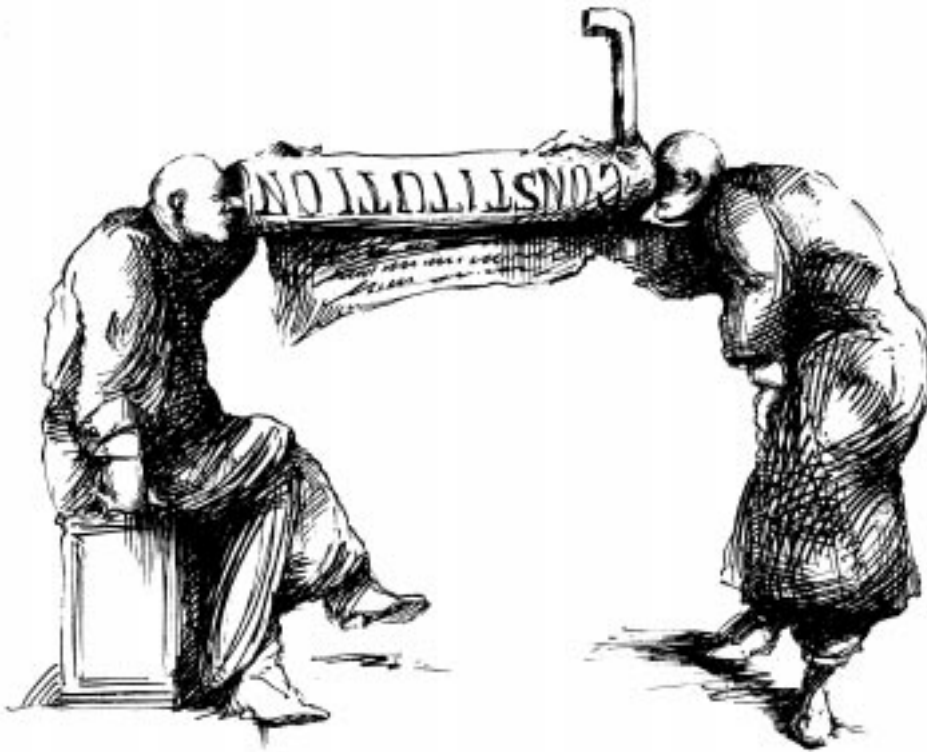


July 18, 2005

Blind Justice?



Budget & taxes U.S. Senate alters anti-terrorism funding formula	6
Politics & leadership States' rights in decline?	9
Governors Could Easley, Warner be King of the Hill?	10
Bird's eye view	3
Hot issues	12
Once around the statehouse lightly	15

Top Story

The recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling allowing governments to seize private property to foster private economic development has brought often bitter political rivals together to clarify, modify or just plain reverse state eminent domain laws.

SNCJ Spotlight

Changes imminent for eminent domain

It is hard to imagine anything pulling Republicans and Democrats together in this age of blind political partisanship, but the U.S. Supreme Court recently did just that with their 5-4 ruling allowing local governments to use the power of eminent domain to seize people's homes and businesses to make way for tax-producing private development. Now, lawmakers of both parties in numerous states and Congress have launched joint efforts to head off what some fear could be a govern-

mental rush to force homeowners off their property in favor of luxury condos, big-box retailers and business parks.

The U.S. Supreme Court's decision came in the case of *Kelo v. City of New London*, CONNECTICUT. City leaders there, looking to pump up the city's tax revenue and produce new jobs, want to replace a 115-home neighborhood known as Fort Trumbull with a private development project that includes an office park and luxury hotel. That project was spurred at least in part by a decision by pharmaceutical giant Pfizer to build a research facility nearby.

Under the Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, local, state and federal governments are allowed to seize private property for "public use" as long as the property holders receive "just compensation." But seven of the New Trumbull property owners argued that the city's plan does not add up to public use and refused to sell. The Constitution State Supreme Court, however, ruled in 2004 that the thousands of jobs and significant revenue city officials projected would be generated by the redevelopment gave the city a valid claim for using eminent domain to take the property. That decision sent plaintiffs to the U.S. high court, which on June 23 of this year sided with the New London officials.

