

October 4, 2010



# Kick the Bums Out!

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The next issue of Capitol Journal will be available on October 11th.

## Top Story

*Fueled by anti-tax fervor, angry voters have taken a "throw-the-bums-out" approach to this fall's elections. But in many cities, they are not waiting for Election Day.*

## SNCJ Spotlight

### Tough times spark wave of mayoral recall efforts

With the Great Recession continuing to wreak havoc across the nation, this has been a tough year for elected officials. But while much of voters' discord has played out in Congressional primary elections, some of the angriest and most outspoken are instead focusing their attention closer to home, often not even waiting for Election Day.

Across the nation, mayors and other elected officials are increasingly finding themselves the target of recall campaigns, frequently over actions those leaders have taken to keep their cities solvent. Over the last two years, the list



water system, which he claimed produced brown, odiferous water.

“We were trying to be responsible,” he said. “But as soon as the rates started to kick in, people who weren’t paying attention were suddenly irate.”

Flint, MICHIGAN mayor Dayne Walling can likely relate to Valera’s plight, though with far better personal results. Walling faced down a recall effort earlier this year after he resorted to laying off police and firemen when their unions failed to agree to the concessions he had sought. Walling had also already cut his own salary, auctioned off the mayor’s car and started paying his own cell phone bills.

That campaign was not overly surprising: mayoral recalls have been a regular occurrence in Flint, including a successful effort in 2002. Another mayor resigned before being recalled in 2009. More shocking, perhaps, is a recall effort underway in Detroit, where mayor Dave Bing is an icon from his days as an All Star guard for the NBA’s Detroit Pistons. Bing’s crime: his decision to reduce city bus service in the face of historic budget shortfalls.

The rise of the tea party has also helped fuel recalls in several states, including an effort earlier this year to remove Chattanooga mayor Ron Littlefield. Tea party advocates were angry over the mayor’s decisions to raise storm water fees to comply with federal environmental regulations and to raise property taxes. The campaign collected more than 15,000 signatures, but a judge ruled last month that many were invalid, leaving them shy of enough to force a recall vote.

For all the fervor, most recall efforts often fail to even make it to the ballot. Still, the growing number has inspired Tom Cochran, the executive director of the United States Conference of Mayors, to put together a video to teach mayors about the risk of recall.

“I’m absolutely convinced that we’ve got more going on than before,” he said. Cochran lays the blame on the bad economy as well as the growing number of blogs and social networking sites that make it easier for opponents to organize.

But not everyone thinks the rise in recalls is a bad thing. Supporters contend they provide voters with a necessary tool for checking officeholders’ power, giving them the ability to get rid of officials like those in the city of Bell, CALIFORNIA. To many people, Bell, a small working-class city near Los Angeles, has become this year’s

## The week in session

**States in Regular Session:** DC, MI, NJ(Senate Quorum), PA(House only), PR

**States in Recess:** CA, NY, PA(Senate), US

**Special Sessions in Recess:** CA “f”, CT “a”, CT “b”, DE “b”, NY “w”, PA “a”

**Upcoming Special Sessions:**

MN “b” Regarding Flood Relief: TBA - October.  
VA “a” Regarding ABC Privatization: TBA - November.

**States in Informal Session:** MA

**States in Skeleton Session:** OH

**States in Veto Session:** NH (10/13/2010)

**States Currently Prefiling or Drafting for 2011:** FL, KY, MT, ND, NH, NV, VA

**States Adjourned in 2010:** AK, AL, AR, AZ, CO, CT, DE, FL, GA, HI, IA, ID, IL, IN, KS, KY, LA, MD, ME, MN, MO, MS, NC, NE, NH, NM, OK, RI, SC, SD, TN, UT, VA, VT, WA, WI, WV, WY

