



SANTA ANA NORTH ROTARY 1959

The Rotations

Dec 18, 2013

SANTAANANORTHROTARYCLUB.ORG

Neighborhood Legislature

PRESIDENT'S REMARKS.

Today, we welcome speaker Anthony Kuo, Coordinator, Neighborhood Legislature. Dixon's honorary membership status was approved. George was nominated as President-elect for 2014-15.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Community Service – Mel

Santa visits scheduled for Dec 19 & 20. Franklin Thurs Dec 19 (8:30 – 11:30 am) Hoover Fri Dec 20 (8:30– 11:30 am). Thanks to all that volunteered on Dec 9 to fill all the bags. We had at least 5 Interact volunteers as well. Pictures from distribution on last page.

Youth Service – Lisa

Children of Nations (www.cotni.org) community service event will be Wednesday, Jan 29 at Century High School from 12:15 – 2:00 pm. We will conduct normal meeting and then prepare 2,500 meals for those in need with Century Interact Club. Please wear

Rotary swag for photo opportunity. This will also serve as a membership drive for the Interact Club and we'll sponsor pizza for those that volunteer.

RYLA and Vocal competition will be 1Q; seeking candidates and participants.

Vocation Speaker Bureau will resume in February to support more involvement and engagement with the Interact Club.

Foundation – Bruce

Ali Danta and Lisa were recognized with Paul Harris pins. Thank you for your donation and commitment to Rotary Foundation!



Wednesdays 12:15 PM
Antonello Ristorante
3800 S Plaza Drive, Santa Ana, CA

UPCOMING SPEAKERS

Dec 25, DARK

Jan 1, DARK

Jan 8, Club Assembly

Jan 15, TBD

Jan 29, OFFSITE: Children of Nations
Community Service Event @ Century HS,
12:15 – 2:00pm

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jan 8, Membership Committee Meeting
Jan 13, Interact Meeting, 1:00 pm (Children
of Nations Speaker)

March 19, Vocal Competition (Santa Ana
Elks Club)

Neighborhood Legislature: Citizens, not special interests

The Neighborhood Legislature Initiative is a bold reform California's political system that empowers citizens to fundamentally change our state's political system. Their goal is to return power to California citizens and take it away from special interests.

They feel special interest and their massive campaign contributions play an outsized role in California's politics. As a result, voters throughout California have grown disenchanted with the political process and feel their voice is no longer heard.

Small, Neighborhood Districts

Each of the 120 presently drawn large legislative districts is divided into 100 tiny neighborhood sub-districts of either 5,000 (Assembly) or 10,000 (Senate) voters. Each tiny sub-district will elect a neighborhood Assembly member or Senator who will have a vote on all legislation. For work that has to be done in Sacramento, each group of one hundred sub-districts will select a representative to sit on a working committee.

Citizen Legislators

Under the Neighborhood Legislature system, ordinary citizens can successfully run for office without the need for hundreds of thousands of dollars in political contributions, large campaign budgets, or mass political advertising. Special interest money for elections will disappear. Candidates will no longer have to be political insiders to have a chance at victory nor will they have to give up their entire lives or beg for money from friends or cronies. Campaigns will be true grassroots efforts dependent on genuine support from local residents. For the first time, everyday Californians have the opportunity to become legislators.

Ready for Reform?

You have a chance to become part of our grassroots movement to reform California. If you're ready to get involved, start by signing up for one of the roles on our website at www.neighborhoodlegislature.com.

Supporter – Sign up for newsletter, like Facebook page, tell friends, or make contribution.

Neighborhood Leader – Volunteer to walk your precinct, tell your neighbors, and become a signature gatherer.

Candidate – Interested in running as a candidate for the Neighborhood Legislature, sign up.

Recent Media Coverage

Posted on December 27, 2013 • 0 Comments

Potential Ballot Measure, Which Likely Faces Long Odds, Would Alter State Constitution and Vastly Expand Legislature

Published in The Wall Street Journal

On Dec 27, 2013

John H. Cox has a vision for making California's government more responsive and less beholden to special interests. All it would take, he says, is increasing the number of elected representatives nearly one hundredfold.

An attorney, real-estate executive and sometime political candidate, Mr. Cox hopes to take his idea directly to the voters, employing California's ballot-measure process and bypassing the legislature he hopes to reform. His proposal, aimed for next November's ballot, calls for massively expanding the legislature by splitting the state's political districts into hundreds of smaller, neighborhood-size ones. Instead of 120 legislators, voters would elect nearly 12,000.