The U.S. House of representatives responded almost immediately, approving just one week later an appropriations bill amendment that would deny federal funds to any city or state project that utilized eminent domain to move people off their property in favor of a profit-making venture. The measure would apply to any funds coming from the departments of Transportation, Treasury and Housing and Urban Development. The amendment must still earn approval in the Senate.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi (D) sharply criticized the measure, saying that, "When you withhold funds from enforcing a decision of the Supreme Court, you are in fact nullifying a decision of the Supreme Court. This is in violation of the separation of powers in our Constitution."

Three companion Republican-sponsored eminent domain bills have also been introduced in the House: HB 3083 by MONTANA Rep. Denny Rehberg, HB 3087 from GEORGIA Rep. John Gingrey and HB 3135 from WISCON-

The Week in Session

States in Regular Session:
MA, NC, OR

States in Recess: CA, DC, IL, MI, NH,
NJ, NY, OH, PA, US, WI

Special Sessions in Recess:
CA "a", OK "a"

States in Special Session
Projected to Adjourn: TX "a"

States Adjourned in 2005:
AK, AL, AR, AZ, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, HI,
IA, ID, IN, KS, KY, LA, MD, ME, MN, MO,
MS, MT, ND, NE, NM, NV, OK, RI, SC,
SD, TN, TX, UT, VA, VT, WA, WV, WY

States in Special Session
Adjourned in 2005: AK "a", CT "a",
KS "a", ME "a", MN "a", MS "a", MS "b",
MS "c", NV "a", UT "a", VT "a", WI "a", WV
"a", WV "b", WV "c"

Letters indicate special/extraordinary sessions

Source: State Net, 7/15/05

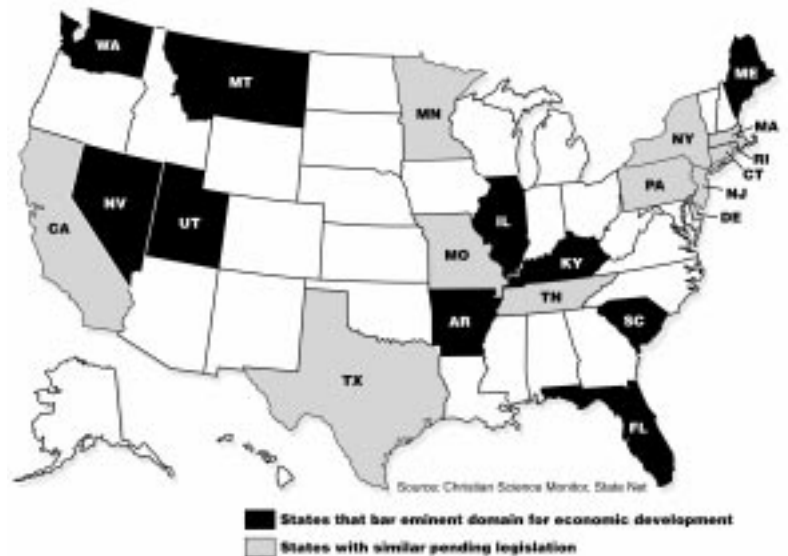
SIN Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner. Republican John Cornyn of TEXAS is carrying SB 1313 in the Senate. All say basically the same thing — the Fifth Amendment was intended to allow government takeover of private property only in order to foster public use projects — roads, schools, and bridges, etc. — and office parks do not fit that description.

Texas became the first state since the decision to actually move legislation when the House unanimously (132-0) approved HJR 19, a constitutional amendment that would bar government land seizures like that in New London. The measure heads to the Senate, where it is also expected to pass. If so, the issue will go before voters in November. The Texas Senate later passed its own proposal, SB 62, which would specify the specific conditions under which government bodies may condemn land, and would strictly forbid taking it for private economic development. That measure moves to the House for consideration.

