morning and was expected to continue on at 9:00 am on Friday, June 18. As approved by the Appropriations Committee, the bill provides $32 billion for operations and activities of DHS in fiscal year 2005, an increase of $2.8 billion (9.4 percent) above the fiscal year 2004 enacted levels, and $896 million (2.9 percent) above the President's request.

The bill as passed by the Appropriations Committee includes $1.75 billion for basic formula grants for first responders, a reduction from $2.2 billion in 2004. (California's share of these grants has been very low – less than 8 percent – because of an unusually large small-state minimum applied to the program.) The committee bill increases, however, funding for the Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) from $675 million to $1 billion, although the floor manager's amendment that was considered on Thursday evening was reported to include $1.175 billion for urban areas. (California's share of UASI funds in 2004 was approximately 20 percent.).

An amendment offered by Rep. John Sweeney (NY) that was debated extensively Thursday night and into the early hours of Friday morning proposed to shift an additional $450 million from the basic grant to the urban area grant programs. Initial estimates predicted that California's overall share of combined funding would likely have increased if funding were shifted from the formula program to the urban area program. Supporters of the amendment were helped by a statement of policy from the Bush Administration advocating the change. The Sweeney amendment was defeated early Friday morning by a vote of 171-237.

Speaking in support of the Sweeney amendment, Homeland Security Committee Chairman Christopher Cox (Newport Beach) noted recent reports that Al Qaeda targeted major urban centers, not only in New York and Washington but also the the tallest buildings California and Washington state. He pointed out that the urban area program is based at least in part on threat levels. Commenting, "Terrorists have limited resources and act accordingly," Cox recommended that Congress also maximize federal resources by focusing funding on the most threatened areas. Pointing out that one in eight Americans lives in California, Rep. Duke Cunningham (San Diego) commented that the area he represents houses a large and dense population, nuclear facilities, one of the largest international borders, a port housing aircraft carriers among other vessels, and one of the nation's primary biotechnology centers.

In addition, the bill also includes: $125 million for port security grants (as well as $126 million for the Container Security Initiative (CSI) that also seeks to secure cargo traffic); $600 million for firefighter grants (a reduction from $750 million for a program of which California's share in 2003 was approximately 4 percent); and $170 million for Emergency Management Performance Grants (based on the same formula as the first responder basic grant). In total, $4.1 billion is provided for first responders.

The bill provides $9.6 billion for border protection and related activities, an increase of $630 million over fiscal year 2004 enacted levels. Included in that funding is: $166 million for vehicle and cargo inspection technologies; $20.6 million for increased intelligence and targeting for cargo and passengers; $38 million for the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism. The bill also includes $828 million to modernize border, customs, and immigration information technology, including $340 million for the US VISIT program and $322 million for the Automated Commercial Environment and $2.0 billion for Disaster Relief.

For an analysis of California homeland security grant receipts in 2003 and 2004 and a detailed discussion of the formulas that drive the funding levels, see "*Federal Formula Grants and California: Homeland Security*," a joint publication of the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) and the California Institute, available on the PPIC website at http://www.ppic.org/main/publication.asp?i=481 .

APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE APPROVES FY2005 CJS SPENDING BILL

The House Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations Subcommittee adopted by voice vote its $39.8 billion FY 2005 funding bill on Tuesday, June 15. The total is $2.2 billion more than was appropriated in FY04, and about $200 million more than the President's request. The bill also includes $703 million in mandatory spending.

The bill funds the Justice Department at $20.6 billion, $1.0 billion more than FY04 and $901.7 million above the President's request. Included in the DOJ funding is $3 billion for assistance to State and local law enforcement for crime fighting initiatives, $886 million above the President's request and $103 million below FY04. Of that, $325 million is provided for the State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) to partially reimburse States for criminal alien detention costs. Funding in FY04 was $300 million. California receives about 40 percent of SCAAP funding. In FY2003, the last year for which figures are available, the state and counties received $95 million of the $265 million total for the program.

In other funding for state and local law enforcement assistance programs, the bill provides $634 million for the Edward Byrne Justice Assistance Grants program; $349 million for juvenile delinquency prevention and accountability programs; $384 million for violence against women prevention and prosecution programs, $176 million to eliminate DNA analysis backlogs, $113 million for COPS enhancement grants; and $130 million for law enforcement technologies.

The Department of Commerce receives $5.8 billion under the bill, $186 million below the FY 2004 level and $301 million below the President's request. The Department of State is funded at $8.9 billion, $299 million above FY04 and $80.4 million below the President's request.

