

# Blue Waves and Political Saves

The blue wave that swept much of the United States in the 2018 midterm elections was more like a tsunami in California. As before, all of California’s eight statewide offices are occupied by Democrats with the majority party picking up three Senate seats and five in the Assembly.

Similarly, Republicans shed seven California seats in the U.S. House of Representatives, contributing substantially to San Francisco Democrat Nancy Pelosi’s victory margin and returning to her the coveted Speaker’s gavel.

Through our bipartisan ChamberPAC, the California Chamber of Commerce supported several “business-friendly” Democrats who were elected in both legislative houses.

Dealing with these dramatic shifts in the state’s political landscape is where CalChamber excels. In partnership with our political networks and local chamber relationships, we are constantly monitoring developments in the races for all major offices in California. Importantly and reflective of the California electorate, we employ a full range of political techniques, including data and analytics, to propel us to success in electing both Democrats and Republicans to legislative office.

The CalChamber’s bipartisan political approach is being noticed. As widely read political columnist Dan Walters commented in a November 2016 opinion piece in *The Sacramento Bee*: “...the (moderate) coalition’s ranks were bolstered by several victories in Democrat vs. Democrat clashes.” Walters continued by noting that the Senate “may be developing a mod squad of its own with wins by business-backed Democrats such as Bill Dodd of Napa and Steven Bradford of Gardena.”

## ELECTION LANDSCAPE 2019–20

California voters will soon discover they have achieved a new milestone: the distinction of being an early Presidential Primary state due to the Legislature moving the date up three months from June to March 2020. This will have a major impact on down ballot contests as well, accelerating all the traditional



**Governor**  
Gavin Newsom (D)



**Lieutenant Governor**  
Eleni Kounalakis (D)



**Attorney General** Xavier Becerra (D)



**Secretary of State**  
Alex Padilla (D)



**Treasurer**  
Fiona Ma (D)



**Controller**  
Betty T. Yee (D)



**Insurance Commissioner**  
Ricardo Lara (D)



**Superintendent of Public Instruction**  
Tony K. Thurmond

Democrats hold all eight California statewide offices.

deadlines, such as candidate filing, contribution disclosure, as well as the imperative of building out the necessary infrastructure to wage a successful and expensive race for legislative office.

But before we get to 2020, there will be two special elections in the open California Senate Districts 1 and 33, where both incumbents were elected to constitutional offices in 2018. In the era of 12-year terms, Senate seats are highly prized by the business community and CalChamber is already interviewing candidates and becoming familiar with both districts. As both incumbents were to term out in 2020 anyway, these races are critically important to the business community and CalChamber anticipates being heavily involved.

In 2020 there will be an additional six open California Senate seats and, due to the early primary, candidate recruitment is already underway, spurring CalChamber and our business allies into high gear much earlier than usual.

# California Promise: Opportunity for All

## 2019 Business Issues and Legislative Guide

See the entire CalChamber 2019 Business Issues and Legislative Guide at  
[www.calchamber.com/businessissues](http://www.calchamber.com/businessissues)  
Free PDF or epub available to download.

Special Thanks to the Sponsors  
Of the 2019 Business Issues and Legislative Guide

Premier



Silver



Bronze



Iron



- Among the open Democratic Senate seats, expect a lot of attention paid to Senate District 5, a Central Valley district currently occupied by business-friendly Democrat Cathleen Galgiani.

- Senate District 13, split between San Mateo and Santa Clara counties, will open due to Democrat Jerry Hill terming out. The Santa Clara County seat, Senate District 15, will open up due to Jim Beall being term limited. CalChamber is looking at replacements for both of these seats who will be more open to the views of the high concentration of employers in these two counties.

- Senate District 17 stretches along California’s central coast and will open with the retirement of Democrat Bill Monning; and Senate District 19, which contains the counties of Santa Barbara and Ventura, opens due to Hannah-Beth Jackson stepping aside due to term limits. Suitable replacements for both of these districts are being actively recruited.

CalChamber has the dual imperative of protecting our Senate allies. To that end, we will work to ensure that Democrat Steve Glazer returns to the East Bay Senate District 7 and Democrat Anthony Portantino to the Los Angeles County Senate District 25.

It is expected that labor and its allies will work to unseat several sitting GOP senators and CalChamber will engage to defend those seats as well. Among the Republican seats thought to be most competitive are the San Bernardino County seat occupied by Mike Morrell, the Santa Clarita Valley seat of Scott Wilk and the Orange County seat occupied by John Moorlach.

At present, there are no open Assembly seats, but we expect that to change as municipal elections in major cities like San Diego and Los Angeles will likely draw candidates from the Legislature.

**TRACK RECORD**

CalChamber will continue to recruit and elect business-friendly candidates to maintain our superb track record of beating job-killing legislative proposals by staying on the task of engaging our political action network. Our focus will remain dedicated to finding and electing candidates from both political parties who possess the courage to stand up to the liberal special interests and reject their philosophy of tax, spend and regulate.

If we are successful with our election strategy, then our opportunities will far outdistance our challenges.

**CANDIDATE RECRUITMENT**

Although not a political action committee, the Candidate Recruitment and Development Program provides the resources necessary to build a bench of electable, pro-jobs candidates for state legislative and local office. CalChamber partners with our local chamber network, as well as state and local member businesses, to ensure the recruitment efforts are bipartisan and locally driven.

The primary component of this program is to identify potential candidates and put them on the path to elective office. The secondary component is training and developing candidates for their positions. The program has successfully recruited numerous local candidates who have won election to state legislative seats.

**POLITICAL ACTION COMMITTEES (PACS)**

The CalChamber’s Political Action Network includes three political entities:

- **ChamberPAC** is a bipartisan political action committee that makes direct contributions to incumbent office holders and select candidates who promote and vote for an agenda of private sector job creation. Contributions to this committee are limited to \$7,300 per year, person, organization or political action committee.

- **JobsPAC** is an independent expenditure committee, meaning it speaks directly to voters on behalf of the business community to elect pro-jobs candidates. Co-chaired by CalChamber and the California Manufacturers and Technology Association, JobsPAC may accept contributions in unlimited amounts.

- **CalBusPAC** is a CalChamber committee that is formed primarily to support or oppose ballot measures having an impact on the state’s business climate. CalBusPAC may accept contributions in unlimited amounts.

**CALCHAMBER POSITION**

California’s business community is under constant pressure due to the disproportionate influence that special interest and government employee organizations have on the legislative and regulatory process. CalChamber is committed to standing up for and speaking out on behalf of the state’s employer community through political action, our advocacy network, and constant and direct contact with elected officials.



Staff Contact  
**Martin R. Wilson**  
 Executive Vice President, Public Affairs

*[martin.wilson@calchamber.com](mailto:martin.wilson@calchamber.com)*

January 2019