

Chapter 4:

The Media

Oct. 7 Simon-Davis Debate

News Stories: Horse Race/Strategy

News Stories: The Candidates

News Stories: The Issues

Interactive Survey:
Rate the media's campaign coverage

Oct. 7 Simon-Davis Debate

The Debate

The Debate

This is your chance to hear more from the gubernatorial candidates in their own words. Included here is video of the debate between Gray Davis and Bill Simon, which took place on October 7, 2002. Watch the debate or browse through the transcript.

Oct 7. Davis-Simon Debate (60 min.)



[Debate Transcript](#)

**News Stories:
Horse Race/Strategy**

Television

Radio

Newspaper

Television: Horse Race/Strategy

Simon's Accusation about Davis' Fundraising (4 min.)

KTVU Fox 2



Review of the Debate (2 min.)

KTVU Fox 2



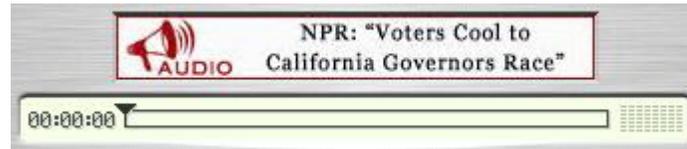
On the Campaign Trail (2 min.)

KGO ABC 7



Radio: Horse Race/Strategy

Public Response to the Campaigns (8 min.)



National Public Radio

Newspaper: Horse Race/Strategy

Negative ads anger voters;

Unhappy and frustrated, they say race for governor lacks substance

The San Francisco Chronicle

OCTOBER 7, 2002

By Lynda Gledhill

Political ads flooding the airwaves during this year's gubernatorial race lack substance and have left voters frustrated with the choices they face, according to results from focus groups assembled by The Chronicle.

Nearly all of the two dozen Bay Area voters who participated in panel viewings and discussions said they were unhappy with both Democratic Gov. Gray Davis and GOP businessman Bill Simon and that neither candidate had produced a message they found inspiring.

"As I watched these (ads), I kept thinking how nice it would be to have a third candidate," said Tom Billings, 71, a registered Republican from Alameda. "Taken all together, this is a terrible way to pick the governor of the state of California." Overall, the group is frustrated by the lack of issues discussed in the ads, and many participants said the commercials had reinforced their negative opinions of both men.

The focus group participants said they found most of the commercials at least somewhat believable, but no one said the spots made them change their mind.

"It's a shame they can't be more positive," said Mike Sher, 59, a Republican from Oakland. "When they emphasize the negative side, it makes more people not bother to vote."

That attitude reflects what many Californians are thinking, said Barbara O'Connor, professor of political communication at California State University at

Sacramento.

"Unfortunately, this year has been nothing but negative," she said. "The effects of the ads are cumulative, and the public keeps saying, 'We hate all the candidates.' "

But O'Connor said negative ads continued to hit the airwaves because they had been shown to work in small doses. The difficulty is finding the line of overkill before it is crossed.

A Public Policy Institute of California Poll released last week shows that an overwhelming number of likely voters are dissatisfied with the amount of time the candidates are spending on issues. Bay Area residents are the most unhappy.

The poll also shows that most voters said the ads are not at all helpful in deciding which candidate to vote for. Overall, 47 percent said the ads were not at all helpful, and 22 percent said they were not very helpful. Only 12 percent said they were very helpful.

Both Simon and Davis have begun airing more positive ads this week, but it may be a case of too little, too late, O'Connor said. "You're starting with a six-month barrage and negative drumbeat," she said.

But Garry South, Davis' political adviser, says what people say and what they do are two different things.

"Focus groups never like negative spots," he said. "But in the end, the only thing that matters is did you change anybody's vote? There is no perfect way to do it."

South said Californians had been seeing a Davis spot between 20 and 30 times a week over the past month.

Most of the ad watchers said they were disappointed by Simon's commercials. Voters said they wanted to hear more from the candidate himself, as opposed to attacks on the governor.

"There was nothing to say where he was coming from," said Nora Barrows-Friedman, 23, a Green Party member from Albany. "It seems like a popular thing to pave over their own inadequacies by attacking someone else."

Simon strategist Sal Russo agrees with the participants' observations that they should be hearing from the candidate himself.

"Everything has a time and place, and there was a time when we wanted to heighten the awareness of the governor's pay-to-play dominating thinking," he said. "But I do think the single most important thing you have to do is build a familiarity with the candidate."

But Simon ads featuring endorsements from former Mayor Rudy Giuliani and President Bush were dismissed by most in the focus group.

Greg Heibel, a 31-year-old registered Republican from Cupertino, said he thought the two endorsement ads were "just noise" and questioned why Simon had to bring in people with no California connection to vouch for him.

Davis' commercials are viewed by many as too negative.

"Gray Davis seems to think we don't remember any of his other campaigns," said Robert Ambrose, 43, who lives in Oakland and is registered as "decline to state." "My feeling now is that he attacks first and defines who he is going to run against. It makes me stop even listening to his ads."

But Dan Dudek, 26, a Republican from Albany, said he thought it was fair to attack Simon's business record and legal troubles because those are the only things voters have to judge the candidate with.

The focus group in general likes Davis ads that focus on comparing his record to Simon's and those that talk about his accomplishments.

The governor has five times as much money as Simon, and South has said he will be spending close to \$3 million a week between now and the election.

"Someone is going to have a problem with every ad," South said. "This is not science, this is an art. And in the end, the only thing that matters is if you drive votes and drive the numbers. All the other stuff is malarkey."

ABOUT THE PANELS

The Chronicle invited 24 voters participating in the newspaper's Two Cents reader interaction project to view the five television ads from each gubernatorial candidate that had the most airtime since June.

There were 10 registered Republicans, eight Democrats, four "decline to state" voters, one Green Party voter and one Peace and Freedom Party registrant.

Before viewing the ads, 11 people said they were undecided, 7 said they would vote for Gov. Gray Davis, four were for GOP candidate Bill Simon, one was for Green Party candidate Peter Camejo, and one planned to write in Republican Richard Riordan.

One group was shown Gov. Gray Davis' ads first, while the second viewed GOP candidate Bill Simon's ads first.

Participants filled out written questionnaires after viewing each ad, and group discussions were held after each candidate's ads were shown.

WHAT THEY'RE SAYING

"I wish there was a viable third-party candidate, but I don't see one. It's very much a hold-my-nose-and-vote year."-- Sue Clark, 38, who lives in San Francisco and is registered as "decline to state".

"I have never cared for Davis, but I now care for him less."-- Oscar Lopez-Guerra, 67, lives in San Mateo and is a registered Republican.

"These ads help convince me that they both are bums; neither is fit to govern."-- Hilda Bernstein, 75, who lives in San Francisco and is a registered Democrat. "I don't like mudslinging ads, yet it seems this is information that people should know."-- Shannon Tubbs, 25, resident of Berkeley and registered with the Peace and Freedom Party.

