

ALERT

CALIFORNIA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

VOLUME 31, NUMBER 3 • JANUARY 28, 2005

Chamber Co-Chaired Group Backs Fundamental Reforms

Winning support for the fundamental political and government system reforms outlined by the Governor is the goal of a newly formed group co-chaired by California Chamber President Allan Zaremberg.

The group, Citizens to Save California, supports reforms in education, the budget process, public pensions and redistricting — all outlined by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger in his State of the State address.

“The status quo is unacceptable in these four major reform areas — and no sane person could argue otherwise,” Zaremberg said. “Over the next month, Citizens to Save California will be looking closely at what specific measures are best to implement this reform agenda.”

The group’s analysis will include a look at both the substance of the various reform proposals and public opinion research. Examining the substance of the initiatives will determine which is most likely to accomplish the Governor’s reform agenda, while the opinion research will help identify which proposals the public is most likely to embrace.

Reform Agenda

In outlining his reforms, the Governor in his State of the State address pointed out, “To continue California’s recovery, this year we must do two things. To

solve the budget’s continuing structural deficit, we must reform the way the government spends its money. And to restore the trust of the people, we must reform the way the government operates.”

The four elements of the reform agenda are:

- budget reform to ensure the state lives within its means;
- public pension reforms to ensure public pensions are fair to recipients and affordable for government. The defined contribution plan, prevalent in the private sector and in the public sector in many other states, is the model Citizens to Save California is examining.
- education reforms to make sure that as many resources as possible get to the classroom and that the law allows charter schools to operate

when local support exists;

● redistricting reforms to remove the inherent conflict of interest when incumbent legislators draw the boundaries for their own districts. Citizens to Save California is looking both at the various approaches to reapportionment reform and the timing of the redistricting.

Business Effort

Joining Zaremberg as co-chair of Citizens to Save California is Joel Fox, *See Chamber: Page 7*

Hearings to Open on Simplifying Meal/ Rest Period Rule

Write Letters, Testify in Person



Public hearings begin February 4 on the California Chamber-supported state proposal providing more flexibility on when employees take a break from work for meals and rest periods.

Employers and employees are strongly encouraged to write letters in support of simplifying the state’s meal and rest period rules so that workers can eat and rest when they are hungry or tired, rather than at a time set by state bureaucrats.

New Rules Provide Flexibility

The proposed permanent regulation provides workers with additional flexibility by clarifying that:

- Workers working less than six hours in a day can mutually agree with their employer to waive the meal period.
- Workers working between six and 10 hours in a day will be able to take their meal period at a time after the sixth hour, as long as the employer ensures that the worker had time available and the opportunity to eat before the end of the sixth hour.
- Workers working between 10 and

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Labor Law Corner

Court, Agencies Back Sexual Harassment Prevention Training for All



Paul Schechter
Employment Law
Counsel

A recent article mentioned that sexual harassment training is required for all employees. I thought that the training requirement applied to supervisors and managers in organizations with more than 50 employees.

The new law does require that

employers with 50 or more employees train supervisors and managers about sexual harassment. While there is no specific law that requires training for employees, in court cases and in information from the administrative agencies that enforce the anti-harassment laws, you will find a reference to training.

McGinnis Case

For example, the McGinnis case states that in a Fair Employment and Housing Act action against an employer for hostile environment sexual harassment by a supervisor, “an employer may plead and prove a defense based on the avoidable consequences doctrine . . . (1) the employer took reasonable steps to prevent and correct workplace sexual harassment; (2) the employee unreasonably failed to use the preventive and corrective measures that the employer provided; and (3) reasonable use of the employer’s procedures would have prevented at least some of the harm that the employee suffered.” (*State Department of Health Services v. Superior Court of Sacramento County*, 31 Cal 4th 1026 (2003).

Equal Employment Commission

The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) enforces the federal anti-discrimination and harassment laws. The EEOC’s “Enforcement Guidance: Vicarious Employer Liability for Unlawful Harassment by Supervisors” states: “An employer should provide every employee with a copy of the policy and complaint procedure, and redistribute it periodically. The policy and complaint procedure should be written in a way that will be understood by all employees in the employer’s workforce. Other measures to ensure effective dissemination of the policy and complaint procedure include posting them in central locations and incorporating them into employee handbooks. If feasible, the employer should provide training to all employees to ensure that they understand their rights and responsibilities.”