Several other states — CALIFORNIA (ACA 22, SCA 15), TENNESSEE (HB 2426, SB 2413, SB 2418), DELAWARE (SB 217, SB 221), FLORIDA (HB 31 [2006]), MINNESOTA (HB 117a, HB 118a and HB 123a) and NEW JERSEY (ACR 255) among others — have introduced their own eminent domain bills. Several more, including GEORGIA, MISSOURI, ALABAMA, IDAHO, NEW HAMPSHIRE, OKLAHOMA and VIRGINIA are considering similar bills.

At least eight states, including ARKANSAS, FLORIDA, KENTUCKY and MAINE, already bar using eminent domain as an economic development tool,

Bird's eye view



Controlling eminent domain

The power of local governments to use eminent domain to force property holders to relinquish private land for public use has been around since the framing of the U.S. Constitution. The Fifth Amendment in fact guarantees that right, although it also explicitly says the land must be used for the greater good, most notably roads and other infrastructure. The recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling that expanded interpretation to also allow seizure of people's homes and businesses to make way for economic development (see *SNCJ Spotlight* in this issue) has spawned a number of states and the U.S. Congress to push legislation that would bar such use of eminent domain law. But, as the accompanying map shows, 10 states already prohibit or restrict using eminent domain for private development purposes.



First Amendment protections, and eventually won a lucrative settlement against the city.

While opposition to the *Kelo* ruling has run high at both the state and federal levels, eminent domain has its defenders. The Texas Senate vote on SB 62 did not come without vocal resistance from at least one Democrat, Sen. John Whitmire, who called the rush to change eminent domain laws “political expediency at the cost of economic development.”

Whitmire echoed the concerns of many city leaders around the nation, who contend that without eminent domain power, cities will often be unable to develop prime land for good public use, leaving them with what Anoka, Minnesota city manager Tim Cruikshank calls “blighted, unsightly, underused and undeveloped properties.” National League of Cities vice president Bart Peterson, a former two-term mayor of Indianapolis, also points out that such prominent national treasures as New York City’s Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and Baltimore’s Inner Harbor project would never have been possible without those cities being able to acquire the properties through eminent domain.

Meanwhile, back in Connecticut, Democratic leaders in the Legislature are calling on local municipalities to observe a moratorium on using their eminent domain powers until lawmakers can figure out what to do next. Republicans there have proposed three different amendments to restrict eminent domain use since the original state Supreme Court ruling, but all three failed amidst Democratic opposition. But with pressure seemingly coming from all sides, Dems are now calling for legislative hearings on the matter as early as this month. That appears to be the preference of Gov. M. Jodi Rell (R), although she has also backed the public hearings and moratorium proposals.

While nobody is yet sure what the final result of the high court’s verdict will be, most lawmakers are intent on taking strong action to ensure that eminent domain use is in line with what the public is willing to accept. GEORGIA Gov. Sonny Perdue (R) says they really have no choice.

“This is a kitchen table issue,” Perdue said in the aftermath of the court’s decision. “Georgians want to be sure they can hold on to their kitchen table. Our citizens demand the strongest protection.”

(NEW YORK TIMES, HOUSTON CHRONICLE, DALLAS MORNING NEWS, BOSTON GLOBE, WASHINGTON POST, WALL STREET JOURNAL, CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, CNN, KANSAS CITY STAR, ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION, DETROIT FREE PRESS, CHATTANOOGA TIMES FREE PRESS, ASSOCIATED PRESS, MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE, STATE NET)

