

**HALF THE LEGISLATURE STARTS
SUMMER BREAK**

Half the Legislature – the state Senate – rewarded itself for passing the state budget by starting its month-long summer recess four days early, forcing the cancellation of numerous committee hearings and putting the spotlight – and presumably the heat – on the Assembly to follow suit.

Meeting in a rare Saturday session on June 29, two days before the beginning of the new fiscal year, the Senate managed to put together the 27 votes needed to pass the latest version of the Legislature’s budget bill, thanks to a Republican Senator who broke ranks with his caucus and voted in favor of the measure. The Senate then adjourned for the summer, putting off until the week of August 5 all scheduled committee hearings. With no Senators on hand to present their bills, the Assembly also postponed its scheduled committee hearings until August, while continuing to meet in full session on the floor.

A two-thirds vote of the Assembly is required to approve the 710-page budget bill, [AB 425](#) by Assembly Budget Committee Chair [Jenny Oropeza](#) (D-Long Beach), and send the measure to Governor Davis for his signature. However, at least four Republican votes are needed to achieve the necessary 54, and as of Wednesday afternoon, Assembly Republicans were still holding firm in opposition to the measure. The Assembly Republicans reportedly are demanding several concessions before they will vote for the bill, including additional cuts in certain government programs, and a reduction or elimination in tax increases pertaining to motor vehicle license fees, cigarettes, and business deductions. For an interesting story on the budget process, see: [Dan Walters, “Behind Scenes of Budget Battle, Squabbling Erupts Within Parties.”](#)

The Assembly recessed Wednesday for the Independence Day holiday. It will remain on call for the long weekend, but is not scheduled to reconvene until Monday morning, July 8.

**JOINT LEGISLATIVE AUDIT COMMITTEE
CHAIR REPLACED**

The chair of the Legislature’s Joint Audit Committee, which held center stage for several months during its extensive hearings on the state’s software deal with Oracle Corporation, was removed Tuesday, July 2, and replaced by another member of the Assembly. Former Committee Chair [Dean Florez](#) (D-Shafter) was quoted in newspaper accounts as saying he was kicked off the committee because “...we pushed too hard on Oracle. I think it’s somewhat of a payback....(and) people aren’t interested in aggressive oversight during an election year.” Florez also noted that he was about to start another investigation - this time on the Department of Veterans Affairs. A spokesman for Assembly Speaker [Herb Wesson](#) (D-Culver City) said the change was “an internal management issue.” Other sources contend that the replacement was because Florez is viewed as too independent, and “operated in isolation of the other committee members.”

IMPORTANT LEGISLATIVE DATES

- June 28 **was the last day** for policy committees to meet and report bills. However, the **Senate** extended the deadline to early August.
- June 30 through August 5 - The Senate is taking its Summer Recess.
- August 5 - The Legislature reconvenes .