Doing so, Mr. Cox says, would restore grass-roots democracy and help prevent what he considers the too-powerful influence of special interests.

"If this passes, this would be the greatest transfer of power since 1776, because what it means is that special-interest money won't control the state legislature," Mr. Cox said in an interview. "It will be real people in the neighborhoods."

A wholesale remaking of government in the most populous U.S. state may seem a pipe dream, but Mr. Cox said he already has spent about \$500,000 of his own money and was ready to dole out "whatever it takes" to get the "Neighborhood Legislature Reform Act" in front of voters. If he succeeds and the measure passes, the state constitution would be changed and the plan would take effect, barring any court challenges.

His first hurdle: Qualifying the measure. Last week California's Secretary of State allowed him to begin gathering signatures. He must get at least 807,615 valid signatures—or 8% of the votes cast for governor at the most recent election—from registered voters by May 19. That alone could cost \$2 million to \$3 million, said political consultants in the state.

His plan also could be one of several ballot measures competing for voters' attention next fall. Currently there are 20 referendums and initiatives in the signature-collection process, while one referendum is past that stage and awaiting verification.

Corey Cook, a political-science professor at the University of San Francisco, said such a measure likely would have a hard time passing, as complex political overhaul measures rarely do well at the ballot box.

California, with 38 million residents, has the largest legislative districts in the country. With an average population of 930,000, the Senate districts are larger than the average U.S.

congressional district. The average campaign for a Senate seat costs about \$1 million. Mr. Cox's proposal would shrink Senate districts to an average of 10,000 people, and Assembly districts would go from 465,000 people to 5,000.

Mr. Cox's plan doesn't require all 12,000 lawmakers elected by the new districts to meet in Sacramento. Instead, the districts would form "working committees" that mirror the size and geography of existing legislative areas, numbering 80 seats in the Assembly and 40 in the Senate.

The committees would caucus and elect a member from their ranks to represent them in the state capital. Final approval of any law, however, would be subject to the vote—most likely by the Internet, according to Mr. Cox—of all the legislators from the neighborhood districts.

Mr. Cox's measure would also cut costs, he said. Most California lawmakers now earn just over \$95,000. His plan would pay each legislator \$1,000 annually, plus certain expenses. Those appointed to represent the committees would earn more. Mr. Cox's plan would also cut spending by the legislature on staff and other costs in half. Such changes would save the state \$130 million a year, according to a preliminary state analysis, though the cost of local elections could increase initially.

Mr. Cox, originally from Illinois and a resident of the community of Rancho Santa Fe in the San Diego area, is president of Equity Property Management and heads his own law firm, Cox, Oakes & Associates. He was briefly a candidate for the 2008 Republican presidential nomination.

Mr. Cox said he came up with the plan after observing the political process in New Hampshire. The state of 1.32 million residents elects a part-time assembly of 424 members, or one representative for every 3,100 people. There, he said, he witnessed impassioned speeches by neighbors and a more grass-roots approach to politics.

The leaders of both Democratic-controlled houses of the California legislature, State Senate President Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, and Assembly Speaker John Pérez, declined to comment for this article.

Kathy Feng, executive director of California Common Cause, a nonprofit organization that advocates for government reform, declined to take a position on the plan, but said "there are certainly going to be some real logistical concerns that people are going to have about how you manage a citizen legislature of several thousand people," she said.

Mr. Cook, the political-science professor, said the plan could make governing a nightmare. "That is a recipe for nothing ever getting passed ever," he said. "Even in a city like San Francisco it is often difficult to get citywide consensus when you have smaller districts, and so imagine getting state consensus...when people represent such small constituencies."

INITIATIVE MEASURE TO BE SUBMITTED TO VOTERS

SECTION 1. DECLARATION OF FINDINGS

- A. Our state Legislature does not serve the interests of the citizens. The Legislature only serves the special interests. Prior attempts at reform have all failed.
- B. The problem is that our Legislative districts are too big and cost taxpayers too much money. Our Legislators represent too many constituents. The average assembly district in the other 49 states has approximately 50,000 citizens. The average assembly district in California is nearly 10 times larger – approaching nearly 500,000 citizens.
- C. It is no wonder that most citizens have never even met their legislative representative, much less been asked their opinion on an important policy issue. We should not be surprised that our Legislators are not our neighbors and do not share our concerns about the future.
- D. The primary concern of our current Legislature is staying in office as long as possible and appeasing the special interests that donate to their campaigns that keep them in office.
- E. Our system of representative government requires a citizen Legislature.

