

The Portantino Press:

News from Assemblymember Anthony Portantino Inauguration ~ Budget ~ Entertainment Tax Credit ~ Legislation ~ Sofia & Bella ~ Weekly Movie



Dear Tim and Joanne,

It's been a while since my last newsletter and truly a lot has happened since Election Day. We have a new President doing great things for our country, inspiring youth in a call to public service and trying to bring stability to our economy. I've been impressed, amazed and encouraged by the bi-partisan well wishing that President Obama has inspired. It's a testament to our great nation that after a peaceful transition of power from one party to another Americans rally to support and help. The depth of folks from both parties who want our country and its citizens to thrive under our new President is staggering.

Warmest Regards,

- Anthony

Inauguration



Sofia and I traveled to Washington for a whirlwind six days of cold, inspiration and grandma's food. Since Sofia is off to college next year I wanted to do something with her that she'd never forget. Thanks to Congressman Adam Schiff, I was able to secure tickets to the inauguration and that mission was accomplished. The logistics were difficult but the end result was worth it. Sunday night I had to drive 4 hours to pick Sofia up from Camp Roberts in Northern

California (my apologies to Pastor Skinner for leaving Metropolitan Baptist early to go get her). Monday, on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, I was grateful to the MLK Community Coalition for allowing me to speak early in their annual recognition program so that Sofia and I could make our 1:20 p.m. flight to Philadelphia. We landed in Philly, drove to Virginia, changed clothes and took the first Metro to Downtown DC at 4:00 a.m. Seven hours later we found our seats and joined two million people, captured in a moment of history like nothing we've ever experienced. That night, Sofia got to see President and Mrs. Obama at the Western States Ball. The two days of running around with no sleep was well worth it to share this incredible event with my eldest daughter.

State Budget

We will be pulling ourselves out of \$42 billion dollars of debt but the costs and impact will affect every Californian. Our State deserves better. We need a bi- partisan plan on the table to invest in our children and rebuild our State's stature as a U.S. and World economic leader. I'm sorry I don't have better news for our school children, our health care system and our everyday citizens who go to work and try to grasp their piece of the California dream. Despite it all, I remain optimistic and hopeful that better solutions will be forthcoming. Certainly, we've all seen that our current 2/3rds requirement for budget passage is fraught with peril. To think that one member of the legislature can ransom a vote in the middle of the night certainly doesn't make for sound policy making.

Entertainment Tax Credit

California finally has an entertainment tax credit to stem the tide of runaway film and television production. Over the past two decades, other states and countries have lured a great deal of our entertainment production out of California with tax and production incentives. As a former filmmaker, this issue has been of particular interest to me. If I had to find the one silver lining in our recent budget deal it would be that we now have a state program that encourages California based film and TV production. It's been a long time coming but it's here for the next five years.

Legislation

Over the last few months I've introduced bills to take a bite out of the budget mess. AB 53 proposes to freeze state salaries over \$150,000 for two years. In just one public institution, the California State University, this translates to over 400 people and \$70 million in salaries. I've also introduced AB 113 to sell approximately 500 Caltrans houses that were bought decades ago to make way for an extension of the 710 Freeway. I'm proposing that the proceeds from the sales of the homes go to backfill higher education cuts and enrollment growth at our campuses. For me, it makes no sense to make it harder for kids with the skills to attend college to do so. The beauty of this proposal is that it also gets the homes back on the tax rolls for Pasadena, South Pasadena and Los Angeles. It preserves the protections of the Roberti Bill and grants the non-profits who currently lease the property the ability to purchase their land. Additionally, it's neutral on the proposed tunnel project. Since the tunnel proponents have already popped corks and advocated selling the homes, it's a no-brainer that today's college bound students deserve the money much more than any future project that might or might not occur decades from now. The Federal Highway Administration decertified the surface route, so that project no longer exists.

Let's sell the homes, help our students and move on.

Bella & Sofia

Recently, Bella and I had a fun hike around the entire perimeter of Hahamonga Park. It took us 1.5 hours to complete. We checked out the legendary home of the "one-eyed monster" and we climbed the entire damn. She's an amazing climber. It was a magnificent day to be outside and the park was being well used by Frisbee golfers, hikers, dogs and horses.

Sofia has five "yes's" so far on her college hunt. SF State, CSUN, USF, Ursinus and Albright. (Ellen and I went to Albright). LMU wants this semester's grades before making a decision and we've been silent on the rest so far. She's pretty stoked that the first five letters were all "yes." Nothing like seeing a teenager glow after getting a "yes" in the mail.

Taken

On the movie front, Sofia and I recently saw Taken and it scared the heck out of me. It was a great thriller with a father / daughter theme running through it. Frankly, I'm rethinking all of the above colleges in big cities and wanting to keep my little girl home-schooled. Can you do that for College?

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"A man is not old until regrets take the place of dreams." -John Barrymore

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