**State Special Sessions Adjourned in 2010:** AZ “a”, AZ “b”, AZ “c”, AZ “d”, CA “e”, CA “h”, FL “a”, HI “d”, HI “e”, KY “a”, MN “a”, MO “a”, MS “a”, MS “b”, NH “a”, NJ “a”, NM “a”, NV “b”, NY “w”, OR “a”, TN “a”, WA “a”, WI “b”, WV “a”, WV “b”

Letters indicate special/extraordinary sessions

— Compiled By JAMES ROSS  
(session information current as of 10/1/2010)  
Source: State Net database



poster child for civic corruption after revelations of a pay scandal that saw the city manager earning nearly \$800,000 a year. The mayor and several other city officials were already facing a recall before eight current or former officials were arrested last month on corruption charges.

Of course, even such high profile charges are no guarantee of a successful recall. In August, Ridgefield, NEW JERSEY mayor Anthony R. Suarez survived a recall effort in spite of being one of 44 people arrested in July 2009 as part of a federal corruption sting. Voters narrowly decided to keep Suarez even though federal authorities have accused him of accepting \$10,000 from an informant posing as a corrupt developer seeking help with building permits. Suarez, who insists he is innocent, goes on trial this month.

While few question the use of the recall in cases like Bell and Ridgefield, others do question recall campaigns being used against mayors simply for doing the unpleasant task of trying to keep their city fiscally afloat during historically rough budget times.

“Those are unpopular things, not things that anyone likes to do, but sometimes in a community you have to step up and do what has to be done,” says Chattanooga mayor Littlefield. “I hope that the recall environment does not become so pervasive that it discourages people from doing the right thing.” (NEW YORK TIMES, MIAMI HERALD, WOWT.COM [OMAHA], CHATTANOOGA TIMES-FREE PRESS, DETROIT NEWS,

— *Compiled by RICH EHISEN*

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## Budget & taxes

**P**A HOUSE PASSES HIGHEST SHALE TAX IN NATION: Last week, PENNSYLVANIA’s House of Representatives passed SB 1155, a tax on gas extracted from the Marcellus Shale reserve outside Pittsburgh that would be the highest shale levy in the nation. The measure, which Democrats favor and Republicans oppose, would impose a tax of 39 cents per thousand cubic feet of gas extracted, projected to generate at least \$200 million for the state’s general fund, as well as localities with Marcellus drilling. The Senate, which is in recess until Oct. 12, is unlikely to approve the measure in its current form. The chamber is controlled by Republicans, who instead favor a tax of 1.5 percent of the dollar value of gas extracted. (PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE, PATRIOT NEWS [HARRISBURG])

**STATES ROUNDING FISCAL CORNER:** The worst may be behind the states, according to the results of a new budget survey from the National Conference of State Legislatures. Forty states are projecting their revenues to grow this fiscal



year, while only ALASKA expects them to be lower, due to a decline in oil prices, which provide the bulk of the state’s revenues. Six other states — ALABAMA, MICHIGAN, NEVADA, RHODE ISLAND, SOUTH CAROLINA and WYOMING — predict revenues to be flat, while another three — SOUTH DAKOTA, UTAH and WYOMING — did not respond to NCSL’s survey (STATELINE.ORG).

**BUDGETS IN BRIEF: WASHINGTON’s** Department of Social and Health Services announced \$281 million in contentious cuts last week. The 6.3 percent across-the-board cuts, some of which are scheduled to begin this month, include nearly \$113 million from Medicaid programs providing hospice care for the terminally ill and medical care for the disabled, children and pregnant women (SEATTLE TIMES). • **ARIZONA’s** deficit for the current fiscal year has grown by \$125 million, to \$825 million, while the projected hole for next fiscal year has grown by \$400 million, to \$1.4 billion (ARIZONA REPUBLIC [PHOENIX])

— *Compiled by KOREY CLARK*

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# Politics & leadership

**S TATE TAXING IMPACTING CONGRESSIONAL RACES:** Twenty-nine states raised taxes by about \$24 billion collectively in fiscal 2010, the largest amount in at least three decades, according to the National Governors Association. The on-the-ground reality of all that taxing is upending the election campaigns of some Democratic congressmen and aspiring congressmen — particularly those coming out of state office — and threatening congressional Democrats’ plans to allow some Bush-era tax cuts to expire.

