

Santa Clara County Democratic Club

# The Democratic Voice

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Volume 28 Number 4

April 2009

## Budget Deal Avoids Disaster

By Shirley Odou, Editor

After months of fruitless negotiations during which time California faced bankruptcy and, unable to meet its obligations, sank deeper into debt, on February 20th the Legislature and the governor finally signed into law a budget deal that seemed to please no one. At SCCDC's March meeting, Richelle Noroyan, District Director for Assemblyman Ira Ruskin, gave a full account of the behind-the-scenes maneuvering and dickering that took place to come up with an agreement that garnered the necessary two-thirds vote in the Assembly and Senate to pass.

Republican legislators "dug their heels into the ground," Richelle said, refusing to compromise with the Democratic majority, despite pressure from Schwarzenegger. From the day they took office, their leadership compelled them to sign no-tax pledge forms, which "basically said I will not raise taxes no matter what happens." If some wavered, right-wing talk show hosts were there to remind *(continued on page 6)*

## Sri Lanka Provokes Wide Response

By Shirley Odou, Editor

Santa Clara County Democratic Club has never shied away from controversy whether it was El Salvador and Guatemala in the 1980s, Desert Storm and Kosovo in the 1990s, the Iraq War in 2003 to the present, or local political races and issues like clean money and health care. But since its inception, nothing has provoked the kind of response the club has received from the article, "Sri Lanka Tamils: Give Them The Ballot, Give Them Their Rights," and the accompanying resolution, both of which were *(continued on page 7)*

### April Special Meeting

Forum on May Ballot Propositions

Featuring John Laird

Former Chair, California Assembly Budget Committee (2005-2008)

Monday, April 27, 2009 7 PM (doors open at 6:45)

Redwood Room, Santa Clara City Library,  
2635 Homestead Rd., Santa Clara

**NOTE DATE AND LOCATION CHANGE**

## Laird Speaks on Ballot Measures

By Carolyn Curtis and Shirley Odou

A statewide crucial special election will be held on May 19th. How crucial was noted in a front-page article in the San Francisco Chronicle on April 6 in which the reporter Matthew Yi wrote, "if voters reject a package of ballot measures in the May 19 special election, then the projected shortfall could push the state's deficit to more than \$15 billion, creating a new fiscal crisis."

On April 27th, Santa Clara County Democratic Club will join with the Dean Democratic Club of Silicon Valley and the Obama Democratic Club of Silicon Valley to sponsor a forum on the six ballot initiatives to be voted on in May. Former Assemblyman John Laird (D-27, Santa Cruz) who chaired the Assembly Budget Committee for four years will be the guest speaker. The Mission City Democratic Club is a co-sponsor of this event.

The meeting will be held in the Redwood Room of the Santa Clara Public Library, 2635 Homestead Road in Santa Clara and will begin promptly at 7 PM. Doors will open at 6:45 PM.

The six initiatives which are the topic of the forum deal with the state budget: Proposition 1A limits state spending and increases the "rainy day" budget stabilization fund; Proposition 1B relates to education funding; Proposition 12C modernizes the state lottery; Proposition 1D protects children's services funding; Proposition 1E reallocates funds from mental health services; and Proposition 1F prevents pay increases for elected officials during budget deficit years.

Before being elected to the Assembly three times by large margins, Laird was mayor of Santa Cruz. During his time on the Santa Cruz City Council, he led local governments in the fight against proposed offshore oil drilling and for the designation of the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary. He is currently a member of the California Integrated Waste Management Board. For more information, contact Carolyn Curtis at [ccurtis@ix.netcom.com](mailto:ccurtis@ix.netcom.com)