"It's sad that such important decisions get made on such flimsy material."-- Lois Requist, 63, from Benicia, who is registered as a "decline to state".

"It would be nice if one of these guys had some pizzazz."-- Peter Wilson, 45, from Berkeley, registered as a Democrat.

A Debate Erupts Over the Debate

Politics: Simon asks the Green Party candidate to be his guest. The effect could be an ideological double-team of Davis.

Los Angeles Times

October 7, 2002

By MARK Z. BARABAK and NICHOLAS RICCARDI

Republican gubernatorial candidate Bill Simon Jr. made a last-ditch effort to upend today's debate with Gov. Gray Davis, inviting as his personal guest a Green Party candidate and political polar opposite whose presence would have signaled an effort to ideologically double-team the incumbent Democrat.

The invitee, Peter Camejo, had not been included in the debate by the host Los Angeles Times because he failed to reach a threshold of viability for third-party candidates. Officials at the paper informed the Simon campaign that Camejo would not be allowed into the paper's headquarters, where the two-man debate is scheduled to begin at noon.

Camejo said Sunday that he will come anyway as Simon's guest.

The last-minute tussle, which included a short threat Sunday by the Davis forces to boycott the debate, underscored the stakes for both campaigns today. Comfortably ahead in the polls, Davis is seeking to deal with as few unpredictable events as possible before the Nov. 5 election. Simon, trailing since a confluence of negative publicity dominated much of the summer, is trying mightily to shake up the race.

Simon's effort to leap ahead of Davis has long included the strange alliance between himself—a conservative Republican—and the far more liberal Camejo. The Simon campaign for months has pushed for Camejo to be included in debates and has sent memos to political reporters talking up the Green Party candidate's prospects, hoping to draw attention to weaknesses on Davis' left flank. Expanding that move onto a

debate stage would have been a risky venture, but Simon appeared to be aiming for a debate in which Camejo came at Davis from the left and Simon from the right. Such pincer moves against the front-runner are common in multi-candidate debates.

Martha Goldstein, a spokeswoman for The Times, said that in extending invitations only to Davis and Simon, the newspaper applied rules that have recently governed participation in the presidential debates. Those guidelines require participants to meet a threshold of at least 15% of the likely vote in public opinion surveys.

"It would seem you want to have a discussion among the two candidates most likely to win so voters can draw real inferences and conclusions about where they stand on issues," Goldstein said.

Camejo received 4% of the likely vote in a Los Angeles Times Poll published last week, little more than four other minor-party candidates on the ballot. Other polls recorded similar levels of support. Simon has not pressed for the presence of the other minor candidates, some of whom would challenge him for conservative voters.

In communications over the last few weeks, Camejo has strenuously objected to his exclusion, Goldstein said, and it was feared he might try to force himself on stage or otherwise disrupt the scheduled 60-minute debate if allowed into The Times building.

Camejo said Sunday that he simply wants to observe the debate and speak to the news media afterward, and he promised not to disrupt the proceedings.

"I want to be available to the media that does want to hear my point of view, and I do not see why the Los Angeles Times or Davis has any right to prevent me from being heard," Camejo said, as he pledged to attend despite the paper's promised lockout.

He brushed off the earlier threats by the Davis campaign that his presence would lead to cancellation. "I am not going to leave the room because Gov. Davis tells me to leave the room," Camejo said, adding that he intends to present his invitation today. If barred, he said, he would "explore his options"—such as joining in the Green Party protest outside, or looking at possible legal action.

Camejo, a onetime Berkeley radical who now runs a progressive investing business in the Bay Area, said he opposes both Simon and Davis and does not believe in trying to "spoil" an election. He argued that winner-take-all voting laws passed by Democrats and Republicans should be blamed for thrown elections.

Ed Rollins, a strategist for the Simon campaign, said he was "outraged by the fact the L.A. Times is censoring who we can bring as our guest." He insisted that Camejo's presence was not a ploy but rather a result of the friendship developed with Simon after they participated in a two-way debate last month.

Davis has been leery of giving any publicity to Camejo, whose left-leaning positions in theory threaten to siphon liberal support away from the incumbent. "We're not interested in participating in a circus," Roger Salazar, a spokesman for the Davis camp, said early Sunday. "If Simon wants to clown around, he can do it elsewhere."

Later, Salazar confirmed that Davis would attend as scheduled. "We believe the Simon campaign was obviously trying to use [Camejo] as a prop," he said. "We had a very clear understanding from the Los Angeles Times that no props would be allowed."

Excluding candidates from high-profile debates is a perennially touchy matter for sponsoring organizations. In the last presidential race, Green Party candidate Ralph Nader vehemently protested his omission from the debates between Republican George W. Bush and Democrat Al Gore, to no avail. Given the closeness of the presidential contest, some analysts suggest that Democratic votes that Nader drew away from Gore cost him the White House.

If current public opinion surveys on the California race are any indication, however, Camejo is not in a position to have the same sort of impact this year.

Although many poll respondents have indicated distaste for both Davis and Simon, Camejo is running well below what would be needed to affect the election. In addition, polls have shown that it is not Davis but Simon who has the weakest hold on his party base. Davis ran stronger among liberals and core Democrats than Simon did

among core Republicans, according to The Times Poll. Davis also ran stronger than Simon among the independents, the unaligned voters who could be swayed by a third-party candidacy.

Additionally, The Times Poll found Republicans to be more dissatisfied with their gubernatorial choices than Democrats.

Whatever happens with Camejo, Nader could resurface: He was a last-minute addition to Simon's guest list. Although it was unclear whether he planned to attend, The Times' Goldstein said his presence would not be a problem.

"He's not a candidate for governor and hasn't demonstrated any reason to think he'd disrupt the proceedings," Goldstein said.

The debate will be televised on KTLA-TV Channel 5.

TIMES POLL: Davis Builds Big Lead in Race

Governor outpaces rival Simon 45% to 35% among likely voters. Many consider him the better of two unsatisfying choices.

Los Angeles Times

October 1, 2002

By MARK Z. BARABAK

Gray Davis has opened a substantial lead over Bill Simon Jr. in the race for California governor, as disenchanted voters turn to the incumbent Democrat as the better of two unsatisfying choices, according to the Los Angeles Times Poll.

The survey, completed Sunday night, suggests that Davis' attack strategy against Republican Simon has paid off: After a multimillion-dollar barrage of critical TV ads, the Los Angeles businessman is now viewed negatively by about half of those likely to vote. Davis' image, in turn, has improved slightly over the last few months.

More significantly, although Davis receives poor marks on issues such as handling the state budget, energy and his personal ethics, likely voters said the governor would still do a better job in those areas than Simon.