Most Congressional Democrats support the Obama administration’s plan to let the top two federal income tax rates return to their higher, pre-Bush levels. But more than 30 Democrats in the U.S. House have publicly expressed their desire to extend all of the Bush cuts at least temporarily. Several of them are facing tough re-election battles in high-income, high-tax areas. The situation is only slightly less unfavorable for the Democrats in the U.S. Senate, where at least five members of the caucus have voiced concern about raising taxes.

Congressional hopefuls like PENNSYLVANIA Rep. Bryan Lentz (D) are also feeling the anti-tax heat. Having narrowly defeated a longtime Republican incumbent in 2006 to claim his state legislative seat, Lentz has supported a number of tax proposals in the time since, including a phasing out of the sales tax rebate for retailers and a tax on the production of natural gas from shale. Although not all of the measures have become law, his voting record has opened him up to attacks from his Republican rival in the state’s 7th Congressional district, U.S. Attorney Pat Meehan.



“I take Bryan to task” for his tax and budget record, including “voting for the \$1 billion in...new expenditures, and \$500 million in new taxes, another job-killing thing,” Meehan said during his first debate with Lentz in August.

Even before then, Lentz joined the growing number of Democrats breaking party ranks on the Bush tax cuts when he told the crowd at a town hall meeting in July that he would support extending several of the cuts for the wealthiest Americans. But as a former Army Ranger and Iraq war veteran, he rejects the idea that he’s giving ground because of his opponent’s attacks.

“Unlike Pat [Meehan] I’ve had to vote on a budget,” he said during the candidates’ second debate in late August. “In Washington D.C. they have a credit card...In Harrisburg we have to balance the budget.” (WALL STREET JOURNAL)

**SOCIAL CONSERVATIVES HEATING UP HIGH COURT RACES:** Four sitting justices on the KANSAS Supreme Court could lose their seats on Nov. 2. The same goes for three justices in COLORADO and three in IOWA.

None of the justices actually faces an opponent in next month’s election, only a simple retention vote, typically nothing more than a formality. In KANSAS, for instance, no justice has ever failed to win approval on such a vote by less than a two-thirds majority.

But this year, the anti-abortion group Kansans for Life is seeking to clear the state’s high court of justices it believes oppose stricter regulation of abortion clinics. In COLORADO, a group called Clear the Bench wants to unseat three justices over their loose interpretation of constitutional limits on the taxing authority of state and local governments. And in IOWA, the group Iowa for Freedom, backed by the American Family Association and the National Organization for Marriage, is trying to remove three of the state’s seven Supreme Court justices over their position on gay marriage, and it has reportedly spent more than \$235,000 on statewide television ads.

“We are seeing more states become battlegrounds for court wars,” said Bert Brandenburg, executive director of Justice at Stake, a nonpartisan group based in Washington, D.C. “It’s going to get nastier, more expensive and rawer, with each cycle.”

KANSAS, COLORADO and IOWA are among 13 states in which Supreme Court justices are selected by the governor from a list of finalists picked by nominating commissions entirely independent of the states’ legislatures. Supporters of those systems say they insulate the states’ judiciaries from politics.

“It’s a risky path to go down,” said KANSAS attorney Dan Lykins, a prominent Democratic contributor to And Justice for All, the counter-campaign to Kansans for Life. “We’ve always had good judges appointed by governors, both Republicans and Democrats.”

But social conservatives say they’re frustrated with what they perceive as judicial activism and the courts’ lack of accountability.