— *Compiled by RICH EHISEN*

Budget & taxes

FEDS ALTER ANTI-TERRORISM FUNDING FORMULA: Last week, the U.S. Senate approved a change to the federal formula for distributing anti-terrorism funds to states — one that would provide less money to states generally considered to be the most likely targets for a terrorist attack. As introduced, the Senate’s domestic security appropriations bill called for 30 percent of the roughly \$2 billion in available funds to be distributed evenly to all fifty states, with the remaining 70 percent allocated on the basis of each state’s assessed risk of attack. But, by a 71-26 vote, the chamber adopted an amendment sponsored by Sens. Susan Collins (R-MAINE) and Joe Lieberman (D-CONNECTICUT) increasing the level of funding for all states — regardless of terrorism risk — to 40 percent. A competing amendment offered by Sens. Dianne Feinstein (D-CALIFORNIA) and John Cornyn (R-TEXAS), which would have raised the level of risk-based funding to 87 percent, was defeated by nearly as wide a margin (32-65). During debate over the proposals, Sen. Charles E. Schumer (D-NEW YORK) contended that it was “patently unfair to say that states that might have a threat, but don’t have a large and tangible repeated threat week after week, should get more money on a per capita basis.” But Lieberman’s counter arguments that risk analysis “is not a certainty,” only “an educated guess about where terrorists are likely to strike,” and that an attack on a rural area’s food or water supply could be just as devastating as a Sept. 11-type attack on a major city carried the day. The House security appropriations bill, however, calls for additional funding for states at higher risk, so the

ultimate determination as to how funds are dispersed will have to be made by a conference committee. (LOS ANGELES TIMES)

... unquote

“I have a hard time substituting pork for risk and I was disappointed by the vote.”

— **U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-CALIFORNIA) after the Senate adopted that change.**
(LOS ANGELES TIMES)

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN ENDS IN MN: MINNESOTA’s partial government shutdown, which sent 8,900 public employees home from their jobs July 1, finally came to an end early last Saturday morning, when Gov. Tim Pawlenty (R) and leg-

Quote...

“All of America is vulnerable. All of America needs help.”

—**U.S. Sen. Joe Lieberman (D-CONNECTICUT), arguing for a change in the federal anti-terrorism funding formula granting more money to all states rather than just those believed to be most at risk**



islative leaders agreed on a budget plan for the next two years. Crucial to the deal was the Democrat's concession to drop their demands for the state's wealthiest residents and businesses to pay more in taxes and accept Pawlenty's proposed 75-cents-per pack "fee" on cigarettes — which will impact lower-income Minnesotans most heavily — as well as the governor's plan to provide money for schools by allowing districts to increase local property tax levies. "I'd say the linchpin in this was when we recognized that the governor was not going to support our desire to have the highest-income Minnesotans help with revenue, and we recognized that we were going to have to compromise and accept his property tax for schools," said House Minority Leader Matt Entenza (DFL). For their part, Pawlenty and the Republicans agreed to give up their session-long push for a new casino, which the governor said was his biggest disappointment of the session. The governor's remark following the conclusion of the budget peace accord at 2 a.m. summed things up fairly succinctly; "Both sides gave, and both sides took," he said. (ST. PAUL PIONEER PRESS, MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIBUNE)

Upcoming Elections
 (07/14/2005 - 08/14/2005)

07/19/2005
Alabama Special Election
 House 072

07/19/2005
Pennsylvania Special Election
 House 131

08/04/2005
Tennessee Primary Election
 House 087
 Senate 029

CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS OVER IN KS? The battle between the KANSAS Legislature and state Supreme Court over school funding subsided a week and a half ago, but it may be only a temporary truce. On July 6, lawmakers finally complied with the high court's June 3 order to provide more money for schools, approving a \$148.4 million education funding increase for next year. The court ruled two days later that the Legislature's action was sufficient to keep it from shutting down the state's schools, which it had threatened to do in order to pressure lawmakers into action. But the court also specified in its opinion that the "present solution" was only "approved for interim purposes." As the court indicated in its original ruling last month, it could order another \$568 million "at a minimum" for the 2006-07 school year. And that figure could, in fact, be significantly higher. The exact amount is dependent upon the outcome of a pair of studies, one focusing on the cost of meeting current educational requirements and the other seeking to determine the cost of meeting the demands of the No Child Left Behind Act. "That's the dirty little secret that most folks don't understand," said Senate Majority Leader Derek Schmidt (R). "A big part of what is happening here is the federal requirement of No Child Left Behind is slipping in the back door and becoming part of the school finance discussion." Meanwhile,

conservative lawmakers, whose repeated efforts during the special session to curb the authority of the courts caused the delay in complying with the school funding order, are likely to take up that fight again next year. So, it looks like January may be unseasonably warm in Topeka. (WICHITA EAGLE)