In a “preventive action” paragraph, the EEOC’s “Policy Guidance on Current Issues of Sexual Harassment” encourages employers to “take all steps necessary to

prevent sexual harassment from occurring, such as affirmatively raising the subject, expressing strong disapproval, developing appropriate sanctions, informing employees of their right to raise and how to raise the issue of harassment under Title VII, and developing methods to sensitize all concerned.”

The Code of Federal Regulations — 29 C.F.R. §1604.11(f) — states: “An effective preventive program should include an explicit policy against sexual harassment that is clearly and regularly communicated to employees and effectively implemented. The employer should affirmatively raise the subject with all supervisory and non-supervisory employees, express strong disapproval, and explain the sanctions for harassment. The employer should also have a procedure for resolving sexual harassment complaints . . . designed to ‘encourage victims of harassment to come forward’ and should not require a victim to complain first to the offending supervisor. *See Vinson*, 106 S. Ct. at 2408. It should ensure confidentiality as much as possible and provide effective remedies, including protection of victims and witnesses against retaliation.”

Prudent Policy

The prudent employer who wants to avoid claims of sexual harassment and take advantage of the “avoidable consequences doctrine” will provide employees with some form of “training.”

For some employers, that training may be a reminder of the company’s complaint process, sexual harassment policy, and no-retaliation policy. An alternative may be to choose online training, a video or live presentation.

Whatever method of explanation or training that the employer chooses, the employer will want to ensure that employees understand the policy and complaint process, and that they feel comfortable bringing a complaint to the employer’s attention.

The Labor Law Helpline is a service to California Chamber preferred level members and above. For expert explanations of labor laws and Cal/OSHA regulations, not legal counsel for specific situations, call (800) 348-2262 or e-mail: helpline@calchamber.com.

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Alert (ISSN 0882-0929) is published weekly during legislative session with exceptions by California Chamber of Commerce, 1215 K Street, Suite 1400, Sacramento, CA 95814-3918. Subscription price is \$50 paid through membership dues. Periodicals Postage Paid at Sacramento, CA.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Alert, 1215 K Street, Suite 1400, Sacramento, CA 95814-3918. Publisher: Allan Zarembeg. Executive Editor: Ann Amioka. Associate: Danielle Kando-Kaiser. Art Director: Andrew Larsen. Graphics Assistant: Jason Untalan. Capitol Correspondent: Kearsten Shepherd.

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Business Consortium Launches Website to Ease Review of School Performance

California Business for Education Excellence (CBEE), a consortium that includes the California Chamber of Commerce, has launched a website that makes it easier for policymakers to see, by legislative district, how students and schools are performing.

The "Legislator Portal" provides easy access to statistics about student proficiency in reading and math, based on the standardized tests offered statewide, as well as student demographics at schools in a legislator's district.

The site is privately funded by businesses that care about improving the education of California's children.

Information at a Glance

The site makes extensive use of colorful graphs and charts to enable visitors to assess student achievement at a glance. For example, color-coded bar graphs show what percentage of students at a school are proficient or better, "basic" or "below basic" in reading and math.

The graphics also illustrate how students at a particular school or district are doing in comparison to the average for schools in the district, the statewide average and the average for schools statewide with similar student demographics.

The state Education Department website provides extensive test data, but in a far less digestible format.

The manner in which the CBEE Legislator Portal presents the statistics makes it easier to identify both schools where students are performing well in language arts and math, and those where the tests show students are doing less well than their counterparts at schools with similar economic and ethnic backgrounds elsewhere in the state.

The easy identification of high-performing and low-performing schools lays the groundwork for interested parties to investigate promising practices at the high-performing schools or to focus on the areas where the low-performing schools clearly need help.

Policy Tool

CBEE's goal in developing the website

is to provide state policymakers with a tool to help them get involved in assuring that California students are prepared to succeed in the 21st century.

By summarizing student demographic and achievement statistics in such a usable fashion, the CBEE Legislator Portal website helps policymakers make fact-based decisions on such issues as improving student performance, managing school finances, designing curriculum or recognizing teacher quality.

Practical Guide

The CBEE Legislator Portal website also includes links to practical suggestions policymakers and education leaders can use to help students do better.

