

Question 1—Budget Dilemma

Assemblyman Berryhill had several concerns related to the Governor's package of budget proposals. These concerns are the following. (a) Realignment of services and funding are a major problem. Specifically Redevelopment agencies have had a very positive impact for valley cities. Changes in this would not be in the valley's best interest. Assemblyman Berryhill believes this issue is not off the table in the budget negotiations; (b) Elimination of enterprise zones for businesses is not a way to attract and keep businesses in California. We cannot entice businesses to our state and then pull enterprise zones out from under them; (c) Realignment of prisoner housing in which low level offenders (not well-defined) would be released to local county or city jails for housing. This realignment would heavily impact county costs for which there is no funding. (d) The tax extensions are not designed to increase the number of jobs nor provide for higher wages. They will not improve the economy in the long term.

Assemblyman Berryhill believes a spending cap is needed and that a bipartisan commission needs to be part of the budget resolution process.

Question 2--Fixing the Budget Process

Assemblyman Berryhill would like to see a 2 year budget process implemented in California. In a 2 year legislative session, the first year should be dedicated to passing a 2 year budget, and the second year should be for legislation. He stated that he feels the current year to year system is inefficient and prohibits legislators from approaching problems in depth, since they must deal with budget issues as well as hundreds of proposed bills each year. He said he thought a bill had been written to implement a two year process, but it had died in committee. Mr. Berryhill also feels that term limits are too strict, and don't give legislators enough time to build relationships and trust between members that would foster compromise and working together. He thinks the optimum amount of time each legislator should have is 10 years in each house. He stated he thought that an initiative increasing term limits would be on the ballot soon, and that he would probably support it, even though the amount of increased time is not as much as he'd like to see. He stated any increase in term limits should not apply to current legislators, but only to those elected once the initiative passes.

Question 3—(Local question) Do you see any weaknesses in the “beneficiary pays” principle as it applies to construction, operation, and maintenance of water storage and transfer infrastructure? Describe what you consider the ideal financing strategy for water resources management including the activities of the Department of Water Resources.

Assemblyman Berryhill acknowledged that the California water issue was very complex with numerous competing factors and interests. He agreed that the user or beneficiary of water should pay the costs of that infrastructure. However he notes that if there are taxpayer subsidies as part of the funding, then those who are benefiting from the water project should not have the legal ability to sell those water rights and gain monetarily from the sale.

Question 4--Major Issues the Legislature Should Address in 2011

Assemblyman Berryhill is concerned that there are too many conflicting regulations in our state. He cited a specific case in which a national and state regulation relating to truck drivers are in direct conflict. He also cited a proposed regulation relating to styrofoam containers for school lunches that would be prohibitively expensive to implement. He feels we need to institute a fair regulation process

based on science and economic impact. It should include a cross-referencing process and a requirement that each new regulation be signed off by the governor.

Another issue of concern to Assemblyman Berryhill is what he called the underground economy. He defined this as workers who take payment “under the table” in order to hide their income from the state and avoid paying taxes. He says this exists primarily in the construction and landscaping business, and represents a large amount of lost tax revenue. He has introduced AB 397, co-authored by Assemblyman Bill Monning (D., Santa Cruz, Monterey) to address this problem.

Also of concern to Mr. Berryhill are issues relating to water, and particularly the Delta. He is the author of AB 627, which would mandate a study of the “Delta Corridors” plan by DWR and the California Dept. of Fish and Game. He is also a co-author of SB 200 along with Sen. Lois Wolk (D., Stockton, Davis), which imposes requirements on DWR in connection with preparation of the Bay Delta Conservation Plan.

Question 5—Advocacy Groups

Assemblyman Berryhill stated that the groups or individuals he particularly listens to are groups in the education community such as the Association of California School Administrators and the California Teachers Association. He also personally contacts those in the education community and in top level city governance such as school superintendents and city mayors or managers whom he personally knows to be informed and knowledgeable. He also listens most frequently to his constituents who come to him with concerns, problems, ideas, proposals. He is not averse to sponsoring a Bill in the Assembly on issues he believes are important to address after listening to key people.