BUDGETS IN BRIEF: CALIFORNIA Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) officially ended his budget standoff with Democratic lawmakers last Monday — 11 days into the new fiscal year — by signing a \$117.3 billion spending plan. But not before stirring things up a little by vetoing about \$190 million in funding Democrats were seeking for prostate cancer treatment, ESL instructional materials and a controversial labor studies program at the University of California. The budget signing ceremony came shortly after an announcement by Moody's Investors Service that it was raising California's credit rating up a notch, due in part to the decision by Schwarzenegger and lawmakers to scrap a plan to balance the budget with new borrowing (LOS ANGELES TIMES, SACRAMENTO BEE). • Congress appears set to approve a proposal that would foster construction of privately-owned toll roads, by allowing private companies to raise up to \$15 billion in federally tax-exempt bonds. While the proposal is welcome news to state transportation officials struggling to keep up with infrastructure demands, the plan has plenty of detractors, such as farmers and ranchers who fear the splitting up of their landholdings (REUTERS NEWS SERVICE, HOUSTON CHRONICLE). • As many as 14 states will use up their share of the federal contribution to the State Children's Health Insurance Program in 2006, according to a report by the nonpartisan Congressional Research Service. And the number of states could rise to 20 in 2007, if demand for the insurance program for poor children continues to increase at its current rate and Congress elects not to boost its funding (USA TODAY). • **INDIANA** Lottery Executive Director Esther Q. Schneider has sought a legal opinion from the attorney general's office on whether the lottery can offer video gambling under current state law. Schneider's request was prompted by two opposing Hoosier-State trends: a decline in lottery ticket sales and the growth of illegal video gambling, currently estimated to generate \$200-350 million a year (INDIANAPOLIS STAR).

— *Compiled by KOREY CLARK*



Politics & Leadership

STATES' RIGHTS IN DECLINE? Traditionally, Republicans have maintained the belief that the less government intrudes on the lives of its citizens the better. So, when the GOP assumed control over both the U.S. Congress and the White House, a lot of people — including many state officials — expected to see a dwindling of the federal government's reach. But that hasn't proved to be the case. Just last month, for example, Congress gave the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission authority to overrule state and local governments in determining sites for on-shore liquefied natural gas terminals, a move that had been called for by President Bush. In April, again with the president's backing, Congress passed the REAL ID Act, which sets national standards for state-issued drivers' licenses and will require states to verify that all applicants are legal U.S. residents. But the most sensational instance of Washington's new willingness to flex its muscle, by far, is the so-called "Palm Sunday compromise," when Bush and Congress pushed the Terri Schiavo case into the federal court system, after FLORIDA's courts had spent seven years deliberating it. In spite of such actions, the Bush administration insists that it has "sought to preserve the traditional role of states in our federal system." Others say the federal government's track record supports a slightly different version of reality. "If there is an important policy objective that [Republicans] really care about, state's rights just doesn't deter them," said Stephen Griffin, a professor of constitutional law at Tulane University in New Orleans, LOUISIANA. (MOBILE REGISTER)