Further information on the bill can be obtained through the Committee's website at: http://www.house.gov/appropriations .

HOUSE FINANCIAL SERVICES REPORTS STOCK OPTIONS BILL

On Tuesday, June 15, the House Financial Services Committee favorably reported H.R. 3574 with amendments by a vote of 45-13. The bill prohibits the Financial Accounting Standards Board (FASB) from implementing its proposed rule to require expensing of all stock options offered employees until it completes a study of the effects of the proposal on the economy. In addition, H.R. 3574 would limit the expensing requirement to employee stock options granted to the chief executive and the next four highest paid employees of a company. Small businesses would be exempt from expensing options, under the bill, and newly public companies would be able to delay expensing in the first three years.

During the markup, Rep. Brad Sherman (Sherman Oaks) proposed several amendments. His amendment that was adopted by voice vote put a one year deadline on the completion of the study required by the bill. Another Sherman amendment that was defeated would have eliminated the provision in the bill that assumes zero volatility – or no change in value of the stock option – in the methodology used to calculate the option's worth. The amendment was defeated by a vote of 14-43. He also offered an amendment that would have required expensing of stock options given to an employee that exceeded $100,000 in value, regardless of whether the employee was in the highest five compensated category. That amendment was defeated by a vote of 12-47.

The Committee also accepted an amendment by the bill's sponsor, Rep. Richard Baker (LA) that is intended to prevent the House Energy and Commerce Committee from getting jurisdiction of the issue.

H.R. 3574 is strongly supported by California's high technology companies which argue that offering stock options is an important factor in hiring and retaining the best employees, especially for start-up companies.

LETTERS SHOW RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT IS TOP FEDERAL PRIORITY FOR BIPARTISAN CALIFORNIA DELEGATION MEMBERS, GOVERNOR

A recent letter by a bipartisan coalition of 39 California members express support for research and development (R&D) programs across federal agencies and funding to university research centers.

In a letter to top Congressional appropriators, House Appropriations Chair Bill Young (FL) and Ranking Member David Obey (WI), members of the California delegation urged support of "robust federal science funding allocations in Fiscal Year 2005," describing federal commitment to research programs as critical to the national economy, homeland defense, the development of scientific breakthroughs, and a key to continued US leadership internationally.

While acknowledging the fiscal challenges befalling Congress over the current appropriations cycle, the letter underscores the accomplishments of research and development programs and their impact on the health of the California economy citing the conclusions of a 2004 RAND report as support. RAND, in a study entitled "Discovery and Innovation" reports that California, the recipient of $14.4 billion in federal R&D funds, benefits more than any other state from federal R&D support and that as much as 19 percent of federal funds directed to the state (not including direct support) are identified as R&D grants. Although California's research infrastructure is robust, the state is not the number one state; California ranks sixth in per capita R&D receipts.

The delegation letter, dated May 24, 2004, coincided with a similar letter by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger to California members of Congress and others identifying the critical nature of R&D to the California economy, and stressing the need for continued federal support as key to maintaining the state's competitive edge in the global economy. "I strongly urge...the entire California delegation to ensure that federal support for research...is made a top priority," said the Governor.

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORTS AGRICULTURE SPENDING BILL

On Monday, June 14th, 2004, the House Appropriations Committee marked up the FY 2005 Agriculture Appropriations bill. The total amount of $16.77 billion provided in the bill, of which $16.347 billion is mandatory spending, is $200 million over the Administration's request and $700,000 below last year's appropriation.

The bill includes $814 million in funding for the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), including an increase of $33 million for the animal identification system. The bill also includes $11.38 billion for Child Nutrition Programs and $4.9 billion for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). In addition, the total appropriated includes a $33.6 billion funding level for the Food Stamp Program, and $108 million for the Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP).

With respect to programs that administer and support farming, ranching, and other rural infrastructure, the total includes $1.008 billion in funding for the Farm Service Agency (FSA), and $1.259 billion for the Agricultural Research Service (ARS). The bill also includes funding for the following programs: $814 million for conservation operations, $1.01 billion for the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQUIP), and $4.631 billion for the Rural Housing Insurance Fund.

For more information about this bill, please visit the House Appropriations Committee website at: http://appropriations.house.gov .

HOUSE COMMITTEE MARKS UP ENERGY AND WATER APPROPRIATIONS

The House Appropriations Committee reported its FY 2005 Energy and Water Development Appropriations bill on Wednesday, June 16th, 2004. The House Subcommittee marked up the bill last week on June 9. (*See, Bulletin, Vol. 11, No. 19 (6/11/04)*). The bill provides $28 billion in funding for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers-Civil, the Department of Interior including the Bureau of Reclamation, the Department of Energy, and several Independent Agencies. The amount appropriated is $743.5 million above the FY04 funding level and $49.6 million above the President's FY05 budget request.