## Letter to the Editor: Sri Lanka

*(Hassina Leelarathna called me from the Los Angeles area a few weeks ago concerning the article by Jey Surier, "Give Them the Ballot: Give Them Their Rights" that appeared in the February issue of the Democratic Voice. She identified herself as a Muslim who had lived in Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka, and went on to say, "The article has caused great concern to the many Sri Lankans who have seen it. They are all well aware of the truth and they are shocked that the Democratic Party would lend its name to nothing short of LTTE propaganda. I hope you will publish my rejoinder Thanking you." In the interest of trying to represent both sides of a most controversial issue, I agreed. Following is the article. Some editorial changes were necessary. The sentiments and statements of fact expressed in the letter represent those of the writer. Shirley Odou, Editor)*

### Rejoinder to: "Sri Lanka Tamils: Give them the Ballot; Give Them Their Rights"

The article titled "Sri Lanka Tamils: Give them the Ballot; Give Them Their Rights" by Jey Surier (Democratic Voice, Feb. 2009) is nothing less than the propaganda of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), a banned terrorist group notorious for using suicide bombings and child soldiers in its mad quest for a separate Tamil state. Surier's article presents a fictional 'Tamil homeland' and a fictional 'Tamil kingdom' indicating that the minority Tamils live in this 'homeland' in the north and east while the Sinhalese occupy the rest of the country. The fact is that 56% of Tamils live outside the north and east, mostly in the south among the Sinhalese. His reference to 'successive Sinhalese-dominated governments,' taken straight out of LTTE propaganda leaflets, is an indictment which makes as much sense as accusing the US of having 'successive Anglo-dominated governments.'

The allegation of indiscriminate attacks on Tamil civilians by the Sri Lankan armed forces is totally false. In 1983, after years of terrorist acts by the Tamils, inflammatory, racist propaganda by Tamil politicians, and the killing of 13 soldiers by Tamil militants, a race riot, led by political elements, erupted in Colombo. An estimated 400 Tamil persons were killed, not 'thousands' as Surier states. A contrite Sri Lankan government paid restitution to the families of these victims and rebuilt all the homes that were destroyed. Since then, despite Tamil provocation by way of hundreds of suicide bombings, the assassination of the Sri Lankan president and countless political leaders, there has never been an organized riot or attack on Tamils. And, yes, thousands of Tamils have sought refuge asylum abroad, most for economic gain, many trafficked by the LTTE.

Surier's version of the 1977 election where he says 82% of the Tamil people endorsed a separate state is fictionalized. In that election, only 69% of the Tamils in the Northern province voted for the Tamil United Liberation Front (TULF) which at

the time did seek separatism. In the Eastern province the TULF got a pathetic 32.9%. The LTTE has been using that election as its crutch to justify resorting to terror to fight for a separate state. What Surier does not mention is that after 1977 the TULF moved away from separatism towards mainstream politics. The LTTE then murdered the TULF leader, Appapillai Amirthalingam, and several other TULF members and forced the people in areas under its control in the north, under gunpoint, into voting for its own proxies, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA). That is the bloody genealogy of the TNA, the party that Surier speaks of with pride.

As for the title of the article and the suggestion that the Tamil people have been deprived of voting rights, again, this is nothing but a downright lie! All Sri Lankan citizens, including women, have enjoyed universal suffrage and the right to stand for election since 1931, without restriction. This is a major contrast to many other countries, including the US, where property ownership, race, and other impositions have prevented one or another group from voting.

In calling for foreign intervention in Sri Lanka, Surier reveals his true objective: saving the LTTE from ultimate defeat and humiliation. Giving the lie to international punditry about this war being 'unwinnable,' the Sri Lankan military has successfully defeated the LTTE, cornering it into a 20-square kilometer of land. Concern for the safety of civilians being held hostage by the LTTE is the only factor stopping the military from reclaiming this last patch of territory. LTTE operatives and front groups in the Tamil diaspora are now frenziedly lobbying for international intervention conjuring up charges of 'genocide' in the desperate hope that the remaining LTTE cadres, including its leader, Vellupillain Prabhakaran, can be rescued from certain defeat.

Considering the extent of Surier's fabrications, the *Democratic Voice* has displayed an utter disregard for the truth, disrespect for the many Sri Lankans who live in the US, and, just as bad, let itself be co-opted into the LTTE's desperate endgame.