POLITICS IN BRIEF: CALIFORNIA Attorney General Bill Lockyer (D) has filed a lawsuit to remove Proposition 77 — the high-profile measure backed by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) that would take redistricting out of the hands of the state's Democrat-controlled Legislature — from the Nov. 8 special election ballot. The suit alleges that the version of the initiative filed with the state differs substantively from the version circulated on petitions used to qualify it for the ballot, a claim supporters of the measure contest. The Golden State's chief election official, Secretary of State Bruce McPherson (R) — appointed by Gov. Schwarzenegger to replace Democrat Kevin Shelley, who resigned in the face of an ethics scandal — said he intends to keep the measure on the ballot, "unless directed to do otherwise by a court" (SACRAMENTO BEE). • For the second time this month, the Republican majority in OREGON's House forced a three-day recess of their chamber in an effort to exert pressure on the Democrat-con-



trolled Senate in ongoing budget negotiations. Some House Republicans conceded the move had a secondary benefit: keeping idle House members from proposing “pork” projects (STATESMAN JOURNAL [OREGON]). • **NEW JERSEY** Gov. Richard Codey (D) signed legislation last week reestablishing a political watchdog agency abolished ten years ago to save money. Codey had made restoration of the Department of the Public Advocate a priority since taking office last November, following the resignation of former Gov. James McGreevey (STAR-LEDGER [NEWARK]).

— *Compiled by KOREY CLARK*

Governors

COULD EASLEY, WARNER BE KING OF THE HILL? If the first step in winning the White House is catching the eye of the national media, then Democratic governors Mark Warner of VIRGINIA and Mike Easley of NORTH CAROLINA could be well on their way toward a show-down for the Party’s 2008 nomination. Warner, the chairman of the National Governors Association, has always been media savvy, recently testifying several times before Congress as well as serving as a keynote speaker at a meeting of the National Press Club. He has also been mentioned as a potential candidate in the past, particularly for managing to broker deals with the GOP-controlled Virginia Legislature, no small feat in a state where Republicans outnumber Democrats by a 2-1 margin. Warner has already established a federal political action committee, which most observers construe as a sure sign he will pursue the nomination. Easley’s rising star, however, is a fairly new phenomenon, starting after he surprised many in 2004 when he easily won re-election in a state that President Bush took by 13 points. He has recently been the subject of feature articles in both the *New York Times* and *Congressional Quarterly*, the latter of which strongly suggested that Dems give him a serious look in ‘08. Both Warner and Easley are lauded for their ability to connect with Southern voters — particularly the so-called NASCAR-dad contingent — and for not coming across as ideologues. Easley also has a sincere love for the animated TV show *King of the Hill*, telling the *Times* that it “is only the second show that’s a comedy about the South — this and Andy Griffith — that doesn’t make fun of Southerners.” He added that some of the show’s characters remind him of people he knew growing up in Greenville. The *Congressional Quarterly* column suggested that Easley’s affinity for the show’s characters, whom the governor sees as “a reflection of Suburban Sun Belt voters,” could play

well for him with fellow Southerners should he decide to make a presidential run. (WALL STREET JOURNAL)

DEMS HOWL OVER SCHWARZENEGGER MAGAZINE DEAL: Just days before taking office, CALIFORNIA Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) signed a multi-million dollar deal to serve as a consultant and executive editor for two national bodybuilding magazines. The deal guarantees the former bodybuilding champion at least \$5 million and as much \$8 million over a five-year period, including \$1.5 million over six years going to the

Governor's Council on Physical Fitness, a tax-exempt group. His income is based primarily on the magazines' annual advertising revenue, of which he receives a total of 1 percent or \$1 million, whichever is more. The revelation, which came from a U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission filing, hastened sharp criticism from Golden State Dems and government watchdogs alike, who say Schwarzenegger's work with the magazines presents a clear conflict of interest. Schwarzenegger last year vetoed legislation that would have, among other things, created a state list of barred performance-enhancing supplements and prohibited supplement producers — the prime advertisers in the magazine Schwarzenegger now represents — from sponsoring school events. Schwarzenegger aides defended his actions, calling the situation "much ado about nothing." They reason that the Legislature is allowed to make outside income and noting that all of the governor's income has been properly reported. That explanation didn't do much for state Sen. Jackie Speier (D), who authored the supplement bill that Schwarzenegger vetoed last year. "If you recall his veto message, he went out of his way to say that dietary supplements are safe," she said. She also called for him to cut his ties to the magazines, noting that "Whether it is a conflict or not, it certainly gives the appearance of being a conflict." Speier earlier this year introduced SB 37, a new version of the legislation Schwarzenegger vetoed last year. (SACRAMENTO BEE, LOS ANGELES TIMES)

