



# A REPORT TO THE PEOPLE



**SENATOR  
ROBERT J. LAGOMARSINO**

## 1968 SESSION A SUCCESS

The 1968 session of the State Legislature, although very partisan, was nonetheless successful in certain respects. Looking back, we can cite a tough new anti-smog law, increased flexibility for school districts, an innovative job-creation package involving private enterprise, and several significant conservation measures as matters which will benefit Californians for many years to come. I was proud to have played a part in the formulation of these programs, and only wish that partisan differences had not prevented the resolution of many other problems which we still face.

Overall, there were 4,732 measures introduced into the Legislature in 1968, including over 3,300 bills, or proposed new laws. Of these, 1,482, or about 44% were eventually signed by the Governor. My own legislative program was fairly successful. At session's end, 31 of the 51 bills I introduced had been signed into law. This was the third best total in the Legislature. Five other of my bills were assigned for interim study.

The 24th District (Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties) fared well during the year, with several new public works projects approved and plans laid for several others. These included a fishing pier at Port Hueneme, pier and harbor improvements at Ventura and several significant state beach and park additions in both counties, and millions of dollars in state funds to the cities and counties. In addition, the groundwork was laid for acquisition of the Santa Barbara Presidio and a state college site for Ventura County, for the importation of Feather River water into the northern end of the district, and for many new highway projects. For the first time in history, the district obtained a seat on the State Highway Commission.

## TAX CRISIS UNRESOLVED

There were, however, some big disappointments during the year. Once again the Legislature failed to come up with an overhaul of our outmoded and inequitable state tax system. Only after it had been put 'under the gun,' so to speak, by Proposition 9, did the Legislature even agree to put Proposition 1-A on the ballot. This measure, which was approved by the voters, will entitle every California homeowner to a \$70 check from the state next spring, but even so it is only a temporary treatment, and not a cure.

There must be more property tax relief. Real tax relief will come only when the government more effectively controls its expenditures. The governor's tax advisory commission is due to report in January with recommendations for reforms in our tax structure. It is hoped the proposal will not meet the same fate as the governor's request for an income tax cut did earlier this year.

Even with its shortcomings, there are several good features in Proposition 1-A. The first is that it will be totally financed from already existing revenues; it will not entail any new taxes. Another is that it eliminates the inequitable personal property tax. The measure also starts a phase-out of the state inventory tax, which has caused a significant loss of commerce to California businessmen.

## CRIME FIGHT HAMPERED

Several other measures sought by the governor and others failed to receive favorable action. My own anti-obscenity bill, which would have made it easier to prosecute pornographers who sell their wares to minors, died because of partisan opposition. A package of bills, which I strongly supported, aimed at making state college officials responsible for disorders on their own campuses, met a similar fate. The battle against drugs seemed impossible of solution.

## PROSPECTS GOOD FOR NEXT YEAR

There are two reasons why I feel we will have more success in dealing with these problems next year. One is the decline in partisanship which follows a general election. Many of the accomplishments of the 1968 session were made possible only because partisan differences were temporarily put aside. And many of the failures were due less to the merits or demerits of particular bills than to infighting involved in the election campaigns. I think we will see less of this next year as party leaders concentrate less on their own records and more on constructive lawmaking.

The second reason is the change in the leadership of the Assembly where Republicans took the edge, 41-39, for the first time in a decade. Although this is a razor-thin advantage it will lead to a change in the composition of some key committees. This can often spell the difference between success and failure for legislation. For example, many of my anti-smut bills have been killed in the past in the Democrat-controlled Assembly Criminal Procedure Committee.

## PUBLIC SUPPORT NECESSARY

One of the areas where the Legislature will need some support will be the problem of campus disorders. Unless administrators of the university and state colleges bring order to the campuses, the Legislature will take appropriate steps to do so. In the name of 'academic freedom,' persons intent on destroying everything the university and society stand for have fostered violence and anarchy. We must have order if we are to maintain true academic freedom, and only if the people -- the taxpayers -- let their wishes be known directly to those responsible will we be able to achieve that order.

This year, I intend to introduce, for the fourth time, my bill to prevent the distribution of obscene material to children. We will also need to look at the problem of school financing from the state level, at stricter controls over Medi-Cal and welfare programs to stem both provider and recipient fraud, and at rapid transit finance methods.

It will be a tough year, but it holds great promise. With hard work, bi-partisan cooperation and support from the people, we can succeed.

