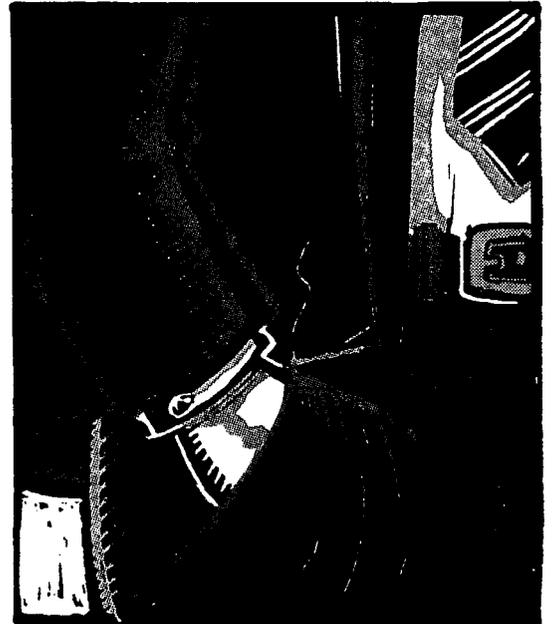
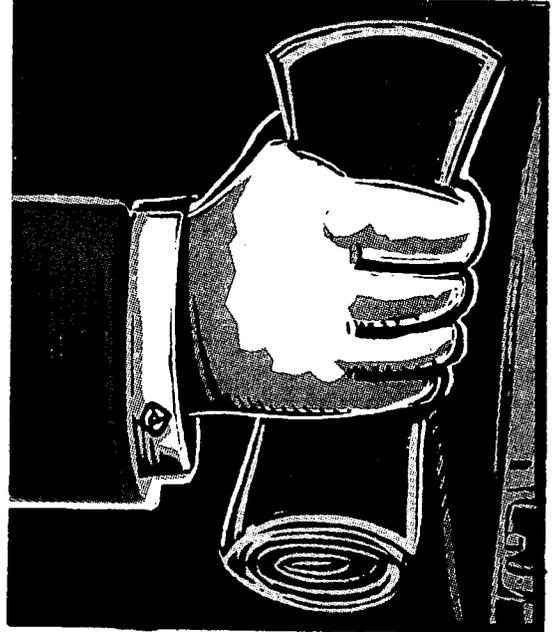
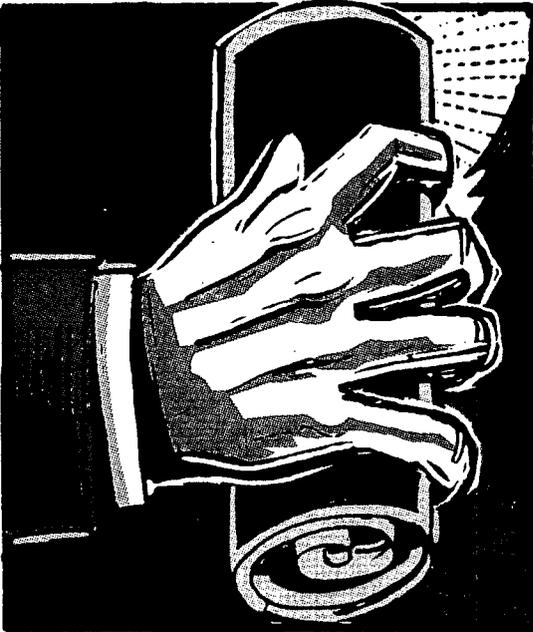


by Peter Kuper



THE BIG PICTURE

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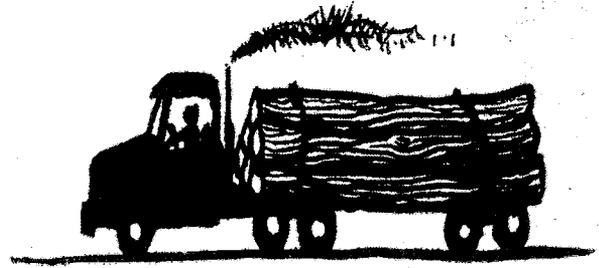
KUPER

Proposition 212, a more stringent reform spearheaded by the California Public Interest Research Group (CalPIRG) that included \$100 contribution limits.