Hassina Leelarathna  
Editor/Publisher Sri Lanka Express  
Arleta, CA 91331

## News & Notes

**President Jay James and his wife Patti are on an extended trip** across the country in their motorhome and will not be back until June. Vice President Aldyth Parle will chair all meetings until Jay returns.

**The annual Jefferson-Jackson Day Dinner** to celebrate the Party's 2008 victory and plan a 2010 strategy sponsored by the Santa Clara County Democratic Party will be held on Friday, April 17, *(continued on page 8)*

# Memo to President Obama

By Reginald Jensen

*(SCCDC member Reginald L. Jensen has been in the life insurance business for over 53 years. He has held nearly every office including eight years as the president and board member of a life insurance company which created and sold medical insurance. He presented his perspective on national health insurance at the March meeting and wrote this response, based on his talk, to the proposal for Single Payer system, presented by Dr. John Geyman.)*

Dr. John P. Geyman, past president of Physicians for a National Health program, wrote: "A Memo to Obama: Seize the Moment for National Health Insurance," in which he said "Premiums alone for private health insurance have grown by more than 100 percent since 2000, and are projected to consume an average household income by 2025, clearly an impossibility way before then." This is a true statement. Average income has increased 12.5 times from 1955 to 2008. Average medical insurance premiums have increased 250 times from 1955 to 2008.

Today, the average medical expense (\$15,000) for a family amounts to more than 20% of average annual income. In 20 years average income will be about \$100,000. In 20 years the average family medical costs will be about \$100,000. Fifty percent of all insureds incur expenses of less than \$100 per year. Eighty-five percent of all insureds incur expenses of less than \$1,000 per year. The mean medical expense for a 40 year old, according to the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, is \$4,585 per year. The mean (average) medical expense for our population is \$8,000 per year.

The organization which introduced the club to Single Payer insurance (Universal Health Care) was the Lewin Group. The Lewin Group showed us a picture of a distraught mother with her baby in her arms and the statement that this poor mother had no health care to provide for her family. The reason advanced for this dire state of affairs was the outrageous profits and administration expenses incurred by the medical insurance companies. They claimed profits exceeded 25% and administrative expenses were nearly as high. They said those profits and administrative expenses should be taken away from the insurance companies and the savings used to provide medical care for those who can't afford it. The statement is that administrative overhead of private insurers is five to nine times higher than not-for-profit Medicare. The Lewin Group has proposed a Single Payer Plan for California, SB 840, now SB 810, to eliminate for-profit medical insurance companies and to provide medical care, including Medicare and Medicaid, to everyone who lives in California.

According to Consumer Reports, the nation's eight largest medical insurance companies in 2006 collectively earned \$11 billion in profits. The top ten insurance companies control

90% of the business. Let's add a couple of billion dollars in profits and bring it up to \$15 billion in 2008 nationally. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, national health care expenditures in 2008 amounted to \$2,420 billion. That's over two trillion dollars. Divide \$15 billion by \$2,420 billion and the result is 0.0062. That's a little more than six tenths of one percent. The insurance sold by the for-profit companies to the consuming public is such a small segment of the market that it produces the above results. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services says the total administrative costs for private and government medical care amounts to 6.95%.

If Medicare administration costs are 3.0% that means there's an excess cost of 3.95%. Add to that the total profits of 1.0%; there exists a potential cost savings of 4.95%. That's a long way from saving 25% to 50%. Then Lewin advocated adding the uninsured to the Single Payer plan, which amounts to 15% of the population, which is three times the amount of the cost savings. Under Single Payer or Universal Health Care it seems to me that costs will increase if those same people obtain the care they forfeited.