The appropriated funding level includes $4.82 billion for the Corps of Engineers, and $1.1 billion for the Bureau of Reclamation. Within the Bureau of Reclamation amount, the bill does not provide any funding for the CALFED-Bay Delta project pending the enactment of authorizing legislation, although it does include funding for several authorized components of the CALFED-Bay Delta project. The total amount also includes $202.2 million in funding for various Independent Agencies.

For the Department of Energy (DOE), the bill appropriates $22.5 billion in funding, which is $669.5 million under the Administration's request and $510.9 million above the FY04 funding level. The amount appropriated for DOE includes $343 million for renewable energy programs, $463.8 million for nuclear energy programs, and $3.6 billion for the DOE research programs. In addition, the appropriation includes $234 million for the Advanced Scientific Computing Research initiative, as well as $7.8 billion for DOE's environmental management cleanup activities.

The bill provides $276.1 million for fusion energy sciences research, a $12 million increase over the President's request. California recipients win a large share of the nation's fusion expenditures.

For more information about this bill, please visit the House Appropriations Committee website at: http://appropriations.house.gov .

HOUSE PASSES CORPORATE TAX BILL; R&D CREDIT EXTENDED

By a vote of 251-178, the House of Representatives passed H.R. 4520, the American Jobs Creation Act. The cost of the tax breaks in the bill, overset by revenue-raising provisions, is estimated to cost $34.4 billion over 11 years.

The bill repeals a tax break, the foreign sales corporation-extraterritorial income (FSC-ETI) program, ruled illegal by the World Trade Organization. Congress's failure to date to repeal the program has resulted in retaliatory tariffs being imposed by the European Union on U.S. products. The bill also reduces the top corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 32 percent for domestic manufacturers and small corporations, and it includes several other tax relief provisions targeted to manufacturers, small businesses and farmers.

Among other provisions, H.R. 4520 extends the Research & Development (R&D) tax credit to December 31, 2005. The credit is set to expire on June 30, 2004. The Welfare-to Work credit and the Work Opportunity credit are also extended. The bill did not include tax incentives to encourage greater domestic film production, which led Rep. Diane Watson (Los Angeles) to charge that the bill "ignores the needs of the U.S. film industry."

Further details on provisions in the bill can be obtained through the Committee's website at: http://waysandmeans.house.gov .

HOUSE PASSES INTERIOR SPENDING BILL

The FY 2005 Interior Appropriations bill was considered and passed by the House of Representatives on late Thursday, June 17, 2004. The bill passed the floor on a 334-86 vote. The same bill was passed by the House Appropriations Committee last week on June 9, 2004 (*See, Bulletin, Vol. 11, No.19 (6/11/04)*).

The bill provides $19.5 billion in funding for the Department of the Interior (DOI) and related agencies, excluding $500 million for emergency firefighting if needed. The total appropriation is $300 million less than both the FY04 appropriation and the President's FY05 budget request.

The appropriation includes $2.6 billion for wildland firefighting and the National Fire Plan, $1.7 billion for National Park Operations, and $1.4 billion for the National Forest System. The bill increased Forest Service wildlife preparedness to $694 million, which is $27 million and $22 million above the President's budget request and the FY04 appropriation respectively. The bill also restored $128 million for the Forest Service forest health program and partially restored cuts to several energy research programs. The bill includes $3 billion in funding for the Health Service, and $4.2 billion in funding for the U.S. Forest Service.

The bill provides $36 million for the Elk Hills school lands fund, which is equal to amount available for fiscal year 2004. The bill recommends that these funds be made available on October 1, 2005, rather than October 1, 2004, which is consistent with the payment of these funds over the past few years.

For further information on the bill, go to the House Appropriations Committee website at: http://appropriations.house.gov .

HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE CONSIDERS EQUITY ISSUES

The House Education and the Workforce Committee held a hearing on Wednesday, June 16, 2004 on H.R. 4283, which would amend and extend the Higher Education Act of 1965. Titled *"H.R. 4283, the College Access & Opportunity Act: Are Students at Proprietary Institutions Treated Equitably Under Current Law?"*, the hearing focused on funding and equity issues faced by students enrolled at proprietary institutions, including unaccredited colleges and those institutions that offer on-line higher education learning.