In its campaign to boost Prop 208, Common Cause attacked the CalPIRG initiative as too radical. "They spent a lot of time attacking our organization," says Adam Ruben of the Yes on 212 campaign. "I don't think that helped clarify the issue for voters. But we are very pleased that there is so much support for campaign finance reform, and we hope that 208 will get some of the money out of the system." But Ruben points to a number of serious problems with campaign financing that 208 doesn't address. "It doesn't ban campaign contributions from corporations," he says. "Nor does it deal with the fact that 80 percent of campaign funds in California comes from out of the district."

Ruben says that CalPIRG plans to work with PIRG affiliates across the country on a national campaign to pass a constitutional amendment stipulating that campaign contributions do not equal free speech.

—Joel Bleifuss



Clearcutting ban gets the ax in Maine

A pioneering initiative to ban clearcutting in Maine failed, thanks largely to record-breaking spending on a rival proposition backed by the timber industry. Thirty percent of Maine voters supported the "Ban Clearcutting" initiative, while 47 percent backed the much weaker "Compact for Maine's Forests" and 23 percent voted for "None of the Above." Under Maine law, because the Compact gained the most votes but not a majority, it will be voted on again.

Jonathan Carter, a forestry scientist and former Maine Green Party gubernatorial candidate who led the Ban Clearcutting campaign, ascribes the loss to \$6 million in spending for the Compact. If the industry-supported measure had not been on the ballot, he argues, "we would have won this hands-down." Nonetheless, given that both measures advertised some limits on industrial forestry in Maine, Carter claims a moral victory. "We got a mandate from the people: They don't want the forests to be destroyed," Carter says.

Carter's group plans to oppose the Compact when it comes up for a vote again in the next statewide election, slated for June 1998. While the Compact reduces the maximum legal size of a clearcut from 250 to 75 acres, Carter claims it effectively does nothing, since the current average clearcut in Maine is 33 acres.

The Compact was the result of a deal Independent Gov. Angus King brokered between the timber industry and several mainstream environmental groups in the state. Opponents of the clearcutting ban viewed it as "much too stringent," says Vic Berardelli, spokesperson for the Compact campaign. Supporters of the Compact pointed to a state study showing that the clearcutting ban would cut the timber harvest in northern Maine by 60 percent, resulting in the loss of 15,600 jobs and a loss of \$3.2 billion to Maine's economy. Even companies that only selectively cut their forests would have been affected, which is why they threw their support behind the Compact, Berardelli says.

Calling the state study "disingenuous," Carter claims that the ban would add 1 percent at most to the cost of finished products. "If timber companies can't meet the minimum stan-



Mixed result for Everglades

The Save Our Everglades Coalition (SOEC) put three constitutional amendments on the Florida ballot aimed at forcing the sugar industry to pay for much of the estimated \$1 billion cleanup of the Everglades (see "A sweet deal for the sugar industry," October 14). The sugar industry spent an estimated \$35 million to defeat Amendment 4, which fell just short with 46 percent of the vote. The amendment would have levied a penny-per-pound fee on raw sugar production and could have raised \$900 million over 25 years to pay for cleanup. (Voters approved another amendment, heavily sponsored by the sugar industry, that requires a two-thirds majority to pass future tax amendments.)