Why would someone visit our club and represent the savings on eliminating insurance company profits and administration costs would go a long way towards solving the medical expense problem? The Lewin Group is owned by United Health Group, a national NYSE firm which sells medical insurance through two subsidiaries: Pacific Care and Golden Rule Insurance Company. United Health Group owns Ingenix. Ingenix acquired The Lewin Group on June 12, 2007. Why would any for-profit organization finance the introduction of legislation which will put it out of business? After all they can simply stop doing business on their own. At section 140231 (b) of the Single Payer bill it says: "The Premium Commission shall perform the functions described in this section by considering existing financial simulations and analyses of universal health care proposals, including, but not limited to, the analysis completed by the Lewin Group in January 2005, of Senate Bill 921 of the 2003-04 regular session." Insurance companies administer Medicare and Medicaid. United Health is currently an administrator. According to President Obama, the combined payments to these insurance companies amount to about \$45 billion each year. If a Single Payer plan is adopted in California and the Lewin Group efforts are rewarded, the result could be annual income to United Health somewhere in the \$10 billion neighborhood.

When you put all of the numbers together nothing currently in place will stop that tremendous growth of medical costs, with or without Single Payer or Universal Health Care; on a statewide basis or national basis the growth will continue. The solution seems to be to turn the problem over to the governments while the insurance companies earn money administering the plans. We, the people of our nation, don't want to be held accountable for our own bodies and our own health. We want the doctors, scientists, and hospitals to come up with a pill, a shot in the arm, *(continued on page 6)*

## Surier Speaks on Sri Lanka Crisis in February

By Shirley Odou, Editor

A packed house was on hand at the February 16th meeting to hear Jey Surier make a passionate appeal on behalf of the Tamils in Sri Lanka, and to seek the membership's approval of his proposed resolution published in the February edition of the Democratic Voice.

“Thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak for the voiceless and oppressed in Sri Lanka. We can save lives, but we need to act. If we don't take action, people will die.” The action he sought was passing his resolution which he said he would send to Senator Kerry who was chairing a hearing on the Sri Lankan situation in late February. It was a small step, he acknowledged, but could lead to a giant one.

A member of SCCDC, Surier opened his presentation with a brief history of the conditions that led to the violence that has cost so many lives in Sri Lanka. For over 2000 years, Surier said, the Sinhalese and the Tamils had separate kingdoms on the island until the European invasion. First colonized by the Portuguese in 1505, then by the Dutch and in 1833 by the British, the island known as Ceylon, was granted its independence by its last colonizer in 1948. Discrimination against the minority Tamils by the majority Sinhalese began almost immediately with their power reduced in the parliament, according to Surier. The catalyst, however, in Surier's opinion, that led to the Tamil resistance movement was the requirement by the government that Sinhalese be the official language of the country.

From 1948-1976, Tamils engaged in non-violent protests, and attempted to negotiate with the Sinhalese-dominated government for equal rights. With equality denied, the Tamils declared their independence in 1976, provoking Sinhalese attacks in the Tamil region. Surier said, “The Sinhalese burned down a public library with many artifacts and a popular newspaper. Scores of Tamils were killed.” Then the Sri Lankan constitution was changed to give Buddhism the “foremost place” in Sri Lanka, a provocative move, Surier claimed, since most Sinhalese are Buddhists while most Tamils are Hindu. “There is no longer any separation of church and state in Sri Lanka.”

In the 1980s, several militant groups sprang up on the island, taking up arms to fight for Tamil independence. Among them was the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), known as the Tamil Tigers. Surier described even them as a terrorist organization which has committed many crimes, including the assassination of the prime minister of India. While he decried their actions and said he has no association with them, he maintained that elements of the Sinhalese are guilty of even more atrocities than the Tigers. The Tigers have been named as terrorists by the US and several other countries.

In 2002, Norway negotiated a cease-fire between the two parties, an agreement which Surier said, a new government in Sri Lanka immediately abrogated. With the fighting continuing, the Tamils unilaterally declared a cease fire in 2008. As the death toll rises and more Tamils are displaced, seeking refuge in other countries, the civil war in Sri Lanka has finally caught the attention of non-profit organizations like the “Genocide Prevention Project,” the US State Department, and the United Nations Secretary General.