## Upcoming stories

Here are some of the topics you may see covered in upcoming issues of the *State Net Capitol Journal*:

- **2011 Preview**
- **Tea Party power?**
- **November elections**



“There’s a lot of concern and unrest in the country,” said Tom Brejcha, president of the Thomas More Society, an anti-abortion law firm based in Chicago, “and people want to force these issues.” (CHICAGO TRIBUNE)

**2010 CENSUS WINNERS AND LOSERS:**

A new analysis of state population statistics by the political consulting firm Election Data Services suggests the biggest winners in the upcoming Congressional reapportionment will be in the West and South. According to EDS’ analysis of population figures compiled by a private demographics company, GEORGIA, NEVADA, SOUTH CAROLINA and WASHINGTON could each pick up an additional seat, while FLORIDA could gain two more seats and TEXAS could garner four. The biggest losers, by EDS’ reckoning, will be in the Midwest and East. EDS predicts ILLINOIS, IOWA, LOUISIANA, MASSACHUSETTS, MICHIGAN, MISSOURI and NEW JERSEY will all lose a seat, and NEW YORK and OHIO will lose two seats apiece. Exactly how the U.S. House of Representatives’ 435 seats will be divvied up, however, won’t be known for certain until the U.S. Census Bureau issues its final 2010 population counts in December. (NEW YORK TIMES)

**POLITICS IN BRIEF:** According to a study by Ballotpedia, 375 — or 6 percent — of next month’s 6,125 state legislative races will not feature an incumbent because of term limits. The GOP, with 190 incumbents termed out this year, is taking a slightly bigger hit than the Democratic Party, which is losing 182 incumbents (BALLOTPEDIA).

— *Compiled by KOREY CLARK*

**In the hopper**

At any given time, State Net tracks tens of thousands of bills in all 50 states, the US Congress and the District of Columbia. Here’s a snapshot of what’s in the legislative works:

**Number of Prefiles last week:** 285

**Number of Intros last week:** 1087

**Number of Enacted/Adopted last week:** 979

**Number of 2010 Session Prefiles to date:** 21,913

**Number of 2010 Intros to date:** 90,859

**Number of 2010 Session Enacted/Adopted overall to date:** 29,557

**Number of 2009-10 bills currently in State Net Database:** 190,215

— Compiled By JAMES ROSS  
(measures current as of 9/30/2010)  
Source: State Net database

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# Governors

**DO ANTI-TEXTING LAWS MAKE ROADS LESS SAFE?** Thirty states currently bar drivers from sending or receiving text messages while behind the wheel. Almost a dozen of those laws were adopted this year. In theory, that should make roads in those states safer. But a meeting of the Governors Highway



Safety Association (GHSA) was told last week that anti-texting laws are ineffective at best and, at worst, could actually lead to even more wrecks on state and federal roadways.

That was the conclusion of a report introduced last week by the Highway Loss Data Institute (HLDI), the research arm of the insurance industry-funded group Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS). The study compared crash data in four states -- CALIFORNIA, LOUISIANA, MINNESOTA and WASHINGTON -- up to 18 months before and 22 months after they adopted text bans. That data was cross-referenced with patterns of claims from nearby states where texting laws did not apply during the time frame of the study. According to the study, only WASHINGTON didn't experience a sharp rise in traffic accidents after the ban went into effect.

While no clear causal link exists, the group theorizes that texting drivers go to greater lengths to avoid being seen by police, often holding their phones at a lower angle where they can be hidden from view. That, the group says, forces drivers to take their eyes even further from the road and for a longer time, thus increasing the chances for an accident.

"The point of texting bans is to reduce crashes, and by this essential measure the laws are ineffective," said IIHS president Adrian Lund.

"When states passed seat belt laws, there was virtually an immediate benefit with more people buckled up and fewer deaths in crashes. With teen driving laws it was virtually an immediate benefit, and we just aren't seeing benefits with cell phone laws," added Russ Rader, also a spokesperson for the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety.

Those conclusions, however, drew a strong rebuke from U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood, a staunch advocate for anti-texting laws.