Overall, Davis was leading his Republican rival 45% to 35% among likely voters, with 7% supporting other candidates and 13% undecided. When a lower turnout scenario was factored in—with fewer than half of registered voters casting ballots—Davis extended his lead over Simon to 46% to 34%.

The poll found a strong Democratic tide running through California, with the party's nominees leading all seven down-ballot contests for offices such as lieutenant governor, treasurer and attorney general—often by substantial margins.

Two of the higher-profile measures on the Nov. 5 ballot were getting mixed receptions. Proposition 49, the Arnold Schwarzenegger-backed measure to promote after-school programs, was supported by 55% of those surveyed and opposed by 31%.

Proposition 52, which would allow same-day voter registration, was trailing with 39% in favor and 51% opposed.

As the campaign heads into its final five weeks, Californians are plainly discontented with both the direction of the state and their choices of who will occupy the governor's seat for the next four years. Though that can cause a certain amount of volatility among voters, in this case Democrats appear to be benefiting.

More than half, 51% of registered voters, believe that the state is heading in the wrong direction, up from 40% in February. And 65% of those likely to turn out next month said they wished there were other candidates running, besides Davis and Simon, with a plausible shot at winning the governorship.

"It's like choosing between two bad apples," said Chris DeLong, a 32-year-old government worker and registered independent from Sacramento, who considers Simon too conservative but questions Davis' trustworthiness. In a follow-up interview, DeLong said he is leaning toward a vote to reelect the governor only because he worries that his support for a third-party candidate would be wasted.

The dissatisfaction transcends party lines, although Democrats are somewhat more contented with their gubernatorial nominee than Republicans. Only about a third of Simon supporters were satisfied with their choice, compared to more than four in 10 Davis supporters who were satisfied with their candidate.

"Frankly, I'll do anything to keep Gray Davis from being elected again," said Barbara Pouliot, 41, a Republican from Fullerton. "I can't think of a single thing that he's done right." That said, Pouliot suggested that Simon "just doesn't have the experience to be governor. It's the best of a bad choice."

Conversely, Dolores Halden, a 70-year-old Republican and retired nurse in Sunnyvale, used words like "opportunist" to describe Davis. Still, she finds him more honest than Simon, who "seems pretty sleazy" in his business dealings. Above all, Halden said, she wishes that she had other choices at the top of the Democratic and Republican

tickets.

Davis' lukewarm standing with Californians would normally signal trouble for an incumbent, particularly since he has spent millions of dollars to plead his case over the television airwaves.

Overall, likely voters are divided in their impressions of the governor, with 48% having a favorable view of Davis and 51% an unfavorable impression.

The biggest reason for unhappiness with the incumbent was his performance during last year's energy crisis, cited by nearly half of likely voters with an unfavorable opinion of Davis.

In recent months evidence has emerged that major energy companies gamed the deregulated California electricity market, contributing to the state's energy problems. But Elizabeth Carlton, apparently speaking for many, said Davis is still somewhat to blame. "He should have been able to detect what was going on and do something about it," said Carlton, 84, a retired Oakland homemaker who is a registered Democrat. "That's his job."

On another major issue facing California, more than half—52%—of likely voters disapproved of Davis' handling of the state budget. He received better marks for his record on education—the governor's stated No. 1 priority—but still only 49% approved. Thirty-nine percent disapproved.

On the broader leadership question, Davis boosted his standing somewhat since the last Times Poll in February. At that stage, fewer than half of registered voters described Davis as a decisive leader. In the latest survey, 51% said he fit that description. (The figure was 50% among likely voters.)

But despite the political danger usually posed by such middling ratings, most of the likely voters surveyed still believe that Davis would do a better job on most issues than Simon. On education, crime, domestic security, the economy and general leadership abilities Davis was favored over Simon by seven percentage points or more among likely

voters. Even on energy, likely voters were evenly split over which candidate would do a better job, with Simon favored only slightly, 39% to 37%.

The contest for governor is Simon's first run for political office. He was the surprise winner in the March GOP primary and enjoyed a burst of favorable publicity after upsetting former Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan. But months of daily pounding by negative Davis TV spots have badly hurt Simon's image, with 51% now having a negative impression of the Republican nominee.

Indeed, the challenge facing Simon over the next five weeks is stark. Davis was leading his opponent among likely voters of all age groups, education and income levels. The governor was predictably ahead in the Democratic-leaning Los Angeles region and the San Francisco Bay Area. But he was virtually tied with Simon in Republican-tilting areas outside California's two biggest metropolitan centers.

Many of Davis' TV spots have focused on Simon's business record, and the criticism has clearly taken hold. Of those with a negative impression of Simon, close to half said their feelings stemmed from doubts about his honesty and integrity.

"I don't like Simon," said Republican Wesley Wolfe, 59, of Westchester, who developed his negative view "primarily from Davis' ads." He doesn't much care for the governor either, Wolfe said, but would probably back him as "the lesser of two evils."

Throughout the campaign, Simon has attacked Davis' prodigious fund-raising, calling him a "coin-operated" governor who runs a "pay-to-play administration" that favors big campaign donors. Davis has repeatedly denied any connection between the money he raises and the policies he pursues.

But the poll found little evidence that Simon's assault has dented Davis: By 44% to 27%, likely voters said they believed that the incumbent has more honesty and integrity to serve as governor than his challenger.

"That's the way politics is," Maxine Bracy, 67, a Los Angeles teacher, Democrat and Davis supporter, said of the governor's fundraising. "I don't think anyone can win

unless they're extremely rich. So they have to raise money."

Two contentious issues—abortion and gun control—have so far played little role in the race, as Simon has sought to downplay his stance and Davis has focused instead on his opponent's business record and personal integrity.

Simon opposes abortion in most instances and is against the adoption of more gun controls. Davis, in contrast, has signed legislation broadening abortion rights and extending curbs on firearms.

Asked about abortion, 57% of likely voters said it should be legal most of the time. Of those, nearly six in 10 were backing Davis. Of the 38% who said abortion should be illegal save for a few exceptions, just over half supported Simon.

On gun control, just about half of likely voters, 48%, said they favored a further crackdown on firearms. Of those, six in 10 were backing Davis.

Of the 16% who favored fewer restrictions on guns, Simon was supported by just about seven in 10 likely voters. The GOP nominee was also outpolling Davis among those who believe that the current restrictions are just about right, leading 44% to 34%.

The Times Poll, under the direction of Susan Pinkus, interviewed 1,171 registered voters Sept. 25-29. There were 679 likely voters. The margin of sampling error for registered voters is plus or minus 3 percentage points. For likely voters it is 4 points.

Another New Start for Simon

Politics: He vows at state GOP convention that he'll finish strong. 'We're on the verge of a surge!'