The links in the "Best Practices" section not only include general suggestions on how to ensure teachers are teaching the skills students need to learn, but also examples of how high-performing schools make sure their students are achieving.

CBEE

Major businesses and business organizations in California founded CBEE in 1999 to represent the business community in state education policymaking and restore excellence to California education.

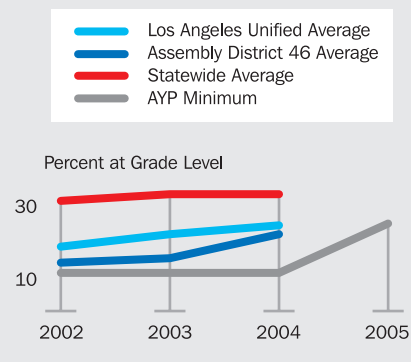
Since its founding, CBEE has helped put in place rigorous academic standards for all students, a testing system that measures progress, and an accountability system that reports progress, rewards success, and provides clear consequences for failure.

The Chamber believes producing an educated workforce is a key factor for improving the state's economy and that California's learning standards should reflect the competitive economy and today's global society. The Chamber further believes that accountability and measured performance are the only ways to ensure children are learning.

The Legislator Portal website, the first of its kind in the nation, is available through the CBEE website at www.cbee.org.

Staff Contact: Charles Bacchi

Performance Summary:
Los Angeles Unified - CA Standards Tests



The CBEE Legislator Portal website compiles charts like this one on reading in response to visitor queries, enabling visitors to see how students in the Assembly district in grades 6-8 are performing in comparison to other averages, including the statewide average and the "adequate yearly progress (AYP)" benchmark.

Chamber Calendar

Luncheon Forums:
February 10, Sacramento.

Seminars

For more information on the seminars listed below, visit www.calchamber.com/events.

Business Resources

Best Practices in Leadership. Claremont McKenna College Kravis Leadership Institute. February 25-26, Claremont. (909) 607-8111.

International

California Council for International Trade Policy Forum. California Council for International Trade Policy. February 23-25, San Diego. (619) 615-0868.

Labor Law

Labor Law Training Seminars. California Chamber of Commerce. February 17, Sacramento; March 3, web seminar. www.calchamberstore.com/llseminar

Hearings to Open on Simplifying Meal/ Rest Period Rule

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12 hours may mutually agree with their employer to waive the second meal period if the worker took the first meal period.

● Meal breaks can begin at any point from the beginning of the fifth hour of work to the end of the sixth hour of work.

Clarification

The proposed regulation will clarify sections of the Labor Code that were added in 2000, but have been subject to considerable misinterpretation due to conflicting opinion letters issued by the Division of Labor Standards Enforcement (DLSE) and further changes to the Labor Code that now differ from the Industrial Welfare Commission orders, according to DLSE.

DLSE has rescinded the conflicting opinion letters and will be applying the new rules as the official enforcement policy on meal breaks from this point forward. Employers who accurately follow the proposed rules will be deemed in compliance with California meal break requirements.

Keep Writing Letters

Employers and employees are strongly encouraged to write letters in support of simplifying the rules covering meal and rest breaks in order to provide their workers more flexibility. The deadline to submit written comments is 5 p.m. on March 2, by mail, e-mail or fax.

Send letters of support to: Allen Perloff, Senior Deputy Labor Commissioner, Division of Labor Standards Enforcement, 9th Floor West, P.O. Box 420603, San Francisco, CA 94142; E-mail: dlsecomments@dir.ca.gov; Fax: (415) 703-4807

Please send copies of your comments to the California Chamber at ccc@calchamber.com or fax (916) 325-1272.

Task Force

The Chamber is forming a task force to work on the implementation of the proposed rule changes. Readers who would like to join the task force, or are interested in testifying at one of the following hearings, please contact Julianne Broyles at

Employer Comments Support Flexibility

The California Chamber of Commerce is continuing to receive comments of support from employers, who emphasize the need for the flexibility that the new proposed permanent regulation will offer and cite problems caused by the lack of flexibility in current rules.