GOVERNORS IN BRIEF: FLORIDA Gov. Jeb Bush (R) officially called an end to the state's inquiry into the events that preceded Terry Schiavo's collapse 15 years ago. Bush ended the inquiry after the state attorney general found no evidence of wrongdoing in the case (ASSOCIATED PRESS). • **NEVADA** Gov. Kenny Guinn (R) said that Silver State residents who owe money to the state DMV

Upcoming Stories

Here are some of the stories you will see in upcoming issues of the State Net Capitol Journal:

- The high cost states pay to attract industry
- Tracking the progress of the year's biggest legislative issues
- Will phone companies take over cable TV?
- Public pension, public problem

And many more...

will not receive any of the \$300 million in vehicle registration rebates the state is set to disperse soon. Most vehicle owners are expected to receive anywhere from a \$75 to a \$275 refund (NEVADA APPEAL [CARSON CITY]). • **NEW JERSEY** Gov. Richard Codey (D) indefinitely postponed the implementation of a controversial plan left over from the McGreevey administration to “fast track” permits for Garden State land developers. Supporters said speeding up the permit system would help revitalize blighted urban areas, while opponents called it the worst environmental legislation in state history (NEW YORK TIMES). • Former **GEORGIA** Gov. Zell Miller (D) announced plans to return \$112,956 plus interest to the state to settle accusations he had improperly pocketed thousands of dollars left over from his entertainment allowance while in office. It is legal in the Peach State for governors to keep the overages as long as they pay income tax on those funds, which Miller did. Although it does not appear that he did anything illegal, Miller says he will return the money because “I cannot live with some folks thinking I have taxpayers’ money I should not have” (ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION).

— *Compiled by RICH EHISEN*

Hot issues

B **USINESS:** The **CALIFORNIA** Supreme Court rejects a lawsuit aimed at overturning the Golden State’s new workers’ compensation laws. The high court said the matter needs to first be handled through local workers’ compensation courts before they can rule on it (SACRAMENTO BEE). • Still in **CALIFORNIA**, the Assembly endorses AB 68, a measure that would limit the amount of profit auto dealers can make on car loans. It would also enact a two-day “cooling off” period in which consumers can cancel a vehicle purchase. It motors off to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R), who has not said if he will sign it (SACRAMENTO BEE). • **MISSOURI** Gov. Matt Blunt (R) signs legislation that bars Show Me State strip club dancers from appearing nude. The “Can’t Show Me” bill also requires dancers to stay at least 10 feet away from club patrons (KANSAS CITY STAR). • The **TEXAS** Senate okay’s a bill that allows phone companies to get a single blanket TV franchise license from the state rather than obtaining one in each city they plan to do business in. The measure rings over to the House (HOUSTON CHRONICLE). • **NEW YORK** Gov. George Pataki (R) signs a measure that allows Empire State wineries to now ship directly to consumers out of state. The previous statute only allowed in-state shipments (ROCHESTER DEMOCRAT AND CHRONICLE).



attempts to develop a stem cell program failed to earn approval from the Legislature (CHICAGO SUN-TIMES). • The **WISCONSIN** Supreme Court rules that the Badger State’s cap on medical malpractice awards for noneconomic damages is unconstitutional. The ruling applies only to pain and suffering awards (LACROSS TRIBUNE).

HOMELAND SECURITY: A **CALIFORNIA** Assembly panel approves a subpoena that demands the state National Guard turn over materials relating to alleged domestic spying. The committee is investigating allegations that the Guard had conducted surveillance at rallies protesting the Iraq war (SACRAMENTO BEE).