Los Angeles Times

September 29, 2002

By MARK Z. BARABAK and MATEA GOLD

Gubernatorial hopeful Bill Simon Jr. sought to rally Republican loyalists Saturday with a pungent assault on Democrat Gray Davis, acknowledging at the same time the skepticism weighing on his underdog campaign.

With just over five weeks left until election day, Simon vowed to invigorate his effort with a new wave of television advertising and an effort to reach beyond the kind of party faithful who flocked to the state GOP convention in Garden Grove. But there were few signs of how he intended to do so. Speaking to reporters after headlining Saturday's luncheon, Simon expressed opposition to several bills just signed into law by Gov. Davis, saying he would have vetoed measures to encourage stem cell research, expand family leave and crack down on firearms--all positions with broad appeal to California's philosophical middle.

Privately, the campaign acknowledged it was expecting get-out-the-vote help soon--and possibly cash and an endorsement--from the National Rifle Assn.

Throughout the convention, which began Friday, Simon's advisors and state party operatives strived, with varying degrees of success, to put on a show of unity and good cheer.

Working behind the scenes, GOP leaders managed to quash a dissident group's effort to embarrass President Bush and his California allies in a feud over internal party operations and the president's appointment of federal judges. Resolutions on the two matters were tabled through parliamentary means.

But the Simon team was less successful papering over the dissent within its own camp, hosting a news conference that featured his feuding advisors scarcely bothering to hide their mutual animosity. They acknowledged a failure to establish an image of Simon in the minds of most voters and skirted questions about the financial commitment the multimillionaire candidate is prepared to make to his own candidacy. So far, Simon has loaned his campaign roughly \$9 million and advisors said only that they are convinced they will have the money needed "to effectively communicate" during the campaign's final stretch, as strategist Sal Russo put it.

The best news, Russo said, was that Simon remains competitive despite repeated missteps and millions of dollars in negative Davis advertising--a theme the campaign promised to take to the airwaves and Simon enunciated in Saturday's keynote.

The buoyant candidate arrived at the convention hotel to a marching band's oompah choruses of "Louie, Louie." He took two passes through the atrium lobby, grinning and glad-handing his way amid a throng of sign-waving supporters. "Time for a surge, don't you think?" he asked one well-wisher. "We're on the verge of a surge!"

In his formal remarks Simon flayed Davis for everything from the state electricity crisis--here the lights were dimmed in the hotel ballroom in a bit of theatrics--to his budget policies to his aggressive fund-raising.

"In 38 days, we are going to bring new leadership to California," Simon told the audience of several hundred convention delegates and guests. "We are going to restore honor and dignity to the governor's office just as President George W. Bush has restored it to the Oval Office. And we are going to take back our government from a failed career politician and put the destiny of California into the hands of our people once again."

Noting that California had recently fallen behind France and lost its claim to be the world's fifth-largest economy--at least by one statistical measure--Simon taunted, "I know of a way to get France back to No. 6: Let's have Gray Davis go run France!"

More seriously, Simon acknowledged, albeit indirectly, the skepticism that has

shadowed his campaign since he pulled an upset in the March primary by romping past former Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan.

He spoke of those who doubted his candidacy before, and acknowledged many doubt it still. He spoke of the "summer doldrums"--drawing knowing snickers--when his campaign was plagued by a multimillion-dollar fraud verdict, since overturned, and he faced controversies over his tax returns and varied positions on gay rights. And he conceded that, among many pundits at least, the California Republican Party is seen as hopelessly crippled and his campaign as hopelessly behind.

On Nov. 5, he vowed, "We are going to send a message to the entire nation, that the party of Ronald Reagan and George W. Bush is alive and well in California."

The involvement of the NRA, the country's premier gun owners group, could provide an important boost to the Simon campaign, which is struggling for cash and counting on an exceedingly low turnout on election day. That makes each party's get-out-the-vote efforts particularly important.

At the same time, however, gun control has wide support in California, particularly among the female voters and suburbanites needed to win statewide office.

The NRA was angered by a law signed last week by Davis that removes liability protection for gun manufacturers, according to Republican sources, who said the group may give up to \$50,000 to Simon in addition to its help turning out sympathetic voters.

"I don't know what their involvement is going to be, but we welcome their support," said Mark Miner, a spokesman for the Simon campaign. "They encourage safe and legal use of firearms. Bill Simon is a strong believer in following existing laws to punish criminals who illegally use guns."

Speaking to reporters on Saturday, the GOP nominee said he would not have signed the gun liability law. Simon has previously said he supports current gun control laws, but would not expand them.

As Republicans gathered just a mile or so from Disneyland, the local

congresswoman--Democratic Rep. Loretta Sanchez of Garden Grove--held a news conference at a nearby hotel to praise Davis and assail Simon's business record.

Garry South, the chief strategist for Davis' campaign, caused a stir and drew a battery of hecklers when he crashed the GOP convention and held court in the lobby for more than two dozen reporters. He scoffed at the Simon campaign's assertions that Saturday marked a new beginning. "Every time they say they've turned a corner" it turns out to be "a dead end," South said.

In Mailers, Davis Keeps Up Attack

Politics: Hit pieces are sent to specific groups. Message to women says Simon will try to end abortion rights.

Los Angeles Times

September 26, 2002

By MATEA GOLD, TIMES STAFF WRITER

After months of questioning Republican gubernatorial nominee Bill Simon Jr.'s business ethics, Gov. Gray Davis is opening a new front of attack against his opponent: painting him as a right-wing extremist.

In a new multimillion-dollar direct mail campaign launched this week, Davis accuses Simon of siding with the most radical members of his party and warns that the GOP candidate will try to overturn abortion rights--something Simon has said he will not do.

The glossy campaign mailers--and others that will go after Simon's record on the environment and education--will be sent to millions of Democrats and independents around the state throughout the rest of the campaign, even as the governor maintains a heavy presence on television.

The tactic is one that Davis strategists indicated they would use when Simon, a conservative businessman, won the GOP primary last spring. But Simon stumbled badly throughout the summer, delaying the release of his tax returns and enduring a fraud verdict against his family's investment firm--events that gave the governor material for a series of television commercials. With the tax issue behind Simon and the verdict thrown out, the governor's campaign is now going after Simon's conservative stances, a theme Davis used four years ago against former Atty. Gen. Dan Lungren.

Davis "didn't have to use this before, because Simon has been shooting himself in the foot," said Barbara O'Connor, the head of the Institute for Media and Politics at Cal

State Sacramento. "So he saved this one for later."

Several political analysts said that Davis' assault on Simon's conservatism, coupled with his recent signing of several bills favored by liberals, indicates that the Democratic governor is anxious to motivate his core supporters during a campaign in which many voters have indicated dissatisfaction with both candidates.