"This report is completely misleading," he said. "Distracted-driving-related crashes killed nearly 5,500 people in 2009 and injured almost half a million more. Lives are at stake, and all the reputable research we have says that tough laws, good enforcement and increased public awareness will help put a stop to the deadly epidemic of distracted driving on our roads."

GHSA spokesperson Jonathon Adkins also discounted the report's findings, saying it is too early to definitively determine whether the laws work.

"Our reaction [to the institute report] is that we are not surprised as state enforcement of texting bans is really now just getting underway," he said, noting that the ongoing economic slump has made it tougher on states to enforce anti-texting laws than with previous efforts to curb distracted driving.

"There is not currently a federal pool of money for states to access for distracted-driving enforcement much like there is for drunk driving and seatbelt use," he said.

## At Issue in the States

Want to learn more about State Net, our legislative experts or the Capitol Journal staff? Visit our blog, <http://statenet.typepad.com/at-issue-in-the-states/>. It's a great way to find out in a flash what's going on in statehouses across the country...like yours!



when he would be able to return home (NEVADA APPEAL [CARSON CITY]). • **VIRGINIA** Gov. Robert McDonnell (R) announced he will declare next April “Civil War in **VIRGINIA**” month, rather than “Confederate History Month” as he originally announced in April. That earlier proclamation drew heated protests from critics who complained it omitted any references to the role slavery played in the war. McDonnell called that omission an “error of haste and not of heart” (WASHINGTON POST).

— *Compiled by RICH EHISEN*

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## Hot issues

**B** **USINESS:** The **WASHINGTON** Supreme Court rules that the Evergreen State’s ban on Internet gambling does not violate the commerce clause of the U.S. Constitution, which protects interstate trade. Opponents of the law say they will appeal in the federal court system (SPOKESMAN-REVIEW [BOISE]). • **CALIFORNIA** Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) signs SB 1072, which will allow Golden State gamblers the opportunity to bet on horses to lose. The measure goes into effect in 2012 (LOS ANGELES TIMES). • Also in **CALIFORNIA**, Schwarzenegger signs SB 1345, which extends to 2016 an exemption that allows the importation of kangaroo body parts, which are used to make soccer shoes and other apparel (LOS ANGELES TIMES). • Also in **CALIFORNIA**, Schwarzenegger vetoes SB 885, which would have barred the sale of gift cards that contain a “dormancy fee.” The governor said the measure would place an unnecessary burden on small businesses (LOS ANGELES TIMES). • Still in **CALIFORNIA**, Schwarzenegger vetoes AB 2411, which would have brought pet health insurance under the regulation of the state Dept. of Insurance. The governor said the agency already has the authority to oversee the industry (STATE NET). • Again in **CALIFORNIA**, Schwarzenegger vetoes SB 427, a bill that would have imposed a \$5,000 fine on auto repair shops that do not properly restore an airbag that has been deployed in a crash (COLLISIONWEEK.COM). • Staying in **CALIFORNIA**, Schwarzenegger vetoes AB 482, which would have barred Golden State employers from using the results of a credit report to hire, fire or promote workers (STATE NET). • Schwarzenegger also vetoes **CALIFORNIA** AB 2187, which would have created a new misdemeanor crime for employers who fail to pay a worker who quits or is terminated their full due wages within 90 days. The governor also vetoed a companion measure, AB 1881, which would have made such workers eligible to receive up to twice the amount they are owed in damages (LOS ANGELES TIMES). • Schwarzenegger also vetoes **CALIFORNIA** AB 1656, which would have required fur clothing manufacturers to attach conspicuous labels naming the kind of animal used for



each garment (SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE).  
 • Finally, Schwarzenegger vetoes SB 933, which would have barred **CALIFORNIA** retailers from charging consumers a fee for using a debit card (SAN FRANCISCO CHRONICLE).