SOCIAL POLICY: A **CALIFORNIA** Senate committee approves a measure that would make the Golden State’s marriage laws gender-neutral. The measure was defeated earlier this year, but was revived when it was tacked on as an amendment to a fisheries research bill. It now faces another Senate committee (SAN JOSE MERCURY NEWS). • A federal appeals court upholds a **NEBRASKA** court ruling that strikes down the Partial Birth Abortion Act, which bars abortion after the first trimester. The court said the Act is unconstitutional because it makes no exception for abortions done to preserve the mother’s health. The federal Dept. of Justice, the plaintiff in the case, has not indicated if it will appeal (NEW YORK TIMES). • The **OREGON** Senate approves SB 1000, which would allow same-sex partners to enter into legal civil unions. Oregon voters last year strongly endorsed a ballot initiative banning same-sex marriage. It moves to the House (REGISTER-GUARD [EUGENE]).

POTPOURRI: A **CALIFORNIA** Senate panel okay’s AB 381, which would subject paparazzi to civil penalties for engaging in any “assaultive behavior” in their pursuit of celebrity photographs. The measure walks the red carpet onto the full Senate floor (SACRAMENTO BEE). • Still in **CALIFORNIA**, state parks officials announce an agreement to improve access for disabled people to more than 270 state park and recreational areas. The agreement resolves a pair of lawsuits alleging that the disabled were being denied access to those areas (LOS ANGELES TIMES).

— *Compiled by RICH EHISEN*

•
•

Once around the statehouse lightly

LAF IT OFF: Ever been to a LAFCO? Chances are not, reports the *Los Angeles Times*, because, contrary to what one might think, it's not a comedy club. A LAFCO is a "Local Agency Formation Commission" and its use has one CALIFORNIA official fed up with government jargon. As a result, the Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors will no longer tolerate acronyms in written reports. Not only that, but supervisors and department managers must pay a \$1 fine every time they use lingo during a public conversation. The money, collected in a jar, will be donated to charity. Before supervisors outlawed linguistic shorthand, board documents contained an attachment listing 83 frequently used acronyms and abbreviations.

MOORE THE MERRIER: Some folks in Traverse City, MICHIGAN, don't like the notion that liberal movie maker Michael Moore chose their fair city for an outdoor film festival later this month. As the *Detroit Free Press* notes, they've organized a counter celebration, featuring conservative movies. On tap are the documentary "Michael Moore Hates America," Tom Cruise's patriotic "Top Gun" and a bio of Ronald Reagan. Moore, who directed "Fahrenheit 9/11," is planning to show the subversive western "High Noon." City officials are tickled — billing the events as "dueling film festivals." One word of caution to those on the right: The CALIFORNIA politician who bills himself as the model for "Top Gun," U.S. Rep. Randy Cunningham of San Diego, currently is embroiled in a series of scandals involving a defense contractor.

WASTE NOT, WHY NOT? A survey conducted by America Online and Salary.com has outed the folks in MISSOURI. According to The Associated Press, workers in the Show Me State waste more time on the job than those in any other state — more than three hours a day. Nationwide, the average worker fritters away over two hours a day. If the survey is to be believed, employers spend \$759 billion every year on salaries that produce no useful benefit. The governor of Missouri is incensed, claiming that the survey was based on results from those with nothing better to do. "Our busiest citizens," Matt Blunt sniffed, "did not want to waste their time" filling out the survey.



Editor: Rich Ehisen — capj@statenet.com

Associate Editor: Korey Clark — capj@statenet.com

Contributing Editor: A.G. Block — capj@statenet.com

Editorial Advisor: Lou Cannon

Correspondents: Richard Cox (CA), Steve Karas (CA),
Bruce McKeeman (CA), Linda Mendenhall (IL),
Lauren King (MA) and Ben Livingood (PA)

Graphic Design: Richard Hansen, Heather Conway

©2005 State Net ISSN: 1521-8449



You've just read State Net Capitol Journal,
the insider's source for political and legislative news
in the 50 states.

State Net Capitol Journal is published 40
times annually and delivered over the web or e-mail.

For a FREE subscription, visit our website at
www.statenet.com and click on the "Register Now" icon.
Or, call us at 916.444.0840.