"He has to do it, because he can't afford the base of the party to be indifferent to the election," said Bruce Cain, director of UC Berkeley's Institute of Governmental Studies. "The whole point is you aren't worried that they're going to vote for Simon," Cain added. "You're worried that they won't show up at all."

Davis spokesman Roger Salazar insisted that Simon has a bigger problem holding onto his base than Davis does, but he agreed that the new mailers are designed to energize Democrats.

"What we want to do is make sure our base voters do know what the difference is between the two candidates," Salazar said. "As they learn more and more about where [Simon] stands, they'll come out in force."

And by sending mail pieces specifically to women, environmentalists and ethnic groups, Davis is attempting to get out his message without alienating other voters, experts said. In fact, just as the mailers are being sent out, the Davis campaign began airing two new positive television commercials that focus on the governor's work on education and veterans' issues.

"People are truly, truly nauseated by the persistent drumbeat of negative ads, and I'm sure their focus groups are telling them that," O'Connor said. "So it's very smart to send this message in a different venue."

This week, women around the state will receive the first round of mailers, which warn that Simon is opposed to abortion. The GOP candidate has stated that he is pro-life, but that he would uphold current California laws protecting abortion.

However, the Davis mailers claim that Simon "would overturn the right to

choose" and that he has ties to "anti-choice extremists." One piece features a photo of a stern young woman on the cover with her arms crossed and the words "Don't Go There." Inside, the mailer reads: "There's only one way to stop Simon and his radical anti-choice agenda. Vote to protect your rights." Another mailer called "Women We Trust" features photos of Sens. Hillary Rodham Clinton, Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer and Rep. Loretta Sanchez, and highlights Davis' endorsements from pro-choice groups such as Planned Parenthood. Future pieces will focus on crime, education and the environment.

The Simon campaign blasted the Davis mailers as "scare tactics."

"Gray Davis has sunk to a new low," said Simon campaign spokesman Mark Miner, noting Simon's promise not to overturn abortion rights. "You have a desperate governor that is attacking like a rabid dog in a cage."

Salazar defended the mailers, saying that Simon has not had a consistent position on abortion. "It's hard to take him at his word, when his track record shows he's very much involved in the movement to overturn a woman's right to choose," he said.

Some Republican political experts said the governor's campaign will have a difficult time convincing voters that Simon is an extremist on certain social issues.

"I think it's a tough sell," said GOP consultant Dan Schnur. "Abortion and guns were the issues Davis relied on to get elected four years ago, but to a large degree, Lungren cooperated with him by emphasizing those issues as much as Davis did. Simon has been much more careful."

Miner said that voters would not be moved by the pieces, adding that soon the Simon campaign will launch its own paid media effort to combat Davis' campaign. Simon, who is currently not running television ads, filmed footage for new commercials in Los Angeles on Tuesday, but his campaign would not say when they would air. On Wednesday, Republican National Committee Chairman Mark Racicot said that national Republicans would be funneling some \$1 million to \$2 million to Simon's campaign for governor, enough to buy about a week's worth of statewide television ads.

"We will have a game plan in place that we are confident will bring votes to Bill Simon," Miner said.

On Wednesday, Simon reiterated his criticism of how the governor managed the state's finances, a message he has been hammering at all week. During an address to the California Fire Chief Assn.'s annual convention, the GOP nominee said that Davis mishandled the budget, creating a shortfall that will force local governments to cut money for fire and police.

"Gray Davis shouldn't be playing politics with firefighting, but that's exactly what he's doing when he nickel-and-dimes you," said Simon, speaking at an Ontario hotel. "Firefighting isn't some luxury that can be dispensed with."

As the candidate spoke, the massive Williams Canyon blaze raged along the San Gabriel Mountains just miles away, clouding the air outside the hotel with thick ashy smoke.

During his speech, however, Simon did not mention the nearby wildfire.

Simon Bears Dissonant Message, Observers Say

Politics: Gubernatorial candidate's adherence to Republican dogma against big government is at odds with increased expectations after 9/11, according to experts.

Los Angeles Times

September 21, 2002

By MATEA GOLD, TIMES STAFF WRITER

As Republican gubernatorial nominee Bill Simon Jr. campaigns to unseat Gov. Gray Davis, he has been skeptical--and at times even derisive--about what government can accomplish.

In the fashion of a true-blue conservative, Simon has argued that government should be doing less, not more. Want to make housing more affordable? Loosen land-use restrictions. Hope to rejuvenate poor neighborhoods? Eliminate the capital gains tax for companies that invest in those communities. Need to build more dams, power transmission lines and highways? Contract the projects out to private companies.

"California can be a state that stands for limited government and unlimited opportunity, and not the other way around," he tells audiences. In front of Republican audiences, the candidate often blames bureaucrats in Sacramento and state regulations for strangling the economy and school reform.

Simon's message, which sticks closely to traditional Republican orthodoxy, has surprised many political experts, who say it is jarringly dissonant in the current climate. The terrorism attacks of the last year, the recent string of corporate abuses and the failure of California's energy deregulation have made voters increasingly distrustful of big business and eager for more government protection, according to pollsters.

The message will strike many as out of step, said Carroll Doherty, a political analyst at the Pew Research Center.

"Government ratings skyrocketed after 9/11," Doherty said. "It has come down a bit, but government is still doing better compared to corporations and business."

Simon is making his pitch at a time when antigovernment rhetoric in national politics is at a nadir, analysts said. Other politicians have pivoted to address the changed mood. President Bush, who criticized Washington bureaucrats during the 2000 campaign, is advocating new regulations for corporations and the creation of a federal bureaucracy to combat terrorism. Unlike the 1994 election cycle, when Republicans took control of Congress promising to scale back government, conservative candidates this year are talking about homeland security and corporate reform, efforts that suggest a larger governmental role.

"This is not a cycle where generally across the country we're seeing a lot of anti-politician and antigovernment rhetoric," said Stu Rothenberg, a Washington-based political analyst. "Among Republicans and conservatives, there's a sense that government has more of a job right now to protect the country ... and that right now, you need government."

Simon said his philosophy about small government was influenced by his father, the late Treasury Secretary William E. Simon, who was a staunch believer in keeping bureaucracy in check. When Simon went to work for the U.S. attorney's office in New York, he said, his father warned him not to abuse the authority he would have.

"I've seen situations where the government has a lot of power, and you've got to be very careful how you exercise that power," Simon said. Otherwise, he added, "you get the sense that you're above everything."

Davis--a man who has spent almost all of his adult life in government--epitomizes for Simon the ills of that approach. The governor "takes a philosophy that the government knows better," Simon said in a recent interview. "I have a reverse philosophy: I think our people know better."

Garry South, Davis' political strategist, dismissed the notion that Davis is an

ardent support of big government.

"There are some things that government does well and has to do if it's going to get done," South said. But "this governor has never been one who has leaned to a government solution to every problem."

Davis' Republican challenger has a more stark philosophy.