**CRIME & PUNISHMENT:** A federal appeals court rules that two **OREGON** laws barring the distribution of sexually explicit material to minors are unconstitutional. A three-judge panel of the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals said the laws, while laudable in intent, are too broad and potentially criminalize material “no more tawdry than a romance novel.” State officials are considering an appeal (LOS ANGELES TIMES). • **CALIFORNIA** Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) signs AB 33, which requires the state attorney general’s office to supply law enforcement agencies with a list of registered sex offenders living in the area of a child who has been abducted. That list must be provided within two hours of the abduction’s report. The measure also contains new guidelines for better training police and related agencies in handling missing person cases (LOS ANGELES TIMES). • Still in **CALIFORNIA**, Schwarzenegger signs AB 1999, which gives immunity from prosecution to people younger than 21 for drinking alcohol in cases in which they call 911 to report an alcohol-related medical emergency (LOS ANGELES TIMES). • Also in **CALIFORNIA**, Schwarzenegger signs AB 1601, which authorizes judges to revoke for up to 10 years the driver’s license of anyone convicted of drunk driving three or more times within a 10-year period. Current law allows judges to take a three-time offender’s license for no more than three years. The law goes into effect in 2012 (CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR’S OFFICE). • Schwarzenegger also signs **CALIFORNIA** SB 1399, which allows state prison officials to release comatose and physically incapacitated inmates on medical parole. All releases must be approved by the state parole board and prisoners serving life terms or on death row will not be eligible (LOS ANGELES TIMES). • Finally, Schwarzenegger also signs **CALIFORNIA** SB 1411, which makes it a misdemeanor to impersonate someone online if it is “for the purposes of harming, intimidating, threatening, or defrauding another person.” Violators face up to a year in jail and a \$1,000 fine (PC WORLD). • The **PENNSYLVANIA** House approves HB 176, which would bar the manufacture, sale and distribution of five chemicals used to make synthetic marijuana. The chemicals are mixed with other herbs and sold as an alternative to pot. The bill moves to the Senate (PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER).

**Upcoming elections**  
 9/30/2010 - 10/21/2010

10/02/2010  
**Louisiana Primary Runoff**  
 US House (District 3)

**Louisiana Special Election**  
 House District 5  
 Senate District 2

10/05/2010  
**South Carolina Special Primary Runoff**  
 House District 79 (Democrat)

10/12/2010  
**Arkansas Special Election**  
 House District 21





Schwarzenegger signs SB 1237, which requires hospitals to disclose radiation overdoses during CT scans and to record the doses from all scans on the patient's medical records (LOS ANGELES TIMES).

• Still in **CALIFORNIA**, Schwarzenegger vetoes AB 2540, which would have barred health insurers from rescinding individual health policies when the holder becomes ill. The governor said the matter is already addressed by the federal health care reform law (LOS ANGELES TIMES).

## In case you missed it

Federal jobs surged temporarily, then ebbed with completion of the 2010 census. Now, state and local governments are reducing payrolls and in some cases raising taxes, actions that impede the tepid economic recovery.

In case you missed it, the article can be found on our Web site at [http://www.statenet.com/capitol\\_journal/09-20-2010/html](http://www.statenet.com/capitol_journal/09-20-2010/html)

**SOCIAL POLICY: A FLORIDA** appeals court strikes down a Sunshine State law that barred gay men and women from adopting children. Gov. Charlie Crist (I) said his administration will immediately cease enforcing the law. The law's supporters are expected to appeal the ruling (MIAMI HERALD). • Ten states sign a legal brief saying a federal court in **CALIFORNIA** "exceeded its judicial authority" when it ruled that the U.S. Constitution requires legal marriage to include same-sex couples. The states — **WYOMING, ALABAMA, FLORIDA, IDAHO, INDIANA, LOUISIANA, MICHIGAN, SOUTH CAROLINA, UTAH** and **VIRGINIA** — weighed in on the case of *Perry vs. Schwarzenegger*. A federal judge made the ruling in August regarding a challenge to Proposition 8, a voter-approved constitutional amendment limiting marriage to one man and one woman (CASPER TRIBUNE). • **CALIFORNIA** Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) vetoes SB 1231, which would have required most government vendors to certify that none of their products are produced by forced labor or in sweatshops (STATE NET). • The **PENNSYLVANIA** House approves SB 699, which would establish a statewide reporting and investigation process for abuse or neglect of adults with disabilities. It moves to Gov. Ed Rendell (D) for review (PATRIOT-NEWS HARRISBURG)