At the conclusion of Surier's talk, SCCDC member Barinder Ahluwalia, a native of India, spoke briefly in opposition to Surier's advocacy for a two state solution, noting that even though India had many different cultures and religions, it has dealt with its problems without dividing the country. President Jay James then called for a motion and a second on the resolution. Once seconded, considerable debate about the wording took place in the discussion period that followed. Several suggestions by members were incorporated into the final version of the resolution that passed. The revised text will appear in a later issue of the *Democratic Voice*.

## Dunkerley Presents Resolution on Over-Population

By Shirley Odou, Editor

Craig Dunkerley, SCCDC e-board member, pointed to the explosion in population growth in the last 200 years and the threat this phenomenon poses for the environment and sustainable living at the February meeting. He backed up his argument with clips from former Vice-President Al Gore's Academy Award documentary, “An Inconvenient Truth..” which uses graphics to trace the increase in the rate of population growth.. It took 165,000 years for the earth's population to reach 1 billion, but since 1800 the number of human beings on this planet has reached close to 7 billion. If the trend continues at the present rate, Dunkerley contends, not only will it contribute to climate change, it will inevitably result in diminishing resources to sustain life on earth.

“If we do nothing, population growth will be reigned in on its own by famine, war and pestilence,” Dunkerley asserted. He proposed that now is our moment to raise public awareness through education. Family planning is one of the solutions he suggested, noting that President Obama has recently lifted the “gag rule” that has been in effect since the first President Bush made it US policy. The “gag rule” has prohibited private family planning groups set up by the UN from receiving US support if abortion was mentioned at all as an option for some seeking counsel.

Dunkerley's resolution passed unanimously and was subsequently presented to the Central *(continued on page 8)*

## Senator Leno Has a Plan to Pass Single Payer in California

By Carol Dalrymple, SCCDC Chair, Health Care For All Committee

At a press conference on March 11th to introduce Senate Bill 810, the California Universal Healthcare Act of 2009, State Senator Mark Leno acknowledged that the bill is headed for yet another likely veto at the hands of the current governor. So why go through the exercise of shepherding it through the state legislature one more time? The answer is that we will have a new governor in 2011, hopefully a Democrat who will sign the bill into law.

Senator Leno, who has replaced termed-out State Senator Sheila Kuehl as the bill's new author, sees a three step process: continue to build the movement for single payer health care reform in 2009/2010; elect a pro-single-payer governor in 2011 and have adequate support in place to defeat an almost certain referendum in 2012 to rescind a single payer law.

Senate Bill 810 had 43 co-authors at its introduction in March, including Senate Pro Tem Darrell Steinberg, Assembly Speaker Karen Bass, Senate Health Committee Chair Elaine Alquist and Assembly Health Committee Chair Dave Jones. Co-authors also included area Assembly Members Jim Beall, Joe Coto and Ira Ruskin. Assembly Member Paul Fong has pledged his support.

Senate Bill 810 would provide every resident of California with comprehensive medical, dental, vision and prescription drug benefits. It would take the private health insurance industry out of the equation and would establish the California Health Insurance System, a government-based, single-payer system along the same lines as Medicare and Social Security. Delivery of healthcare would remain in the hands of the same providers, both public and private, that serve the healthcare needs of the state today. Free choice of doctor, hospital and/or health maintenance organization would be maintained and enhanced.

The program would be funded by graduated and affordable taxes on workers, employers, self-employed individuals and some non-wage income. These would replace all premiums, co-pays, deductibles and out-of-pocket expenses currently being paid for medical care. The bill would also use money now being spent on other government-based healthcare programs such as MediCal and Healthy Families. The coverage provided by these programs would continue under the new system. Finally, it would realize savings from bulk purchasing of drugs and medical equipment and an emphasis on primary and preventive care and on chronic disease management.

Besides electing a pro-single payer governor in 2011, it should be pointed out that it would be extremely helpful to get rid of the rule that requires a two-thirds majority in the California legislature to pass new taxes. As noted above, Senate Bill 810 would be tax-supported. This would eliminate the need to go to the voters to fund the bill once it had been passed into law. There are several campaigns already underway to eliminate the two-thirds vote requirement, both for taxes and to pass a state budget, in the wake of the recent budget impasses.