Simon said that while he values the role of government in public safety, he believes that state rules and agencies can be a roadblock to economic growth, job creation and school reform--a view he believes voters share, despite the terrorist attacks and corporate scandals.

"To the extent that people don't fear for their safety and to the extent to which they don't feel they need to rely on the government, I think they just want the government out of their lives," he said.

And so on the campaign trail, Simon has stuck resolutely to his call for limiting government and turning to the private sector for solutions.

"We all deserve opportunity, all of us, and we all deserve not to be interfered with by our government," Simon told about 600 seniors during a visit to Leisure World in Laguna Hills on Sept. 12.

To partially close the state's massive budget gap, the GOP nominee suggests cutting state operations by 15%. In his education plan, Simon would dramatically reduce the number of state regulations and decentralize school districts.

In the past week, he said he would get "the state out of the power business" to deal with California's energy crunch.

Instead, Simon said, he would transfer the state's power contracts to local utilities and create incentives for private companies to expand transmission lines.

Sometimes his message seems out of kilter with his environment.

In July, the Republican nominee toured the Shasta Dam, the largest man-made reservoir in California, a massive public works project that took the federal government

six years and almost 5,000 workers to complete. But as he made his pitch about how he'd build more dams in California, Simon's admiration for government projects faded.

"I think it's about time that we stop relying on our government, and we start trying to limit the role of government and try to empower our people," Simon said, adding that he would pursue private partnerships to build more reservoirs.

"I just don't know that I've ever met a bureaucrat that I felt is going to proactively address a problem," he added.

Daily Power Call Shapes Political Life of Gray Davis Election

If it's 8:30 a.m., he's on the phone with his inner circle, sharing news and strategy.

Los Angeles Times

May 20, 2002

By MARK Z. BARABAK, Times Staff Writer

SACRAMENTO -- Every weekday morning at 8:30, members of Gray Davis' political brain trust reach for their telephones, dial a toll-free number and link up for a conversation that has continued nonstop for years.

On most days the governor joins in, often while puffing away at home on his stationary bike. For the next freewheeling hour, or more, the discussion ranges over the morning news clips, the day ahead and various state issues, all in service of a larger purpose: ensuring that the Democratic incumbent wins a second term in November.

Davis says he views politicking and the need to raise money as one of the necessary burdens of his job, stealing time he would much rather devote to public policy.

But to a far greater degree than either of his recent predecessors, Davis has thrown himself deeply and devotedly into the day-to-day running of his reelection campaign.

He designs TV ads. He dissects poll results. And the whole time he raises huge sums of money, personally asking donors for amounts up to \$1 million--a practice that has yielded a bulging bankroll but also exposed him to fierce criticism from Republicans and Democrats alike.

In recent weeks, state legislators and others have criticized contracts struck by the Davis administration with some of the governor's political donors, including the state prison guards union and Oracle Corp. Both of those deals, as well as a request for a \$1-million contribution that Davis made to the California Teachers Assn. in his Capitol

office, have deepened questions about the links between politics and policy in his administration.

Other governors have taken a strong interest in political parts of the job. George Deukmejian paid close attention to his portrayal in campaign ads. Pete Wilson called donors in search of large contributions and did as much polling, or more, than Davis. Sometimes Wilson even assigned specific questions to be asked, according to his campaign pollster.

But neither governor waded as hip-deep into his own campaign as Davis, who effectively functions as both the candidate and chief strategist of his reelection effort.

"The governor's the boss," said David Doak, the Washington consultant mainly responsible for producing Davis' TV advertising. "It's his life. We advise him. He makes the final decision."

The 8:30 phone call is central to the functioning of the Davis administration, as well as his political team, which has stayed in touch and stayed intact--with the addition of a few key players--since March 1997.

"Almost every decision impacting the state of California, at least from the perspective of the governor's office, is made on that call," said one participant, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "It's the only time you have in one place all the key players he listens to."

LONG-RUNNING PART OF GOVERNOR'S ROUTINE

The calls--which cost the Davis campaign as much as \$18,000 a month in phone bills--are all the more remarkable for having been held most weekdays, and some weekends, throughout the governor's term. By comparison, Deukmejian's campaign team did not convene until January of his reelection year.

But Garry South, Davis' chief political aide, said there is no end of business that requires daily discussion among the governor and his campaign strategists. "It's totally

specious to suggest that the governor of California, one of the most prominent Democrats in America, doesn't have ongoing political demands and responsibilities that he has to deal with," he said.

For that reason, South chose after Davis' election not to become chief of staff, his job when Davis was lieutenant governor. In fact, South said, none of Davis' campaign aides are on the public payroll, in contrast to Karl Rove, President Bush's top political strategist and an important advisor on a host of policy issues.

It is not unusual for elected officials to rely on aides who play both a political and policy role. In Sacramento, Wilson and Deukmejian both had chiefs of staff--Bob White and Steve Merksamer, respectively--who played a vital role in their reelection campaigns.

Nor is it plausible to expect that people who spend years in politics will suddenly stop thinking about such things the moment they go into government. "Obviously, if you watch 'West Wing,' you know you don't just talk about government all the time," said Larry Thomas, a Republican strategist who served both Wilson and Deukmejian. "You talk about politics and who looks like they're going to run against you and how you're doing within your own party."

But Davis has taken those discussions to a new level by instituting ongoing political bull sessions as an integral part of his administration.

The lineup on the 8:30 call changes regularly, depending on the subject matter and availability of individuals. Some call in while exercising, others while eating breakfast, answering e-mail or surfing the Internet. All use a secret pass code, which changes frequently.

Along with Davis and South, regulars include Doak, the campaign's ad man, and his partner, Tom O'Donnell; Paul Maslin, the governor's pollster, and Larry Grisolano, the campaign's day-to-day overseer. On Tuesdays and Thursdays, the conversation often expands to include Lynn Schenk, the governor's chief of staff; Susan Kennedy, the deputy

chief of staff; and Steve Maviglio, the governor's press secretary.

The three staffers joined Davis after his November 1998 election. Grisolano signed on last summer. South and Maslin are the governor's longest-serving campaign aides, helping steer his 1994 run for lieutenant governor. Doak and O'Donnell were hired in March 1997; the daily political call grew out of early getting-to-know-you sessions between Davis' California and Washington-based strategists.

The arrival of South, Maslin and others marked a major change in Davis' approach to politicking. For 10 years, while Davis was an assemblyman and state controller, his campaigns had been run by Michael Berman and Carl D'Agostino, the mechanics behind the vaunted Berman-Waxman political machine on Los Angeles' Westside. Berman and D'Agostino, who demanded utter obedience from their candidates, shunned polling and focus groups and other standard campaign practices. Their strategy was to garner endorsements and raise large sums of money--a practice Davis has continued--then lay on a barrage of last-minute TV advertising and direct mail.

