

The Portantino Press:

News from Assemblymember Anthony Portantino

Budget ~ Shared Responsibility ~ National HIV Testing Day ~ Bills ~ Finally - a College Choice ~ Softball ~ Woman of the Year



Dear Tim and Joanne,

The year is moving quickly and we find ourselves back in a \$24 billion hole. After a devastating round of cuts over the last two years, our downturn in revenue and the national economy has us once again looking at very difficult choices. It's my hope that we will prioritize and endeavor to do what's in the best interest of our economy and the diverse constituencies we serve. As an eternal optimist, I also hope that we use this crisis as an opportunity to make much needed structural reform. If we fail to make significant changes now, shame on us.

Warmest Regards,

- Anthony

BUDGET

We are facing about a \$24 billion problem. Most of the easy solutions have already been used up and are gone. Although everything and every part of the state budget must be looked at, I'm deeply disappointed in the Governor's scattershot approach and incessant grandstanding. Let's be focused and work together in a bi-partisan manner to get out of this mess. For example, it would make more sense to look at park fees as a way to keep our parks open then to just close them. Certainly, we must look at ensuring that government costs meet government service. We owe it to our constituents to look for every possible savings but we also must be prudent about looking at fee streams and creative sources of revenue to offset devastating cuts. That's why I continue to look at selling the \$400 million worth of Caltrans-owned houses in my district as a way to offset transportation and education cuts. I'm also pushing a bill to cap salaries for 24 months for state employees who earn over

\$150,000 per year. Although the appropriations committee killed this bill twice on the Assembly side, I've resurrected it in the Senate. Now more than ever we need to be disciplined in our approach and creative in our outlook.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Given the impact that the state budget is having on all Californians, I have tried to do my part. Since I was elected, I declined a state-purchased district car, turned down the raise in my per diem and have taken a voluntary pay cut of \$3,000 per year. In addition, I voluntarily reduced my personal staff budget by 10% during each of my three years in office. I fully understand that if I'm going to be critical of the UC and the CSU for their executive compensation practices, I've got to lead by example.

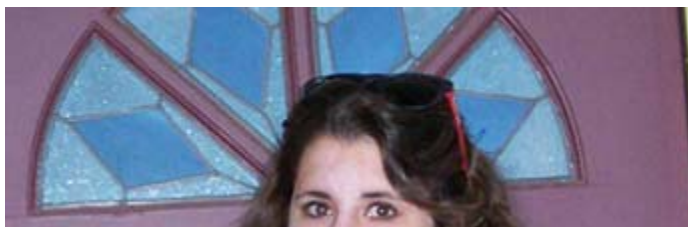
NATIONAL HIV TESTING DAY

In observance of National HIV Testing Day, I'm hosting three hours of free HIV testing at Vroman's Bookstore on June 27th. The Center for Disease Control estimates that 250,000 Americans don't know that they are HIV positive. The CDC recommends that HIV testing should be a routine part of your next check up and that identifying HIV is the single most important public health goal in relation to AIDS. Although HIV continues to spread and is particularly spreading among minority women, there is a persistent stigma attached to testing. That's why I am going to be tested and am inviting the public to have their cheeks swabbed in a rapid and confidential HIV test. Testing will take place from 10 AM to 1 PM at the patio adjacent to Vroman's Bookstore at 695 E. Colorado Blvd, Pasadena. Spread the word and join me for testing and/or education provided by the Pasadena Public Health Department and AIDS Service Center.

BILLS

Still working on Cord Blood funding. My bill AB 54 continues to work itself through the Assembly. It would provide \$3 million per year to store and use umbilical cord blood for the general public. My breast cancer coverage bill is also still moving. If it passes, it is estimated that an additional 20,000 women a year will receive a mammogram. This will save the lives of 16 women a year. On the higher education front, I've picked up on Senator Scott's legacy and am once again asking our institutions of higher learning to be held accountable and to set and reach established benchmarks. Now, more than ever, we need to know that we are using our resources wisely. At a time when student fees continue to increase we must hold the UC, CSU and Community Colleges accountable. And I'm pleased to report that AB 1361, the ban of trucks for the Angeles Crest Highway, successfully passed the Assembly and is headed to the Senate.

FINALLY - A COLLEGE CHOICE



After a 17-college list was narrowed to two, Sofia finally reached her decision to attend UC Santa Barbara. I know most

of you are wondering how I'm going to handle letting my little girl attend a party school. The answer is simple: NOT WELL AT ALL. If one more person tells me about the legendary Halloween Party, I'm going to scream. All I can fall back on is that Sofia's a great daughter and I am very proud of her for being accepted by a school with 5 Nobel Prize winners. Certainly, I will miss our Sunday night movies. We've watched one together almost every Sunday for the past 12 years. I also take solace knowing that Sofia wants to pursue a career as a film editor and UCSB has a great film school.

SOFTBALL

As for Bella: she and her sister seven-year-old teammates of THE MIGHTY PURPLE reached the Championships, but lost in the final game to MUSTARD, NOT KETCHUP aka THE MUSTARD. You haven't lived until you've seen seven-year-olds play softball.

WOMAN OF THE YEAR



Earlier this year, I had the pleasure of naming Duarte Councilwoman Lois Gaston as the Woman of the Year for the 44th Assembly District. Lois is an exemplary public servant who has never stopped asking what she can do for her community, as her record in public service and volunteerism clearly demonstrate. Lois was recently installed as the President of the Contract Cities Association, a collection of 67 California cities that contract with another public agency or private company for

governmental services. I am honored to have the opportunity to recognize my friend Lois Gaston for her commitment and contributions toward making the 44th Assembly District a better place to live, work and play. Congratulations Lois!

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James Baldwin - "Those who say it can't be done are usually interrupted by others doing it."