● A **production manager for a Southern California manufacturer** states, "I cannot tell you how many times I have tried to schedule some individual workers, or even an entire department, to work just six hours (8:00-14:00). But then about 13:45 a rush order comes in, we have to work an additional half hour to 45 minutes to get it completed, and we already blasted that stupid five-hour rule by NOT being able to predict the future and have a 30-minute lunch at (or before) 13:00!"

● A **Southern California health care products manufacturer** writes, "We give a one-hour lunch period and our employees often wish to perform personal errands or schedule doctor visits during their lunch periods in order to save time outside of work hours in their busy lives. However, in many cases we are unable to allow them the opportunity to do this because the time constraints on when they may take lunch preclude them from being

able to coordinate lunch periods with other appointments."

● A **labor relations consultant** says that in his 14 years of experience, "I have seen employees actually tell their employer that it destroys their job efficiency to break at a time not of their own choosing. As an example, in the construction industry, a cement mixer driver must delivery his load to a job site within a specific time frame (cement hardens in the barrel within a certain period), plus the fact that 10 or more

cement finishing workers are being paid an hourly rate while waiting for his load. If the driver has to stop to take his/her half-hour lunch break, the quality of the load could be compromised, the subcontractor handling the finishing could be out some money on a bid job and the mixer/operator could lose a contract by not delivering in a timely fashion. As the mixer driver usually starts work at an early hour (2:00 a.m.), you can see where he/she would be unhappy about taking their lunch break at 7:00 a.m. The law should protect employees but should also be flexible enough to accommodate the various circumstances that confront businesses on a daily basis."



julianne.broyles@calchamber.com

Hearings

The public hearings are set to begin at 9 a.m. on the following dates:

- February 4, 300 South Spring Street, Auditorium, Los Angeles;
- February 8, 455 Golden Gate

Avenue, Auditorium, San Francisco; and

- March 2, 2550 Mariposa Mall, Room 1036, Fresno.

A copy of the proposed regulations, including examples, is available at www.dir.ca.gov/dlse/MealandRestPeriod2.pdf.
Staff Contact: Julianne Broyles

Fortune '100 Best Companies to Work For' Includes 28 California Chamber Members



Twenty-eight members of the California Chamber of Commerce are among the nation's "100 Best Companies to Work For" in *Fortune* magazine's annual ranking.

Once again, California was home to the most *Fortune* top 100 companies — 14 — with 28 other states being represented.

Fortune determined and ranked this year's companies based on a survey of randomly selected employees from 356 candidate companies. Each candidate company also filled out a questionnaire detailing its policies and practices.

Fortune magazine used the results from both questionnaires, with the employees' opinions accounting for two-thirds of the total score.

Best to Work For

The following Chamber members are among *Fortune* magazine's "100 Best Companies to Work For." Locations of company headquarters are noted in parentheses.

- **American Express (New York)** — Ranked 37, American Express is a 150-year-old global travel, financial and credit card services provider. Today, women hold nearly 57 percent of managerial positions and make up 40 percent of executives and senior managers. Minorities hold more than 18 percent of higher-level positions as well. Employees nominated their company for giving them perks like pet health insurance and the LifeWorks Family Resource Program that helps on a variety of family-related issues.

- **American Fidelity Assurance (Oklahoma City)** — Ranked 34, American Fidelity Assurance offers insurance products and services to the educational community and to trade

association members throughout the country. The chief executive officer has lunch with every new hire and the company offers free courses from time management to Spanish, which can be taken while employees are at work. Ninety-five percent of management is promoted from within the company.

- **Amgen (Thousand Oaks)** — Ranked 33, Amgen is the world's largest biotechnology company, aspiring to be the leading human therapeutics company. Its research and products aim to help people in such areas as hematology, oncology, inflammation and metabolic disorders. Now in its third decade of operations, Amgen operates in 19 countries. In its 401(k) plan, Amgen contributes \$1 for each dollar an employee does (up to 5 percent of total compensation), and kicks in an additional 5 percent of total compensation whether or not the employee contributes a cent.

- **Bingham McCutchen (Boston)** — Ranked 78, Bingham McCutchen is an international law firm with more than 850 lawyers in 11 locations around the globe. In 2004, the firm's San Francisco office was voted as one of the top five places to work in the Greater Bay Area by the *San Francisco Business Times* and the *Boston Business Times* ranked the company headquarters among the top five employers in Massachusetts. Employees talk about a "relaxed" atmosphere and a "true sense of friendship." Company perks include box seats at Boston's Fenway Park, a strong mentor network and a high base-pay rate.

