

NEW LEGISLATURE SET TO CONVENE DECEMBER 6

The 2005-06 Session of the California State Legislature will convene on Monday, December 6, with the two houses meeting to elect officers, organize, and introduce the first few bills of the new session.

Neither house is expected to be in session for more than a day or two. The Assembly has scheduled an orientation session for its 24 new members (including three “returnees”) on Tuesday, December 7. No similar orientation will take place in the Senate, since all the “new” Senators are former members of the Assembly.

Once the organizational session is concluded, the Legislature will stand in recess until Monday, January 3.

No surprises are expected in terms of elected legislative leadership. Both Assembly Speaker [Fabian Nuñez](#) (D-Los Angeles) and Republican Leader [Kevin McCarthy](#) (R-Bakersfield) were elected to their respective posts last year during their freshman terms specifically so that they could provide the continuity of leadership that had been missing in the lower house for over a decade, and their re-election is virtually certain.

In the Senate, [Don Perata](#) (D-East Bay) was elected President pro Tem in August after an extremely tight race, and is likely to be re-elected to the post by acclamation – notwithstanding the recent FBI probe of Perata and his associates.

Senate Republican Leader [Dick Ackerman](#) (R-Irvine) is also expected to retain his post.

PERATA OVERHAULS SENATE LEADERSHIP, COMMITTEES

Senate President pro Tem [Don Perata](#) has been extremely active in recent weeks, appointing his leadership team, re-constituting a number of Senate Committees, and appointing new chairs to many. The changes to date:

- Senator [Gloria Romero](#) (D-Los Angeles) has been appointed Senate Majority Leader (the post held by Perata prior to his election as Pro Tem), and Senator [Kevin Murray](#) (D-Los Angeles) as Democratic Caucus Chair.
- As reported earlier, Senator [Joe Dunn](#) (D-Costa Mesa) has been appointed chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee, replacing [Martha Escutia](#) (D-Whittier).
- Escutia will take over as chair of the Energy, Utilities & Communications Committee from Senator [Debra Bowen](#) (D-Marina Del Rey), who will take over as chair of the newly-expanded Elections, Reapportionment & Constitutional Amendments Committee formerly chaired by Perata. The former Constitutional Amendments Committee, which had been chaired by Republican Senator [Chuck Poochigian](#) (D-Fresno) has been abolished.
- Senator [Jackie Speier](#) (D-South San Francisco) will chair an expanded Banking, Finance and Insurance Committee. The former Banking, Commerce and International Trade Committee, which had been chaired by [Dean Florez](#) (D-Bakersfield) will be abolished.
- Senator [Sheila James Kuehl](#) (D-Santa Monica) has had her chair-ship of the Natural Resources Committee sweetened by the addition of water issues to its jurisdiction (the new committee is Natural Resources and Water). Water issues previously had been the jurisdiction of what now will be the Agriculture Committee.
- Former Agriculture Committee chair [Mike Machado](#) (D-Stockton) has been appointed chair of the Revenue & Taxation Committee.
- Senator [Jack Scott](#) (D-Pasadena) has been appointed chair of the Education Committee, replacing the termed-out John Vasconcellos.
- Current Housing Committee chair Senator [Tom Torlakson](#) (D-Antioch) has been appointed chair of the newly-combined Transportation and Housing Committee.
- Several newly-elected Senators have been appointed to chair key Senate Committee. [Alan Lowenthal](#) (D-Los Angeles) will chair the Environmental Quality Committee, [Elaine Alquist](#) (D-San Jose) will chair the Public Safety Committee, and the [Joe Simitian](#) (D-Palo Alto) will chair the new Human Services Committee, which was carved out of the former Health and Human Services Committee. Senator [Deborah Ortiz](#) (D-Sacramento) will continue to chair the Health Committee.