The Committee members heard testimony from the following witnesses: Dr. Dwight Smith, President & CEO, Sophisticated Systems, Inc.; Mr. Andrew Rosen, President & COO, Kaplan, Inc., and President, Kaplan College; Dr. Alice Letteney, Director, University of New Mexico-Valencia; Mr. Barmak Nassirian, Associate Executive Director, American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers; and Mr. David Moore, Chairman and CEO, Corinthian Colleges, Inc.

Dr. Smith offered an employer's perspective on the issue of proprietary institutions arguing that they produce quality graduates needed in the business community and essential to the economic strength of the country. In his testimony, he offered individual examples of the successful careers of some graduates and limited his public policy remarks to a statement that every citizen has a right to post-secondary education that best meets the student's goals.

Mr. Rosen expressed strong support for H.R. 4283, asserting that the bill strengthens online education. He noted that the bill additionally addresses and resolves three other issues that have caused students enrolled in for-profit schools to be treated inequitably. One is the proposed elimination of the 90/10 rule, which requires that for-profit institutions obtain at least 10 percent of their revenues from sources other than federal student aid funds. Mr. Rosen said the bill also addresses the area of credit transfer and provides for a single definition of an educational institution. He applauded the Committee's work on the bill, and urged the members to retain all of the proposed modifications.

Dr. Letteney, on the other hand, countered the previous witnesses' claims by saying that community colleges strongly oppose the bill. In particular, they oppose the "single definition" provision, because it would allow approximately 4,000 for-profit institutions to qualify for non-Title IV Higher Education Act (HEA) programs, thus significantly undercutting funding that is currently available to community colleges. She also spoke for the elimination of the so-called 50 percent rule. The 50 percent rule limits the number of courses offered via distance education, as well as the number of students enrolled in distance-delivered courses only, to fifty percent of the total for each category. Dr. Letteney also advocated the preservation of the 90/10 rule, which, she argued, works to insulate government entities from fraud by proprietary institutions.

In his testimony, Mr. Nassirian substantially agreed with Dr. Letteney. He also argued for the elimination of the "single definition" provision, and emphasized that doing away with the 90/10 rule is ill-advised as it will harm students as well as taxpayers. He spoke against the proposed "transfer of credit" changes as well. Unlike Dr. Letteney, however, Mr. Nassirian asserted that the 50 percent rule needs to be preserved to curb abuses associated with long-distance learning, which he noted was the original intent of the provision when it passed in 1992.

Mr. Moore spoke in support of the bill. He noted that almost 2/3rds of today's students are nontraditional because most have families, are older, and are concerned with preparation for entry into the workforce or with the advancement of their careers. He further argued that for-profit institutions do not subsidize their profits with federal aid available to their students, but rather they serve to support disadvantaged students that become part of the workforce and fuel economic growth. Mr. Moore joined

Dr. Smith and Mr. Rosen in calling on the Committee members to reject the 90/10 rule and commended the bill for addressing the transfer of credits issue. In particular, Mr. Moore argued that the 90/10 rule should be eliminated as it hinders student access and creates an incentive for proprietary institutions to raise tuition.

For more information about this hearing, please visit the House Education and the Workforce Committee website at: http://edworkforce.house.gov .

NATION PER PUPIL SPENDING GROWS, CALIFORNIA RANK IMPROVES SLIGHTLY

A new report released by the Census Bureau shows an increase of 4 percent in education spending nationally between 2001 and 2002. The highest per pupil spending states recorded were Washington D.C., New York and New Jersey. Although California rose one spot in total per pupil expenditure rankings from 24th to 23rd in the nation, revenue commitments from state sources declined by 1.2 percent in the same time period.

The report entitled *"2002 Census of Governments Survey of Local Government Finances: School Systems"* shows that public schools expenditures grew by 6 percent to $435.3 billion in 2002 and that state governments continue to contribute the largest share of school finance revenue. The report asserts that 49.3 percent of elementary and secondary school revenue is derived from state sources, followed by 43 percent from local contributions and 7.1 percent from the federal government. California's revenue format, however, is more dependent on state resources than the national average, with 58.5 percent of school revenues originating from state coffers in 2002. Meanwhile local sources provided 31.9 percent, and federal grants were responsible for 9.6 percent of total education commitments, according to the authors.