- **Booz, Allen, Hamilton Inc. (McLean, VA)** — Ranked 75, Booz, Allen, Hamilton is an international firm that provides strategy and technology consulting to companies around the world. Staff this year increased to more than 16,000 employees in offices on six continents. Flexibility is a major issue for this firm. From 2000 to 2003, it spent \$10.8 million on remote access and laptops for its professional staff. In 2002, two-thirds of the staff reported a flexible work arrangement. Employees list high

workplace morale, plentiful career improvement opportunities and good workplace diversity as some of the best reasons to work for the company.

- **Bright Horizons (Watertown, MA)** — Ranked 98, Bright Horizons is the world's leading provider of employer-sponsored child care, working with employers to build a family-friendly workplace. The company manages more than 500 Family Centers around the globe for more than 400 clients — including 84 companies in the Fortune 500. Bright Horizons offers discounts for workers' kids, on-site training for certification as a child development associate and above-market pay.

- **CarMax (Richmond, VA)** — Ranked 87, CarMax operates 58 used car superstores in 27 markets. Employees enjoy benefits such as education reimbursement, assistance with adoption and a significant discount on CarMax vehicles, accessories, parts and services for employees and any person (even unrelated) who lives in the same household as an employee. CarMax Chief Executive Officer Austin Ligon holds frequent Q&A sessions with employees to get their feedback, asking, "What are we doing that is stupid, unnecessary, or doesn't make sense?"

- **Cisco Systems (San Jose)** — Ranked 27, Cisco is the worldwide leader in networking for the Internet. Cisco's Internet Protocol-based (IP) networking solutions are the foundation of the Internet and most corporate, education and government networks around the world. Employees said they appreciate the company's efforts to make the workplace fun, from "nerd lunches" at which experts lead a discussion of tech topics to movie-themed food in Cisco's cafes on Oscar day.

- **The Container Store (Coppell, TX)** — Ranked 15, The Container Store is a national chain of retail stores that offer a wide selection of home and office organization and storage products. Although the average retail employee receives about seven hours of industry-

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Fortune '100 Best Companies to Work For' Includes 28 Chamber Members



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specific training annually, The Container Store gives full-time retail employees 241 hours of training in the first year. Everyone who works at least 18

hours a week gets some health coverage, and special schedules (9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday)

are available for those with children.

● **Deloitte & Touche (New York)** — Ranked 90, Deloitte & Touche and its member firms deliver audit, tax, consulting and financial advisory services worldwide. With approximately 120,000 people in nearly 150 countries the company serves more than one-half of the world's largest companies. The firm attracts great hires by creative means: It rewards with cash — and sometimes even new cars — employees who refer successful job candidates. Deloitte has awarded nearly \$20 million since 1996. Regional managing partner Mark A. Edmunds is a member of the Chamber Board.

● **Eli Lilly (Indianapolis)** — Ranked 73, Eli Lilly is a national leader in pharmaceutical research and development. Lilly products treat depression, schizophrenia, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, osteoporosis and many other conditions. Employing 146,000 people worldwide, the company markets its medicines in 138 countries. Lilly has research and development facilities in nine countries and conducts clinical trials in more than six countries. Although the company lost its patent for Prozac a few years ago, it hasn't laid off a single employee. Profit sharing boosted employees' salaries by 10.2 percent in 2003.

● **Ernst & Young (New York)** — Ranked 80, Ernst & Young is one of the Big Four accounting firms, with more than 103,000 employees in 670 locations, in more than 140 countries. Ernst & Young offers a broad array of solutions in audit, tax, corporate finance, transactions, online security, enterprise risk management, the valuation of intangibles and other critical business performance issues. Ernst & Young

frequently offers onsite classes and training, as well as allowing employees to take career advancement courses. Nearly half of the company's workforce telecommutes at least occasionally. Anthony K. Anderson, area managing partner, is a Chamber Board member.