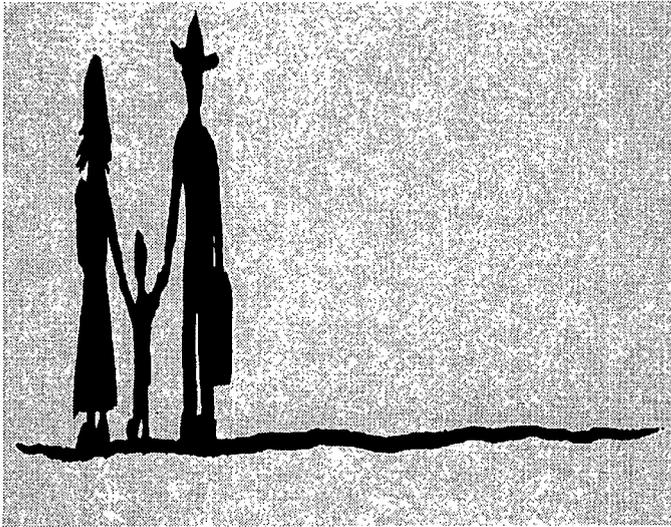
Nonetheless, Amendment 5, which holds polluters financially responsible for costs incurred as a result of their pollution, passed with 68 percent of the vote. Amendment 6, which sets up a trust fund for any money earmarked for Everglades cleanup and restoration, also passed with 57 percent of the vote.

Following the election, SOEC's Joe Garcia remained optimistic about the precedent-setting power of Amendment 5, the first constitutional amendment in any state to require polluters to pay for the damage they cause. In future battles in the Florida legislature and the courts, says Garcia, "Amendment 5 will be our stealth missile."

—Gary Barlow

dards in our bill," he says, "they're not doing good work."

The Ban Clearcutting campaign plans to remain active, and is considering another initiative. "You don't have to win to influence the way things come out," Carter says. "We're stronger than we were nine months ago. We are not going away."
—Patrick Mazza



Anti-immigrant propositions die early

When California voters passed Proposition 187 two years ago by a decisive 59-41 percent margin, the movement to take away immigrant rights at the ballot box appeared to be an unstoppable juggernaut.

President Clinton and the 104th Congress took up the anti-immigrant drumbeat, boosting the size of the Border Patrol, passing tough national immigration legislation, and cutting off welfare benefits to legal immigrants. But this year immigrant scapegoating by means of the ballot proved to have shorter legs. Anti-immigrant forces in Oregon, Florida and Arizona failed to gather enough signatures to qualify their Prop 187-like initiatives for the November ballot. The proposed measures ranged from barring undocumented immigrants from social services and public schools, to requiring proof of citizenship to get a driver's license, to granting a business the right to sue another business if employment of undocumented workers causes unfair competition.

Unlike California Gov. Pete Wilson, who made support for Prop 187 a key plank of his '94 re-election campaign, most mainstream politicians were wary of the 187 copycat initiatives this year. Govs. Fife Symington in Arizona and Lawton Chiles in Florida publicly declared their opposition to the measures. Only Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber did not come out for or against his state's anti-immigrant initiatives.

Perhaps more decisive, however, was the greater degree of organization and unity among immigrant rights advocates. In

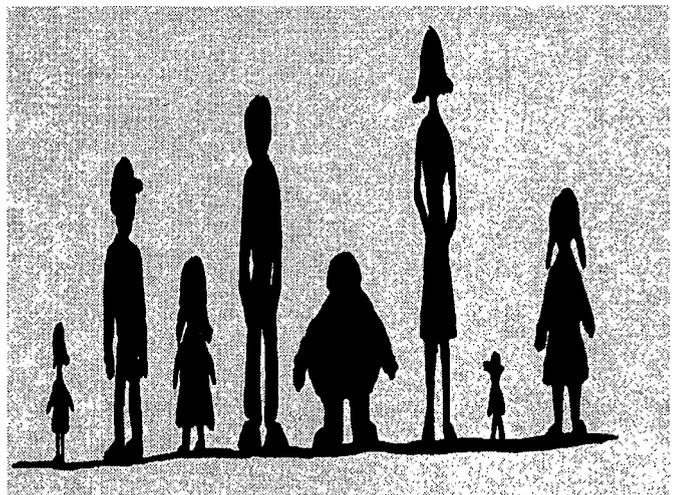
California, those who opposed Prop 187 were caught off-guard by the groundswell of popular support for the initiative, and remained splintered over strategy up to election day. By contrast, immigrant rights forces this year quickly organized broad grassroots campaigns against the propositions.