The tactics served Davis well for a time. But Davis and company stumbled badly in the 1992 U.S. Senate primary when they faced former San Francisco Mayor Dianne Feinstein. The campaign produced an ad comparing Feinstein with Leona Helmsley, the New York City hotelier and tax cheat. Davis lost in a landslide and spent years living down the spot. He severed his ties to Berman and D'Agostino and never again wholly trusted someone else's instincts; indeed, aides say Davis' attention to campaign detail is a direct result of that disastrous Senate run.

CALLS CAN BE DISAGREEABLE

Even so, the 8:30 sessions are robust and not always agreeable, according to half a dozen of those who have participated. "No one is namby-pamby," South said. "It doesn't sound like a corporate board meeting. These are all very strong-willed people, starting with the guy at the top." (Davis has insisted, for instance, that his positive TV spots always include a list of his endorsements scrolling across the screen.)

The candor, aides say, comes from the shared-foxhole experience of four years ago, when few gave Davis much hope of being governor prior to his come-from-behind primary victory. They also share a basic philosophical accord.

"We look at politics essentially through the same prism," said South, who described Davis as "a buffer between the right-wing instincts of Republicans and the much more liberal instincts of many Democrats in state government."

The governor declined to be interviewed for this article.

Two key additions to his team are Schenk and Kennedy. Schenk, who served with Davis in Gov. Jerry Brown's administration, is a former member of Congress from San Diego. Kennedy is a former abortion rights activist and state Democratic Party official, who was also a top advisor to Sen. Feinstein.

The women--who declined to discuss their strategic roles in the campaign--have brought a different set of political antenna, as demonstrated during the recent gubernatorial primary. Davis wanted his team to bloody GOP front-runner Richard Riordan, to check his momentum heading into the November election. But Kennedy and Schenk saw strength in Riordan's rival, businessman Bill Simon Jr., and that caused Davis and other advisors to rethink their approach.

"We were looking at his mannerisms," said South, scoffing at Simon's wooden delivery. "They were listening more to what he was saying and saw his discipline at sticking to that message."

Convinced by Schenk and Kennedy that Simon could win with a lift from the Davis team, the governor's strategists poured millions of dollars into anti-Riordan advertising, helping push Simon past the former Los Angeles mayor and giving Davis the November opponent he preferred.

It is just that sort of brute calculation, along with Davis' ravenous fund-raising, that gives the governor a reputation for placing political preservation above all other thoughts. Republicans, led by Simon, have made that image a central part of their assault

on Davis.

FRUGAL WITH CAMPAIGN MONEY

Aides to the governor call the criticism unfair. For one thing, they say, Davis does less polling than people think--and less than some advisors would like. (Insiders gripe that Davis, notoriously frugal in his private life, is just as tight with campaign dollars.)

Maslin, the governor's pollster, said people underestimate the instincts Davis has developed after nearly 30 years in politics. "He's extremely smart about the state and its voters and what they're willing to do and how he can shape that," Maslin said. "He rarely needs me around, or anyone to tell him, 'You're wrong about this' or 'Didn't you realize that?' "

He suggested those who fault Davis for being overly political fail to grasp one of the fundamentals of successful leadership.

"Politics is not a bad word," said Maslin, who has worked for hundreds of campaigns over the last 20 years. "Leadership is a very delicate balance between taking people where you think they ought to go and making sure you can get them there."

Davis' campaign advisors help achieve that balance, Maslin said, adding, "What good is policy if ... you can't get anything done?"

**News Stories:
The Candidates**

Newspaper

Newspaper: The Candidates

Davis' Drive Has Been Unswerving

Profile: Long climb has displayed pragmatism and perseverance, but not always expedience.

Los Angeles Times

October 11, 2002

By MARK Z. BARABAK

In 1994, Gray Davis faced a major career decision. Fresh off a disastrous U.S. Senate campaign, his choice was to seek a third term as state controller or surrender that safe seat to run for the less powerful post of lieutenant governor.

He chose the latter, saying he wished to be "an ambassador of hope" at a time when California was economically flat on its back. But that was not really his motive.

For years, Davis had plotted his return to the governor's office, where he had served as Jerry Brown's chief of staff and, in Brown's frequent absences, as California's de facto chief executive.

Through much of 1993, Davis met with strategists and supporters, pondering his future. Some, like his wife, Sharon, saw the lieutenant governor's position as a step down. As controller, Davis was California's chief financial officer, a job he turned into a high-profile platform for environmental activism and abortion rights.

But Davis was convinced the lieutenant governor's post was the best perch from which to reach the next rung, according to several of those involved in the strategy sessions. The office looked better on a resume. Fewer duties meant more time for politics. And winning a new office would be a validation of sorts after he had lost badly to fellow Democrat Dianne Feinstein in the 1992 Senate primary.

The job switch proved a shrewd one. Davis easily won the lieutenant governor's

race and four years later became governor. His title was a big asset, voters told his campaign researchers, conveying a reassuring sense of experience and Sacramento know-how.

The path he followed says much about the way Davis has approached politics and policy during his 25-plus years in public life.

Throughout, he has hewed to a handful of beliefs, including support for the death penalty and gay rights, that have not always been the most politically expedient positions.

As Brown's top aide, Davis was vital to enacting environmental legislation and opening the ranks of state government to women and minorities. In the Legislature, he championed the cause of missing children, putting their faces on billboards, bus stops and milk cartons. As controller and then lieutenant governor, he fought offshore oil drilling and took on the tobacco industry when other politicians balked. His consistent moderate-to-conservative views predated the national Democratic Party's own shift away from its traditional liberal moorings.

"He's one of the most knowledgeable people I've ever known in state government," said John Plaxco, a former aide. "He knows how to get things done in a way few people do."

If he wins reelection Nov. 5, Davis will arguably be the most successful Democratic politician California has ever seen, winning three separate offices in five elections—all, so far, by big margins.

And yet, for all that, Davis' voracious fund-raising, his clinical approach to issues and his constant eye on the next opportunity have created a widely held perception, in the words of one past advisor, that for him principle always falls second to political calculation.

"What motivates him is to win," said Richard Steffen, who served as Davis' chief of staff during his two terms in the state Assembly. "To get elected."

Those who have worked closely with Davis at different times over the past two decades use identical words to describe him. He is a shark, a machine, the Stepford politician, a man who, for all his accomplishments, still rubs many Californians—and even many of his own aides—the wrong way. It was his "agenda" to become governor, former staff members say, not his dream.

Most of the criticism is said privately, a testament to the governor's power and to fears of retribution. Working for Davis has been a rite of passage for a generation of California Democrats, many still active in state government and politics. Almost unanimously, they share the perception of Davis as someone more interested in self-advancement than substantive achievement.