● **FedEx (Memphis, TN)** — Ranked 96, FedEx is a family of companies that offer a global network of specialized services — transportation, information, international trade support and supply chain services. A presence on *Fortune* magazine's "Best Companies to Work For" since 1998, the company also was named by the magazine as one of the top 10 most admired companies in the world and in the country. When the company acquired Kinko's this last year, employees of both corporations kept their jobs and continued to enjoy the usual perks. Among those perks, Fed Ex allows employees to enjoy free rides on its airplanes anywhere in the United States.

● **General Mills (Minneapolis)** — Ranked 58, General Mills is one of the world's largest makers of cereal and a multitude of other food products, including Pillsbury, Yoplait and Betty Crocker. The company allows each employee, even new employees, to enjoy a 100 percent (up to \$6,000) annual tuition reimbursement. New employees are given three weeks vacation for the first year, and this time off increases as the employee stays on. All employees are invited to take advantage of the company's flexible summer hours when a half-day Friday is offered.

● **Granite Construction (Watsonville)** — Ranked 79, Granite Construction produces construction materials and builds roads, tunnels, bridges, airports and other infrastructure-related projects used by millions of people. When employees do good work, the company rewards them handsomely — it sets aside 3.7 percent of pretax earnings each year for bonuses and incentives for lower-ranking employees. In 2003 the company awarded its nearly 900 employees more than \$4 million. Company Chairman David H. Watts is a Chamber Board member and served as Chamber chair in 2000.

● **Intuit (Mountain View)** — Ranked 64, Intuit develops and markets small business, tax preparation and personal

finance software. Executives had an indoor walking path built into the offices, and launched an incentive plan that gives \$1 to charities for every pound lost by employees. Other company perks include tuition reimbursement, child adoption reimbursement and a computer loan program that allows employees to borrow up to \$2,500 without interest and with small deductions made from the employees' regular paychecks.

● **J.M. Smucker (Oroville, OH)** — Ranked 6, J.M. Smucker has been making jams, jellies and other food items since 1897. Family-run and -owned for four generations, the company now has more than 2,700 employees worldwide and distributes products in more than 45 countries. Employees praise the company for its family-like atmosphere and the respect shared between all employees.

● **MBNA (Wilmington, DE)** — Ranked 89, MBNA is the world's largest independent credit card issuer and also specializes in retail deposit, consumer loans and insurance products. More than 28,000 employees work within the company's offices in the United States, Canada, Ireland, the United Kingdom and Spain. MBNA employees have access to on-site childcare centers, reimbursement for tuition, up to \$20,000 per child for adoption and even a paid week off for new grandparents.

● **Microsoft (Redmond, WA)** — Ranked 57, Microsoft is an internationally recognized software giant. While the company was not able to hire all of the 300,000 applicants who sent in resumes last year, the nearly 60,000 current employees receive restricted stock grants, generous medical and dental benefits, and matches on charitable donations. Employees enjoy the presence of numerous organizations like Hoppers — a group that works to develop and retain talented female employees. LaSandra Thomas, general manager, is a Chamber Board member.

● **Morrison & Foerster (San Francisco)** — Ranked 91, Morrison & Foerster is one of the world's largest law firms, with 1,000 lawyers in 19 offices worldwide. One of the country's most diverse law firms, the firm counts 166 minorities among its 871 U.S. attorneys,

See *Fortune*: Page 7

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From Page 6 including 21 partners. The firm also was named one of the best companies to work for by *Working Mother* magazine. Generous pro bono work also is a major factor for the firm. In

2004, lawyers and staff gave 102,000 hours.

- **Network Appliance (Sunnyvale)** — Ranked 24, Network Appliance is a leader in enterprise storage and delivery of data and content on demand. The company aims to help businesses create easily accessible global data management systems. The company rewards employees with \$5,000 to \$15,000 for each patent they file — and individual stock grants for multiple patents. The company filed 23 patents in 2004.

- **Pfizer (New York)** — Ranked 76, Pfizer is one of the world's largest pharmaceutical companies. Offering a range of top-level perks, the company has on-site daycare at four locations (parents pay on a sliding scale based on income) and an elder-care program that includes counseling.

- **PriceWaterhouseCoopers (New York)** — Ranked 82, PriceWaterhouseCoopers provides industry-focused assurance, tax and advisory services for public and private clients, primarily in four areas: corporate accountability; risk management; structuring and mergers and acquisitions; and performance and process improvement. Firm offices in

769 cities, in 144 countries employ nearly 122,000 people. Employees are highly rewarded for their part in staff development: the company's policy is to pay referral bonuses that average \$8,000 for new hires. Managing partner Bradley J. Oltmanns is a member of the Chamber Board.

