



By Christopher Shelton

Party Morale - Translated into Voting Booth Turn out - Could Decide Between an Electoral Nightmare and Sweet Dreams For The GOP

The recurring California Republican nightmare question that is keeping GOP pundits awake nights: is 1996 turning into a replay of the 1992 general election? November of 1992 saw the most unfortunate combination of a state openly deserted by the Bush/Quayle campaign, morale (and hence turn out) among the GOP rank and file at rock bottom, and a Democrat Party and electorate energized almost to the point of triumphalism (if such a religious allusion isn't completely inappropriate to use in the same sentence as California Democrats). The resulting landslide cost the GOP dearly in congressional and legislative contests.

Republicans keep saying it can't happen again with all the fervor of a group of kids who *know* they saw ghosts in the cemetery last Halloween and would just as soon not have to take that route home again. Democrats know it is a consummation devoutly to be wished, and point to stray omens here and there as harbingers every bit as reliable as the swallows in Capistrano indicating the dawn of the feast of St. Joseph.

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Predicting the outcome of elections is perilous duty even a week before the voting, let alone more than a month in advance. Nonetheless, the dictates of editorial deadlines make such prognostication our task, and there are some general outlines that can be seen through the political mists. The good news for Republicans is that a debacle of 1992 proportions is unlikely. The bad news is that just about all of the easy pickin's were nabbed by the GOP in 1994, thereby severely limiting their upside potential this year. This is not to say of course that disaster could not still strike and make '96 a '92 repeat. The Clinton campaign starts with a solid lead of 10 to 12 percent. That will be tough to overcome in the best of circumstances. Any more Dole gaffes such as his nicotine comments could send the presidential race out of reach in California — with all the negative consequences that holds for GOP morale and turn out. However, if statewide turn out is anywhere near historical norms (5 to 10 percent more registered Republicans voting than Democrats), then the political map of California keeps the Dole/Kemp ticket in the hunt for our electoral votes.

The "political map" is simply the reality that Clin-

Democrat challenge in Pasadena. Hoge is a conservative in the H.L. Richardson "in your face" tradition. This, combined with a constant drumbeat of negative stories from his local media, put this district at risk of falling to a heavily-financed Democrat effort.

The Assembly district centered in Glendale is currently held by Republican Jim Rogan, the GOP nominee for the Moorehead congressional seat. The 1991 re-districting stretched this formerly solid conservative seat into the Hollywood and Echo Park portions of the city of Los Angeles. Heavily Democrat and heavily voting, these additions combine with a growing Latino population in the Glendale portion to make the district exceptionally vulnerable. The Republicans had a factious primary in which conservative division allowed the victory of a candidate who, if not a Pete Wilson certified moderate, is still a *far* cry from the rock-ribbed conservative leadership this district was used to receiving from Rogan, Pat Nolan, and Mike Antonovich. The GOP nominee, Peter Geranios, has worked hard with apparent success to mend fences — a must-win district for both parties.

There are a half-dozen other competitive Assembly races around the state, but if the GOP retains the Hoge and Geranios districts, and replaces Setencich with Robert Prenter, the odds are strong that Speaker Pringle will be sitting snugly atop a Republican majority in the Assembly numbering 42 or 43 seats. On the other hand, Democrat victories in the above mentioned races would probably exactly reverse those numbers, giving them a 42 or 43 seat majority. That being the case, the most likely outcome for California's congressional and legislative elections is that millions of dollars will be spent and not a whole lot will change. A Dole/Kemp collapse would of course change those dynamics. But now, it appears that if the national ticket stays competitive, the state GOP could have reason to smile the morning after the election.

☆ ☆ ☆ **Good Bye Pete** ☆ ☆ ☆

AN INTERESTED observer of all these battles will be P.



