

California Constitutional Convention lead proponent, Bay Area Council, addresses 4th District PTA!

On Friday, September 25th, we were thrilled to have Matt Regan – Director of Government Relations for the Bay Area Council (BAC) – as our guest speaker at the 4th District Advocacy Roundtable held at Fountain Valley School District. There were more than 50 attendees present and Matt received a standing ovation at the conclusion of his presentation! This was particularly impressive as, just the day before, he had graciously agreed to step in for BAC President & CEO, Jim Wunderman, due to an emergency he needed to take care of.

The Bay Area Council, which is now part of a broad based coalition called **Repair California**, is the lead proponent calling for a California Constitutional Convention. Repair California includes League of Women Voters, Common Because and New America Foundation among others.

Here are the highlights of what Matt shared:

- Repair California plans to submit ballot language to the Attorney General in mid-to-late October, for the November 2010 ballot.
- The first measure would amend the constitution to allow voters the right to call a Constitutional Convention and the second measure would call the Convention.
- If called, the Convention would gather in Spring 2011, then propose a revised system of governance to be put to the voters in a special election in Fall 2011.
- Social issues are off the table - this Convention will be dedicated to governance only.
- The estimated cost of holding this Convention is approximately \$80 million and that will come out of the General Fund. As a point of reference, every day our state budget is late costs us \$40 million.
- The way delegates would be selected is not yet finalized but Repair California is looking at each county getting one delegate (selected by County Board of Supervisors or County Councils) plus an additional delegate per 250,000 residents.
- The delegates would be chosen in advance of the Convention being convened to allow them enough time to do their work.
- Delegates would be paid about the same as legislators.
- “Daylight is the best disinfectant” for ensuring that special interest groups do not influence this process and there will be criminal penalties for tampering with the process (much like tampering with the jury process).
- The 4- 6 month process of coming up with a rewritten Constitution is envisioned as being highly transparent with meetings being televised and available via the internet. This would also allow for the electorate to become educated, and stay informed, about all that is taking place.
- The thought currently is to have the Legislative Analyst Office (under Mac Taylor’s direction), staff this Convention, as the LAO is a non-partisan body.

Once a Constitution is convened, Repair California would no longer be involved – everything would be turned over to the LAO staff and conventioners.

- Leadership among the delegates would be self selected and the process would be guided by Robert's Rules of Order.
- The goal is to have this operate by consensus with 80 - 90 % of the people involved supporting what is being brought forward.
- Repair California has secured top legal advice in order to avoid this getting caught up in the courts.
- The idea of holding a Convention is polling in the low 70's. 69% of Republicans support this and 71% of Democrats – and that's the same across all age groups.
- In closing, Matt stated that California is headed towards being a third world country and we cannot continue down this path. We have to have serious reforms and even if not everyone is not on board with these ideas, "Don't let perfect be the enemy of good."

Please go to www.RepairCalifornia.org for further information.

By: Kim Anderson
4th District Advocacy Roundtable Chair