- **Procter & Gamble (Cincinnati)** — Ranked 66, the Procter & Gamble Company began in 1837 as a small, family-operated soap and candle company in Cincinnati. Today, the company markets almost 300 products to more than 5 billion consumers in 140 countries. In an innovative move to bring employees together, the consumer products giant started a program that pairs junior female employees with a senior manager for reverse mentoring to help the mostly male higher-ups understand the issues female employees face.

- **Starbucks (Seattle)** — Ranked 11, Starbucks purchases and roasts high-quality coffees and sells them along with Italian-style espresso beverages, pastries and coffee-related accessories and equipment — primarily through its retail stores. Started in 1971 at Seattle's Pike Place Market, the company now operates 7,225 locations around the globe. Employees working at least 20 hours per week receive comprehensive health coverage, as do their spouses or partners.

- **Symantec (Cupertino)** — Ranked 43, Symantec provides a broad range of software, appliances and services to help its more than 120 million users secure and manage their information technology infrastructure. The 6,000-person com-

pany has operations in more than 35 countries. The company has had a banner year, with stock up 150 percent. Stock options and a generous profit sharing plan enable all employees to share in the company's good fortune. Performance-based bonuses are awarded to employees on a quarterly, rather than an annual, basis. Reimbursement plans include adoption cost and gym/health club reimbursement.

- **Vision Service Plan (Rancho Cordova)** — Ranked 10, Vision Service Plan (VSP) is the nation's largest provider of eye care coverage. With nearly 40 million customers and a network of more than 21,000 participating providers, VSP provides health coverage to one in eight people in the country. VSP allows its nearly 2,000 employees to extend one of their benefits to friends: Up to four people can receive special discounts on eyecare services and eyewear through VSP providers. Roger J. Valine, president and chief executive officer, is a Chamber Board member.

- **Valero Energy (San Antonio)** — Ranked 23, Valero is one of the country's top refining companies and gasoline retailers, with 20,000 employees producing 2.4 million barrels of oil per day. In its 25 years of operation, the company has never laid off an employee. Employees are encouraged to speak with management about their career goals and receive reimbursement for education costs. Annual performance-based bonuses are awarded to all employees, at every level, and executives receive a bonus only if everyone else in the organization does.

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president of the Small Business Action Committee.

Also serving on the group's board are the heads of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association, California Business Roundtable and California Taxpayers Association.

To manage the reform campaign, the group has hired Rick Claussen of Goddard Claussen, who managed last year's successful campaigns to stop

shakedown lawsuits through Proposition 64 and win support for the Governor's bond and balanced budget initiatives, Propositions 57 and 58.

A variety of reform initiatives have been submitted to the state attorney general for analysis. Once the attorney general has issued a title and summary for a measure, its supporters can begin gathering signatures to place it on the ballot.

The Governor has called a special

session of the Legislature to work on his reform agenda.

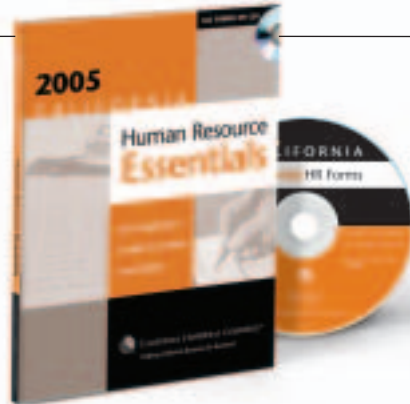
"A special session will allow us to work together quickly, so that people can vote on our reforms in an election by early summer," the Governor said in his State of the State address.

He added, "If we here in this chamber don't work together to reform the government, the people will rise up and reform it themselves. And I will join them. And I will fight with them."

Everything you need to know. One low price.

If you're someone who needs to be informed about labor laws, but doesn't need to be an "expert," the California HR Essentials guide and Forms CD is ideal for you. Presented in an easy-to-read, question-and-answer style, Essentials focuses on steps to follow, forms to use and helpful checklists. This guide addresses the top areas of concern to California businesses, including:

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