SECTION 2. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

- A. The size of legislative districts must be reduced so that Legislators represent the interests of their neighbors and not the special interests.
- B. At the same time, the Legislature must function effectively and cost taxpayers less money. Procedures must be enacted to provide for the effective administration of legislative business and to protect taxpayers.
- C. Therefore, the people hereby enact "The Neighborhood Legislature Reform Act."

SECTION 3. THE NEIGHBORHOOD LEGISLATURE REFORM ACT

Section 1, 2, 6, and 7.5 of Article IV are hereby amended, section 9.5 of Article IV is hereby added to the California Constitution to read as follows (additions shown in underline type and deletions shown in strikeout type):

Article IV

Sec. 1. The legislative power of this State is vested in the California Legislature which consists of neighborhood representatives elected to the Senate and Assembly, but the people reserve to themselves the powers of initiative and referendum.

Sec. 2. (a) (1) The Senate shall be comprised of representatives from neighborhood districts, as provided in section 6. has a membership of 40 Senators shall be elected for 4-year terms, half 20 to begin every 2 years.

(2) The Assembly shall be comprised of representatives from neighborhood districts, as provided in section 6. Assembly members shall be has a membership of 80 members elected for 2-year terms.

(3) The terms of a Senator or a Member of the Assembly shall commence on the first Monday in December next following her or his election.

(4) During her or his lifetime a person may serve no more than 12 years in the Senate, the Assembly, or both, in any combination of terms. This subdivision shall apply only to those Members of the Senate or the Assembly who are first elected to the Legislature after the effective date of this subdivision and who have not previously served in the Senate or Assembly. Members of the Senate or Assembly who were elected before the effective date of this subdivision may serve only the number of terms allowed at the time of the last election before the effective date of this subdivision.

(b) Election of members of the Assembly shall be on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November of even-numbered years unless otherwise prescribed by the Legislature. Senators shall be elected at the same time and places as members of the Assembly.

(c) A person is ineligible to be a member of the Legislature unless the person is an elector and has been is a resident of the legislative neighborhood district for one year, and a citizen of the United States and a resident of California for 3 years, immediately preceding the election, and service of the full term of office to which the person is seeking to be elected would not exceed the maximum years of service permitted by subdivision (a) of this section.

(d) When a vacancy occurs in the Legislature the Governor immediately shall call an election to fill the vacancy.

(e) The Senate Working Committee shall be comprised of 40 Senate members, chosen from among the neighborhood representatives elected within each Senatorial District. The Assembly Working Committee shall be comprised of 80 Assembly members chosen from among the neighborhood representatives elected within each Assembly District. One Member of the Working Committee shall be elected by majority vote of the neighborhood representatives from each Senatorial and Assembly District in an open meeting held pursuant to section 3(a). When a vacancy occurs in a Working Committee, the vacancy shall be filled by the neighborhood representatives from a Senatorial or Assembly District, as appropriate. The Senate and Assembly may remove a member of their respective Working Committee upon a rollcall vote entered into the journal, two thirds of the membership of the house concurring.

Sec. 3. (a) The Legislature shall convene in regular session at noon on the first Monday in December of each even-numbered year for the purpose of choosing which neighborhood representatives will serve in the Working Committees of and each house, and each Working Committee shall immediately organize. Each session of the Legislature shall adjourn sine die by operation of the Constitution at midnight on November 30 of the following even-numbered year.

(b) On extraordinary occasions the Governor by proclamation may cause the Legislature or both Working Committees to assemble in special session. When so assembled it has power to legislate only on subjects specified in the proclamation but may provide for expenses and other matters incidental to the session.

(c) The Senate or Assembly may convene upon petition signed by twenty-five percent (25%) of the members for the purpose of removing a member of their respective Working Committee pursuant to section 2(e), or to provide direction or input to their respective Working Committee regarding any legislative matter.

(d) Except as provided in section 9.5, all legislative power provided for in this Article shall be exercised by the Senate and Assembly Working Committees and any reference to "Senate," "Assembly," "Legislature," or "house," herein means the Senate and Assembly Working Committees.

(e) The provisions of section 4(a), 4.5, 5, 13 and 15, including the provisions regarding ethics, and conflicts of interest, shall apply to all members of the Legislature, including the Senate and Assembly Working Committees.