Washington D.C. replaced New York as the state/geographic area with the highest per pupil expenditures in 2002. Used as a measurement of education commitment, top ranked Washington D.C. spent $13,187 per pupil, whereas the state of California spent $7,511 per pupil, placing it 23rd in state rankings. Although California improved its national ranking in 2002 (it ranked 24th in 2001), the report suggests that California's status could have improved more if the state government had not reduced commitments to K-12 education by 1.2 percent in 2002. Most other states increased per pupil commitments from state revenue in 2002, the national average being a $143 augmentation in state effort. California, however, reduced its commitment by $59, declining from 10th in state revenue in 2001 to 14th in 2002. Had California state spending grown by the national average, the state's ranking would have improved to 22nd (and perhaps even higher when factoring in California schools' higher rate of reliance on state revenue than the national average).

To view the report's press release and a link to tabulations, visit the Census Bureau website at: http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/governments/001841.html .

PPIC BRIEFING ON JUNE 23 TO DISCUSS CALIFORNIA'S PARTISAN DIVIDE

On Wednesday, June 23, 2004, the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) and the California Institute for Federal Policy Research will host a lunch briefing entitled *California's Partisan Divide – "Red and Blue" Trends in the Golden State*. The briefing will be held at 11:30 a.m., in Room HC-6 of the U.S. Capitol Building.

David Lyon, President and CEO of the San Francisco-based Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC), will offer opening remarks, and Mark Baldassare, Director of Research and Senior Fellow at PPIC, will outline research findings from PPIC Statewide Surveys that show diverging opinions about trust in government, approval ratings for elected officials, and voter attitudes on fiscal, economic, social, and security issues.

Among pundits, alarm has been growing that America is in the throes of partisan polarization. Evidently, California is experiencing some of its own. In the past two-to-four years, the gap has widened between Republicans and Democrats on issues of abortion, the environment, immigrants, gay and lesbian rights, poverty, and homeland security and civil liberties. "Many people have pointed to the redrawing of electoral districts as the reason partisanship has increased in the legislature, but we're finding that California's voters are themselves further apart on many issues than they were just a few years ago," comments Mark Baldassare. "If this trend continues, it could make California even more difficult to govern - through representative government or direct democracy."

For information regarding the topic to be discussed, a "Just the Facts" outline is available on the PPIC website, at http://www.ppic.org/main/series.asp?i=14 . In addition, other information regarding recent PPIC Statewide Survey findings is available at http://www.ppic.org/main/series.asp?i=12 .

First Responders Safety Issues Addressed at Briefing

The issue of the safety of first responders was recently explored at a RAND Corporation briefing, held on Wednesday, June 16, 2004 and co-sponsored by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, and the House Homeland Security Caucus. Titled *"Protecting Emergency Responders, Volume 3: Safety Management in Disaster and Terrorism Response"*, the briefing focused on the findings of a recently released RAND study.

Briefing attendees heard introductory remarks by the following speakers: Mr. Michael Rich, Executive Vice President, RAND Corporation; Rep. Curt Weldon (PA), Co-Chairman of the House Homeland Security Caucus; Rep. Norm Dicks (WA), Co-Chairman of the House Homeland Security Caucus; Dr. John Howard, Director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health; Mr. John Henshaw, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health; and the author of the study, Dr. Brian Jackson, RAND Researcher.

The study on the safety of first responders, defined the latter broadly to include not only uniformed servicemen but also construction workers removing rubble and Red Cross volunteers, and examined 4 major national disasters, two of which were terrorist attacks. The study argues that in the chaotic environment of a major disaster, individual response organizations may have problems following normal safety procedures and may have difficulty collecting and coordinating data on the hazards at the scene. The study further recommends that responder agencies need to be able to anticipate such problems and need to put systems in place so that they can efficiently scale up to cope with circumstances more complex and hazardous than they routinely address. In particular, Dr. Jackson underscored during the briefing that protecting responders during a major disaster requires a coordinated, multi-agency effort.

Additionally, the study included 31 recommendations to address current management shortfalls. Some of the key strategies suggested in the study include: building an integrated safety function into the existing structure for managing major response operations; using preparedness efforts to plan ways to integrate safety management; and developing a cadre of highly trained "disaster safety managers" to facilitate coordination among agencies.

For more information, visit the RAND Corporation website at: http://www.rand.org .

California State Society Picnic on Saturday, June 19

The annual picnic of the California State Society will take place from 11:00 am to 4:00 pm on Saturday, June 19, 2004 at the ballfield at West Potomac Park, next to the Polo Fields, near the intersection of Ohio Drive and Independence Avenue. The site is located in an area between the Lincoln and FDR Memorials, and between the Tidal Basin and the Potomac River. Only 2004 CSS members may attend the picnic, and member sign-up (for $10 per year) is permitted at the event. For additional information, visit http://www.californiastatesociety.org .