Barlow Wilson. However, Wilson's stunningly inept performance in the weeks leading up to the Republican National Convention has finally made him the irrelevant man. Two months ago, Wilson stood to be a re-invigorated GOP powerhouse if the Republicans made legislative gains. Whether Dole/Kemp won or lost, Wilson appeared to be well-positioned to run in 2000 at the end of this current term, or wait for 2004 while returning to the U.S. Senate.

His incredibly ham-handed attempts to bash Dole with the abortion issue — keeping it alive with regular Dole-goading finterviews and network TV appearances long, *long* after the issue had been settled — eviscerated support for Wilson across all GOP spectrums. Dole is furious. Moderate Republicans who favor legal abortion but have other issues of importance are embarrassed. Conservatives are rejoicing that Wilson has finally — with his own actions — proven himself to be exactly what they've said he was for years. Republican leaders of all stripes wonder at the governor's artless handling of the matter. George Gorton must have been back in Russia, for the Wilson political operation was clearly without a leader — and without a clue — as the convention approached.

Wilson's fall from grace was inadvertently captured in a picture of Jack Kemp addressing the California delegation. Kemp, working himself up into the usual froth, stopped in mid-speech to take off his coat. As he turned from the podium, the first person he saw was Wilson. Kemp handed over — and Wilson dutifully accepted — his coat. And there was a brash, energetic Jack Kemp speaking as a grim and dour Wilson literally held his coat.

Wilson can now probably be ruled out as a contender for 2000 if Dole/Kemp lose. He certainly still has a good shot at returning to the Senate, but veteran Wilson watchers wonder if he'd be happy there as a back bencher to the solidly-entrenched conservative leadership. The true reasons for Wilson's self-destruction as a national GOP force have pros scratching their heads — and California conservatives reaching for the champagne.

CPR



The California Dream

by Terry Eastland

Continued from CPR's July/August issue. Excerpts from Part I:

An effort to recover the original intent of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, after which it is named, the California Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI) would amend the state constitution on these terms: "The state shall not discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting." CCRI is the creation of two professors new to grassroots political activism — Tom Wood, executive director of the California Association of Scholars and a former philosophy professor, and Glynn Custred, a professor of anthropology at California State University, Hayward.

Under the California Constitution, two-thirds of both houses of the Legislature may propose an amendment, and in August 1994, Republican lawmakers in the state Assembly pushed an early version of CCRI. But with Democrats in control of both houses, and the proposed amendment drawing vigorous opposition from civil rights leaders and public employee unions, it died after a three-hour hearing. Fortunately, the state constitution also provides a process by which the people themselves may propose an amendment by referendum — the strategy Wood and Custred finally decided to pursue. "The only way," says Custred, "was to take it to the people."

Part II

The prospect of California's voting on CCRI in 1996 caught the attention of Republican presidential aspirants, including Governor Wilson, who endorsed CCRI early in 1995 and then moved on several fronts to end affirmative action. To begin with, Wilson issued an executive order eliminating all state preferential treatment requirements lacking authorization in state or federal law. In other words, he ended discretionary employment preferences, such as those adopted by the water resources and the forestry and fire protection departments under which a certain percentage of jobs were reserved for women and minorities only. The executive order also sought to conform state employment practices to the Supreme Court's *Croson* decision by requiring that statutorily required hiring goals be based on the percentages of minorities in the qualified labor pool, not the percentages in the work force generally. And the order eliminated one of the subtle pressures of the affirmative action culture — a requirement that a hiring supervisor explain in writing why a non-affirmative action candidate was hired if an "under-represented" candidate was in the hiring pool.

Wilson also filed suit challenging the constitutionality of five state laws that encourage or require preferential treatment, all of which concern employment and contracting. When measured against the Supreme Court's 1989 *Croson* decision, these statutes had obvious infirmities. The laws requiring set-asides for minorities in contracting, for example, contained no findings of actual discrimination, as *Croson* demands. What is politically notable is that the Legislature made little effort to bring these wayward statutes into con-

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