Best of all, however, would be a two-thirds majority of pro-single-payer Democrats in both houses. That would both enable funding of a single-payer bill and allow the legislature to override a gubernatorial veto if needed.

More information about Senate Bill 810 is available on Senator Leno's website: [www.dist03.casen.govoffice.com](http://www.dist03.casen.govoffice.com). There is also information available at [www.healthcareforall.org](http://www.healthcareforall.org) and [www.onecarenow.org](http://www.onecarenow.org). The bill itself may be read at [www.leginfo.ca.gov](http://www.leginfo.ca.gov).

*Carol Dalrymple is a member of the SCCDC and chairs the local chapter of Health Care for All – California. She can be reached at 408 984 8708 or [ymples@msn.com](mailto:ymples@msn.com).*

## Thanks for your get well messages

By Shirley Odou, Editor

I greatly appreciate your get well messages and the flowers and card. Also, thank you for the resolution which Karen read to me. I can't tell you how much it meant to me.

I am on the mend. I might have recovered two weeks earlier if I had not so stubbornly resisted surgery. People have asked me how I could have fractured my kneecap since I didn't fall on my knee or get kneecapped by the Mafia. I fell backwards like cartoons show someone slipping on a banana peel and the kneecap just broke into two pieces, three inches apart. I agreed to surgery only after one doctor said I would be a peg leg (the thought of Long John Silver came to mind) and the other two orthopedists I consulted for a second and third opinion said I might never walk again. That made up my mind for me.

By next Friday, I should have the leg brace removed and start walking again without aids. Anyway, I have found crutches to be quite versatile. I turn off the light switch with them, mop up spills on the kitchen floor and use them for tongs.

Again thanks for your good wishes!

*(continued from page 1: BUDGET DEAL)* them that if any Republican legislator voted to raise taxes “we are going to put your head on a stake,” as Richelle put it. The three Republican Assemblymen and two state senators who defected were singled out at the Party’s state convention and, for those not termed out, will undoubtedly face challengers on the right in 2010.

The final holdout and key to passing the budget was State Senator Abel Maldonado whose district encompasses parts of Santa Clara County. But Democrats paid a heavy price for his vote which came only after he extracted a major concession from them that they support his state initiative for open primaries, a tit-for-tat deal that may be illegal, according to Richelle. Maldonado’s open primary initiative which will appear on the June 2010 ballot is opposed by both political parties as it all but bypasses them, setting up a system whereby the two top vote getters in state and congressional races in the primary will be the only names on the general election ballot for the office the candidates are seeking. “So it could be two Republicans or two Democrats running against each other,” Richelle said. Only presidential candidates will be required to name their party affiliation.

Still Maldonado is being given credit for bucking his party and presents himself as a moderate voice among his fellow Republicans. Indeed, in a recent television interview, he said that there were those in the Republican caucus that wanted California “to go off the cliff,” a real possibility if the budget went down, so the majority party could be blamed for the catastrophe.

Citing the factors that led up to the budget crisis, including the worst recession since the great depression, the state’s high unemployment rate, decreased revenue from corporations, retail sales and personal income taxes, the state’s coffers were bare. “There was no money. . . It’s just the times we are in right now. To address the deficit, we needed a balanced approach to make cuts as well as raise revenue,” Richelle said. With no other options in sight, Democrats in the Assembly and Senate approved the 2009 \$50 billion budget, half California’s usual annual budget, aware that some of their constituents would take them to task for not fighting harder for their core values. In fact, there were people who contacted Ruskin contending Democrats in Sacramento had capitulated and should have held out for a budget with fewer cuts in education and health care.