**POTPOURRI: CALIFORNIA** Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger (R) signs SB 5, which allows autopsy reports of homicide victims to be sealed at the request of the victim's parents (LOS ANGELES TIMES). • Still in **CALIFORNIA**, Schwarzenegger signs AB 2199, which overturns a Golden State law requiring the state to seek a cure for homosexuality (STATE NET). • Also in **CALIFORNIA**, Schwarzenegger vetoes SB 1207, legislation that would have required local governments to address fire prevention and protection as part of their land-use decisions.

— Compiled by RICH EHISEN

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# Once around the statehouse lightly

**WITH SUPPORT LIKE THAT:** As endorsements go, CALIFORNIA state Treasurer and former Attorney General Bill Lockyer's recent shout out to current AG candidate Kamala Harris leaves a lot to be desired. As the *San Francisco Chronicle* reports, the notoriously blunt Lockyer said that while he supports Harris, a fellow Democrat, he doubts she can beat GOP candidate Steve Cooley. This in spite of, Lockyer says, Cooley being "a mean, gloomy bureaucrat." Lockyer rep Tom Dresslar immediately tossed the comment into the spin cycle, noting that his boss has given Harris financial support and believes "she will make an excellent attorney general." Cooley, meanwhile, thanked Lockyer for the vote of, uh, confidence.

**ONE FOR THE BOOKS:** You can't blame MASSACHUSETTS Gov. Deval Patrick for looking back with fondness on the good old days of 2008. His good buddy Barack Obama was drawing waves of support on his historic march to the White House, scooping up more than a few colleagues in the happy vibes all along the way. Patrick's connection to the then-phenom — and best selling author — Obama helped the gov land a \$1.35 million book deal to tell his own rags-to-riches story. Fast forward to the present, where the *Boston Herald* reports that the gov's anything-but-certain re-election has the folks who signed that check just a bit nervous. It seems there is not likely much of a market for an "inspirational" political book from a politico who gets ousted after one term. Polls show Patrick in a dead heat with Republican rival Charlie Baker. His book is due out later this year.

**TRUST HIM TO DO WHAT?** Quick, what do top brass from Microsoft, Yahoo and the Harvard Business School have in common with impeached ILLINOIS Gov. Rod Blagojevich? As the *Chicago Tribune* reports, they will all be on a panel billed as a "Trust Forum" in New York City this week. Organizers say they included Blago in the event, which is part of the Big Apple's Advertising Week, to obtain his "unique take on trust." Unique indeed: the former gov was convicted last month of lying to the FBI, though jurors deadlocked on 23 other corruption counts. His retrial is set to start next January.

**NOT JUST ANOTHER JOE:** The first clue things were amiss for NORTH DAKOTA state Sen. Joe Miller came when folks started ringing up his office asking for campaign lawn signs, odd in a year he was not up for re-election. Then it was the interview requests, often from media outside the Flickertail State. Alas, scribes



and hopeful voters soon learned they were talking to the wrong Joe Miller. As the *Forum* of Fargo-Moorhead reports, the Joe Miller reporters were looking for is the tea party candidate in ALASKA who recently took on and defeated incumbent Sen. Lisa Murkowski in the state's Republican primary. The media calls were goofy enough — Miller's web site clearly says *NORTH DAKOTA* at the top — but he says he really gets a chuckle from the weekly yard sign calls that come from folks in ALASKA. "That's what's hilarious," he says.

— By *RICH EHISEN*

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