While immigrant rights advocates won this round, the fight is not yet over. Anti-immigrant groups vow to get their measures on the 1998 ballots in all three states. Meanwhile, Causa '96 in Oregon and the Committee for Dignity and Justice in Florida plan to fight the national immigration legislation at the state level and launch campaigns to register Latino voters.
—Deidre McFadyen

PR goes down in Frisco

San Franciscans voted 57-43 percent against adopting a proportional representation (PR) system to elect the city's Board of Supervisors (see "Voting matters," October 14). The proportional representation ballot measure, Proposition H, failed despite a string of big-name endorsements and the editorial support of the *San Francisco Examiner*. At the same time, 56 percent of voters cast ballots for Proposition G, which will replace the current at-large voting system with a district system in the year 2000.

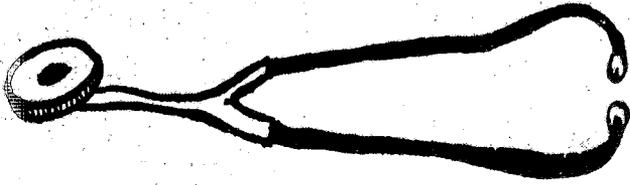
Rob Richie of the Center for Voting and Democracy, a



PR advocacy group in Washington, D.C., that acted as a catalyst for the San Francisco campaign, explains the loss this way: "It was a new idea, San Francisco was pretty big, and we didn't have a big campaign staff." He adds that it didn't help matters that the proposed PR system on the ballot, known as preference voting, is "a little bit complicated." Richie is now looking to the citizens of Cincinnati, who will vote next spring on a package of electoral reforms, one of which is PR.

But not all PR-related election news was bad. The two strongest PR proponents in Congress, Reps. James Clyburn (D-SC) and Cynthia McKinney (D-GA), were re-elected.

—Joel Bleifuss



lem," Cain says. "This election shows us that when President Clinton deals with this issue, he needs to assure people he is not going to increase the level of regulation or increase the costs of health care."

Proponents of Prop 216 have already regrouped and are planning a new campaign to educate patients to protect themselves against the practices of the HMO industry. They are printing up brochures and leaflets that encourage patients to ask if HMOs have imposed gag orders on their physicians or have paid them bonuses for not prescribing expensive tests.

For now, Californians will have to look to the statehouse for HMO reform. But, says Court, "if the legislature does not enact legislation to protect the patient, we will be back at the ballot box in 1998."
—Nina Schuyler

California rejects HMO reform

California voters rejected two initiatives that would have reformed the health maintenance organization (HMO) industry, sending a signal that people are more concerned with the cost of health care than the quality.

Propositions 214 and 216 would have put new restrictions on the HMO industry, prohibiting gag orders on doctors and imposing new taxes on the industry to pay for certain medical services (see "Reining in HMOs," September 2). Similar in many respects but at the same time rivals, both propositions were roundly rejected. Prop 214 attracted 42 percent of the vote and Prop 216 attracted 39 percent.

The initiatives ran aground partly because voters found their similarity "confusing," says Sherry Bebitch Jeffe, a senior associate at the Center for Politics and Economics at the Claremont Graduate School. Moreover, Jeffe adds, "little was done to explain the 'yes' side to people." Six weeks before the election, a Field Poll showed 64 percent of people surveyed said they understood the measures "not too well" or "not at all."

Other factors played a crucial role as well. Opponents of the measures outspent proponents 20-to-1. "The opponents spent \$10 million on TV and radio ads, and we spent a half-million," says Jamie Court, director of Consumers for Quality Care in Santa Monica.

Jeffe says that the measures also suffered from a residue of voter skepticism about large-scale health care reform, which she traces to President Clinton's failed 1993 national health care plan. But Bruce Cain, a political scientist at the University of California-Berkeley, says that the issue is not going to go away. "The numbers of uninsured present a massive prob-

SOURCES

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THE ADVENTURES OF A HUGE MOUTH

By Peter Hannan

It's weird, but I've loved every single solitary thing you've ever done in your career... except for this

worthless piece of crap you came up with once started paying you.

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