However, Richelle stressed that if the budget had not passed when it did 95,000 people working on state infrastructure projects would have lost their jobs, schools would not have been funded, college students would not have received financial aid, the blind, disabled and elderly would have seen additional cuts in their health care benefits and, in a worst case scenario, the state may not have been eligible for Federal stimulus money. Admitting that coming up with the budget was like “putting it together with spit and bubble gum,” Richelle claimed that, considering the Republican

intransigence and “ archaic rules” like the two-thirds requirement for the budget to pass (a constitutional amendment dating back to the 1930s), “it’s the best we could get under the circumstances.”

With limited options to fill the \$42 billion deficit gap, the Assembly and State Senate agreed on the following: \$4.9 billion in cuts, \$12.5 billion in tax increases, \$7.8 to \$10 billion in Federal stimulus funds, \$5.4 billion in borrowing. Just when legislators believed they had resolved the budget crisis, they were confronted with news from the State Controller that there is an unexpected additional \$8 billion shortfall, a complication that may be remedied only if California is awarded \$10 billion in Federal stimulus money.

While Proposition 98 was not suspended, education took a big hit, losing \$8.6 billion in funding for elementary schools. School districts were given more flexibility, however, in how money is spent and allowed to consolidate certain programs and increase class size slightly, a concession to school administrators that was not popular with teachers. Higher education was not spared from the budget axe, either, with CSU and UC seeing their funding slashed by 10% across the board.

On the revenue side, all California residents will be paying higher taxes. Largely retrogressive, these taxes include a temporary 1 cent increase in sales tax, a 2.5% surcharge on personal income tax brackets, a reduction in credit for dependents, and a jump in vehicle license fees from 1% to 1.65%, a rate still below the 2% in effect before Schwarzenegger slashed it to keep a recall campaign promise in 2003 that was one of the determinative factors in his defeat of Governor Davis.

Richelle concluded her remarks with a warning: “If the (six) constitutional initiatives (submitted by the Legislature) on the ballot in May don’t pass, then all of this budget deal falls apart.”

*(Continued from page 4: MEMO TO OBAMA)* or an operation, which will cure all of the damage we do to ourselves. Medical costs can be reduced by 50%, but not through insurance, the Single Payer plan, or Universal Health Care. The only way it can be done is if we take care of our own bodies. That’s unlikely.

Here’s a solution if the Lewin Group wants to solve the medical problem without bankrupting the nation. There are about 424,000 children under the age of one who are not insured. The median medical expense for those children is \$432. The mean medical expense for those same children is \$1,684. That’s currently \$714 million per year to provide health care for those children.

*(continued from page 1: SRI LANKA RESPONSE)* authored by SCCDC member Jey Surier and appeared in the February edition of the *Democratic Voice*. More than 75 e-mails and phone calls came to SCCDC President Jay James and your editor from across the United States and from countries as far-flung as India and Canada. While most expressed their appreciation for bringing attention to the ongoing civil war in Sri Lanka between the majority Sinhalese and the minority Tamils, some were outraged, claiming that the article was full of “lies.” From the University of Nottingham in the United Kingdom, Fernando Pasan’s e-mail entitled “Petition against Dividing Sri Lanka” stated that “the majority of Santa Clara’s Sri Lankan community is deeply committed to the Democratic Party and is outraged that the party would pass a resolution whose aim is to divide Sri Lanka into two states.” Some accused us of supporting terrorism like Geshan Alwis: “Please remember, if you support to ‘divide the country’, then indirectly you’re supporting to continue terrorism in Sri Lanka . . . Sri Lanka needs to be a united country and not two countries. . . .”

Still, the majority of the messages we received were like the following from Siva Sinniah, President of the Canada Hindu Cultural Council who wrote: “On behalf of the Canadian Tamils, I thank your members for having resolved to end the unfortunate plight of Tamils in Sri Lanka. Please see that your resolution is implemented with the help of President Obama and his Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and be a part of history. May God bless you all!” Eliza Mann from the Southwark Council in the United Kingdom wrote: “Thank you for taking such an interest in the island conflict and offering space for the Tamil American to write and inform about the terrible genocide against the Tamil Nation by the Majority Sinhalese. . . . This is the need of the hour for those 250,000 civilians cornered in 30 square kilometers and subject to bombing and shelling day and night without food, medicines and sanitary facilities. . . Hope your effort will bring the conflict closer to the end.”