(f) Notwithstanding section 8 of Article III, the compensation for each Senator and Assembly member shall be one thousand dollars (\$1,000) per year, however, compensation for a member of the Senate and Assembly Working Committees shall be fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) per year. Notwithstanding section 4(b), neighborhood representatives shall be reimbursed for his or her actual travel expense attending legislative sessions and members of the Senate and Assembly Working Committee shall be reimbursed his or her actual travel and living expenses, not to exceed two hundred dollars (\$200) per day. The Citizens Compensation Commission may adjust the salary and per diem of members based on the Consumer Price Index for California.

Sec. 6. For the purpose of choosing members of the Legislature, the State shall be divided into 40 Senatorial and 80 Assembly districts to be called Senatorial and Assembly Districts. Each Senatorial district shall be further divided into neighborhood districts of populations of approximately 10,000 persons, as nearly equal as is practical. choose one Senator and each Each Assembly district shall be further divided into neighborhood districts of populations of approximately 5,000 persons, as nearly equal as is practical. choose one member of the Assembly.

Boundary lines for Senatorial, Assembly, and neighborhood districts shall be drawn pursuant to Article XXI.

Sec. 7.5. In the fiscal year immediately following the adoption of the Neighborhood Legislature Reform Act this Act, the total aggregate expenditures of the Legislature for the compensation of members and employees of, and the operating expenses and equipment for, the Legislature may not exceed an amount equal to nine hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$950,000) per member for that fiscal year or 80 fifty (50%) percent of the amount of money expended for those purposes in the preceding fiscal year, whichever is less. For each fiscal year thereafter, the total aggregate expenditures may not exceed an amount equal to that expended for those purposes in the preceding fiscal year, adjusted and compounded by an amount equal to the percentage increase in the appropriations limit for the state established pursuant to Article XIII B.

Sec. 9.5. Notwithstanding any other provision of this Constitution, except for urgency bills pursuant to section 8(d), a bill, including the budget bill, passed by both the Senate and Assembly Working Committee's shall not be presented to the Governor unless the bill has first been presented to and approved by each house of the whole Legislature by the appropriate vote required for enactment of the bill. No amendment to a bill so presented may be offered, considered, or approved by either house of the whole Legislature. The whole Legislature may be convened for this purpose, or to override a veto pursuant to section 10, upon at least ten (10) days notice at any time by a joint resolution passed by both Working Committees.

SECTION 4. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Act shall go into effect immediately upon its adoption by the voters and shall become operative as follows:

(a) Within 6 months, the Citizens Redistricting Commission shall draw boundary lines for neighborhood districts based on the Senatorial and Assembly Districts approved in 2011.

(b) Elections shall be conducted and the Legislature convened pursuant to this Act in 2016. Any Senator serving an unexpired term in 2016 shall be deemed the neighborhood representative for the neighborhood district in which he or she resides without an election, and shall be exempt from any reduction in compensation pursuant to section 3(f) for the remainder of the unexpired term. If two or more Senators reside in the same neighborhood district, the Citizens Redistricting Commission shall assign each Senator to represent a neighborhood district nearest to his or her residence for the remainder of the term, without an election.

SECTION 5. SEVERABILITY/CONFLICTING MEASURES/ STANDING

(a) If any part of this measure or the application to any person or circumstance is held invalid, the invalidity shall not affect other

provisions or applications which can reasonably be given effect without the invalid provision or application.

(b) This measure is intended to be comprehensive. It is the intent of the People that in the event this measure or measures relating to the same subject shall appear on the same statewide election ballot, the provisions of the other measure or measures shall be deemed to be in conflict with this measure. In the event that this measure receives a greater number of affirmative votes, the provisions of this measure shall prevail in their entirety, and all provisions of the other measure or measures shall be null and void.

(c) The people of the State of California declare that the proponent of this Act has a direct and personal stake in defending this Act and grant formal authority to the proponent to defend this Act in any legal proceeding, either by intervening in such legal proceeding, or by defending the Act on behalf of the people and the State in the event that the State declines to defend the Act or declines to appeal an adverse judgment against the Act.

(d) In the event that the proponent is defending this Act in a legal proceeding because the State has declined to defend it or to appeal an adverse judgment against it, the proponent shall:

- (1) act as an agent of the people and the State;
- (2) be subject to all ethical, legal, and fiduciary duties applicable to such parties in such legal proceedings;
- (3) take and be subject to the Oath of Office prescribed by Article XX, section 3 of the California Constitution for the limited purpose of acting on behalf of the people and the State in such legal proceeding; and
- (4) be entitled to recover reasonable legal fees and related costs from the State.

Reference Email Attachment: Understanding the Neighborhood Legislature – Terms and Arguments

The Rotations

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