

State Bar of California, Office of Governmental Affairs

The Sacramento Scene

Vol. 1, No. 2

January 11, 2002

LEGISLATURE IS BACK!

- The Legislature returned to action on Monday, January 7, and immediately began considering the many two-year bills that must clear their house of introduction by the end of the month. Various policy committees held hearings on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, and will continue through next week. January 18 is the last day for policy committees to hear and send fiscal bills to the appropriations committees.
- On Thursday, January 10, the Assembly -- by unanimous voice vote -- elected **Herb Wesson** (D- Culver City/Los Angeles) the Assembly's 65th Speaker. Mr. Wesson will assume the duties of Speaker on February 6 - replacing current Speaker **Bob Hertzberg** (D-Van Nuys/Los Angeles). In a show of bipartisan spirit, Minority Leader **Dave Cox** (R- Fair Oaks/Sacramento) and **Tony Strickland** (R-Thousand Oaks/Ventura) both made speeches praising the Speaker-elect, who responded with big hugs for both men. For an in-depth look at Mr. Wesson, you may want to read two recent profiles published in the [San Jose Mercury News](#) and [Sacramento Bee](#) (Note: The profiles are in the seven-day archives of the two papers, and will soon be moved to the regular archives, where they will be available only a pay-per-view basis. See [Mercury-News Archives](#) and [Sacramento Bee Archives](#) if the above links do not work.)
- **Marco Antonio Firebaugh** (D. East Los Angeles) will be the Assembly's new Majority Leader. Mr. Firebaugh has a law degree from UCLA. **Dave Cox** will continue to be the Minority Leader.
- Bion Gregory just retired as the Legislature's longest serving Legislative Counsel. Prior to assuming the post of Legislative Counsel, Gregory was the Chief Counsel to the Senate Judiciary Committee. He served as Legislative Counsel from 11/22/76 to 1/4/02. Gregory's successor has not yet been named.

LEGISLATION

- **Bills Introduced.** California lawmakers introduced 91 new bills during their first week back and amended 180 others. Most of the amended bills were "gut-and-amends" -- i.e., brand new bills created from old bills that failed to move in 2001. Bills will continue to be introduced daily through February 22, the deadline to introduce bills.
- **Summaries of 2001 Legislation** The Judicial Council's Office of Governmental Affairs has produced a "[2001 Legislative Summary](#)" of legislation of interest to courts, judges and practicing attorneys. The Senate Public Safety Committee also has produced a "[2001 Bill Summary of Measures Signed and Vetoed](#)" in the criminal justice arena.

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ANSWERS TO SOME FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON FINDING AND TRACKING CALIFORNIA LEGISLATION:

Q: HOW DO I FIND A BILL?

A: If you want to find a bill, find out when it will be heard, or listen to a legislative hearing, the Internet sites listed below may be useful. Or, if you ever have a bad “web day” you can call our office and we can tell you about a certain bill, where it is in the legislative process, etc.

Q: HOW DO I FIND OUT WHAT BILLS ARE OUT THERE?

A: There are several legislative search engines available for California legislation, including engines maintained by the office of Legislative Counsel, the state Senate, and Legweb, a proprietary service with which this office contracts. Each of the engines has slightly different search capabilities and sorting features (e.g., by keyword, author, and range of Code sections). All are linked to the “Bill Search” page maintained by the Office of Governmental Affairs (<http://www.calbar.org/2ent/3oga/search.htm>)

To view all bills as they are introduced or amended day by day, go to: <http://www.calbar.org/2ent/3oga/ViewBillCatalogs.htm>

The Office of Governmental Affairs also maintains lists of legislation sponsored and tracked by the State Bar’s Board of Governors, and by many of the Bar’s affiliate entities (all funded through voluntary sources). Links to these lists

may be found on the same page (<http://www.calbar.org/2ent/3oga/search.htm>).

Q: HOW DO I FIND OUT WHEN BILLS ARE BEING HEARD?

A: A schedule of legislative hearings (including links to the bills being heard) can be found at: http://www.legweb.com/cgi-bin/hearing_data.cgi?session=5518f43b999795a08d971b706f8135b1

In addition, the bill lists maintained by the OGA (see above) provide a “calendar” feature, which enables one to see when the bills on the list are scheduled to be heard.

Q: CAN I LISTEN TO THE LEGISLATIVE HEARINGS?

A: Yes, both the Senate and the Assembly provide real-time audio links to all committee hearings and Floor sessions.

- *Senate Committee & Floor Hearings* – Listening to the Senate committee hearings and floor sessions requires the (free) RealAudio player. http://www.sen.ca.gov/htbin/te stbin/noframe_raudio
- *Assembly Committee & Floor Hearings* – *The Assembly uses the built-in Windows Media Player, which is convenient (assuming you have Microsoft Windows; we’re uncertain how/if it works for Mac users). To use, click on the link to the desired hearing room or floor.* http://www.assembly.ca.gov/committee_hearings/