Unfortunately, like Pasan the perception by most of the writers and callers, whether praising or condemning us, was that the resolution was presented to the Santa Clara County Democratic Party, another instance in which the name of our club has been confused with the county party. The county party has not taken action on this matter thus far, although Surier submitted a resolution at the regular Central Committee meeting in March. Another misconception by many who contacted us was that the club, by publishing it in the newsletter, had already given their support to the resolution. Surier submitted the resolution as it appeared in the *Democratic Voice* to the e-board for their approval before presenting it to the general membership at the February meeting for the necessary two-thirds vote to be adopted by SCCDC. (By-laws permit any member to bring a resolution to the members with or without e-board approval.) The resolution in its original form did not pass. However, after extended discussion and debate a revised resolution calling for an end to violence and a political solution to be monitored by

the UN or some other independent organization was approved by the membership.

Whether the two parties will find a way to end this tragedy peacefully or whether they will, like the Palestinians-Israelis, remain so intractable in their positions in which each is so heavily invested through their history and grievances that the solution will elude them is at this time uncertain. If SCCDC has been able to shed some light on what is happening in Sri Lanka, then perhaps we may play some role, however small, in changing the course of events in that country.

### The Democratic Voice

Published by the Santa Clara County Democratic Club monthly, ten times per year.

Submissions due first Monday each month

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Campaign Finance Reform: Dale Leuthold

Health Care For All: Carol Dalrymple

*(continued from page 2: NEWS & NOTES)* 2009, in the Imperial Ballroom of the San Jose Fairmont Hotel located at 170 South Market Street in San Jose. The guest speaker will be San Francisco Mayor Gavin Newsom. A general no-host reception takes place from 5:30 PM to 7:00 PM. Dinner and the program is from 7:00 PM to 9 PM. SCCDC members who plan to attend may request that they be seated at the club's table. RSVPs are expected by April 11. However, it is possible that late registrations may be accepted. You may register and pay securely online at [www.sccpd.org](http://www.sccpd.org).

**SCCDC member Dan Hoffman received The Elbert L. Reed Award** for his 1983 co-foundership of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Association of Santa Clara Valley and his outstanding community service in Santa Clara County. The late Elbert Reed was Executive Director of the San Jose NAACP for many years. Prior to that, he served as President of Santa Clara County Democratic Club for five years from 1991-96.

**Gwendolyn McDaniel** has suffered a herniated disk and will need to curtail some of her activities for the club for a time. She has served for many years as our corresponding secretary and is the person responsible for all the wonderful decorations and party favors that appear at our meetings and events. We wish her a speedy recovery.

*(continued from page 4: POPULATION)* Committee where it also received overwhelming approval. Dunkerley hopes to have his resolution on the agenda at the next California Democratic Convention.

## Upcoming Events

**April 27**--Special Forum on Ballot Measures. 7 PM (doors open at 6:45), Redwood Room, Santa Clara City Library, 2635 Homestead Rd., Santa Clara. NOTE DATE AND LOCATION CHANGE

**April 29**--E-Board Meeting, Engstrom home, 5974 Friar Way, San Jose, 4461609, 7 PM. Coffee and dessert will be served

**Need information about the May 19  
ballot propositions?**

## FORUM

Featuring

**John Laird**

**Former Chair, California Assembly  
Budget Committee (2005-2008)**

Hosted by

**Dean Democratic Club of Silicon Valley  
Santa Clara County Democratic Club  
Obama Democratic Club of Silicon  
Valley**

**FREE and open to the public**

**Monday, April 27, 2009  
7:00 pm (doors open 5:45)**

**Redwood Room  
Santa Clara City Library  
2635 Homestead Rd., Santa Clara**

**Full text of the propositions:  
<http://www.voterguide.sos.ca.gov>**

5974 Friar Way  
San Jose, CA 95129

**Address Correction Requested**