"When we sat down to talk about his goals for the year, it was never how to make the world a better place," said one former aide. "It was always, 'What's going to get me media attention?' and 'What's going to please interest groups?' " important to Davis' fund-raising. "That was the heart of discussions."

Davis has long disputed the notion that he cares more about politicking than policymaking. "I enjoy governing," he said in a campaign-trail interview four years ago, describing the fund-raising-and-chicken-dinner grind as a necessary burden. (Privately, aides go further, saying he detests the glad-handing and political pomp that other candidates find exhilarating.)

As for the ego salve of personal adulation, Davis said in Monday's debate, "My job is not to win a popularity contest. It's to lead this state."

Despite several accusations of impropriety over the years, Davis has denied ever using his office for personal gain and vehemently rejects any connection between the money he raises and his official actions. "I make decisions based on what I think the merits are, and I'll continue to do that," Davis said last month as he signed the state budget into law.

Born in New York City, Davis grew up in a Republican household amid relative

affluence until his alcoholic father squandered the family's wealth. To help pay for college, Davis joined the ROTC and eventually spent two years in the Army, serving for almost seven months in the Signal Corps in Vietnam. The experience politicized him, Davis later said, when he saw much of the fighting being done "by people of color and whites who didn't have college degrees."

That consciousness of prejudice and privilege has been a constant through Davis' public life. Steffen remembers his boss citing his elite education at Stanford and Columbia universities and his pledge to work so others had the same doors opened. "His rhetoric today about improving schools is consistent with what he'd said back then," according to Steffen.

Gay activist David Mixner recalls Davis' willingness to meet with gay groups during the Brown years, back when it was rare—and risky—for a politician to even utter words like "gay" and "lesbian" in public.

"He was extremely receptive, always returned our calls, and any meeting we requested we immediately got," said Mixner, who later backed Davis in assorted races. campaigns. "Jerry Brown was the pioneer, and Gray Davis was the one who pushed him very hard on that."

But even then, Davis showed the pragmatism—timidity, critics call it—that has come to be his political trademark. "If he thought something could get done, he would make the effort," Mixner said. "If he thought it wasn't doable, he wouldn't waste his time. He'd be very direct: 'It's not going to happen this session, but here's what we *can* do.' "

The caution that Davis showed then and now goes to the question of political leadership and, like the problem of the chicken and the egg, poses a riddle with no obvious answer. Is it the role of an elected official to summon people to move in a direction the politician sees fit? Or should leaders implement the people's will, bowing to the sentiment that helped elect them in the first place?

To the governor's critics, his baby-step approach is a failing that speaks to a

single-minded devotion: to himself and his career advancement. "He never took a risk," said a former political aide, one of several who cited Davis' legislation to put missing kids' faces on milk cartons as just the kind of inoffensive, publicity-grabbing initiative he sought out. "Everything he did was safe. After a while you begin to think maybe it's just about getting ahead."

Defenders say that shallow portrait of Davis is facile but misses a larger picture. "People don't see him trying to solve a problem or grapple with an issue or figure out how to get from here to there on a policy question," said Stephen Rivers, an entertainment industry consultant and former Davis campaign aide who remains active in Democratic politics.

"Those kind of efforts aren't played out in public, and he's not a charismatic sort of figure you see pounding the podium because he believes in this or that issue. So the superficial image focusing on fund-raising is what people focus on."

Money has long been integral to the success—and occasional missteps—of Davis, who got his start in politics more than 30 years ago as a fund-raiser for Los Angeles mayoral candidate Tom Bradley.

After helping elect Bradley in 1973, Davis made his own run for public office, a failed bid for state treasurer. (Davis assailed the front-runner, Jesse Unruh, for prodigious fund-raising, at one point likening Unruh to a prostitute.)

After Unruh won the June 1974 primary, gubernatorial hopeful Brown tapped Davis as a fund-raiser for the fall campaign. After he was elected, Brown made the 32-year-old Davis his chief of staff.

"It was clear to all of us that ... was not Gray's last stop," said Bill Press, who worked under Davis as Brown's director of planning and research. "He was politically driven ... and it was clear that he saw himself someday sitting in the governor's office."

Today, Davis demands utter obedience—and preferably anonymity—from his staff, going so far as to personally edit every press release issued by his administration

and its myriad department heads. But as Brown's top aide he could not have been more different.

He became a fixture on TV and radio, sometimes elbowing the governor aside, to make sure everyone knew it was his idea—not Brown's—to plant the governor in a modest Plymouth as a symbol of government austerity.

Scrupulous about his image, Davis became known for calling Sacramento correspondents, sometimes repeatedly in one day, to edit and reedit his quotes, including the proper use of punctuation; once he berated a reporter who left him unmentioned in a story by scolding, "My name is not spelled a-i-d-e."

Davis' name even showed up on Brown's reelection bumper stickers, though he later said they just happened to come back that way from the printer.

On a few occasions, however, he was frank about his aspirations, something most politicians try to hide. "I like to say everyone in the district is upwardly mobile, including their representative," he told an interviewer after just one term in the Assembly, representing Beverly Hills and the Westside. Another time he acknowledged, "You don't run for state office without some ambition or a healthy ego."

In that first Assembly contest 20 years ago Davis established a pattern that would serve him well throughout his career, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars to scare off a field of Democratic rivals. The tactic worked again four years later, in 1986, when he made his second try at statewide office.

He was sitting on \$1 million in donations when state Controller Ken Cory announced his retirement just days before the candidate filing deadline. Thanks to his financial head start—and a bankroll that later swelled to a formidable \$5 million—Davis handily won the Democratic primary and cruised to election in November.

Over the next eight years, Davis amply demonstrated his political skills and promotional savvy. The main duties of the controller are paying the state's bills and keeping track of its books. But Davis turned the job into a soapbox for causes only

peripherally related to his responsibilities, like coastal protection and abortion rights; he was a regular on the barricades outside family planning clinics.

Davis also came under criticism twice for allegedly mingling politics and policy. In the first case, he narrowly averted prosecution by reimbursing the state \$28,000 for improperly using Assembly staffers and office equipment during his 1986 controller's campaign. In the second, Davis was embarrassed by reports that he had named political cronies, personal friends and relatives of campaign contributors to highly paid jobs as state probate referees.

Davis denied any wrongdoing, but the charge of mixing fund-raising and favors would continue to haunt him as governor. At \$100 million and counting, Davis has probably raised and spent more money than any politician in California history. But he lives modestly—home is a 1,000-square-foot condominium in West Hollywood—which underscores what Davis intimates say: money matters only to the extent it fuels his political ambitions.

It wasn't campaign cash that cost Davis dearly the one time he strayed from his carefully plotted career path. Facing a reshuffled landscape resulting from term limits and campaign finance changes, he plunged into the ill-fated 1992 race for the U.S. Senate. The low point came in a single, desperate advertisement run near the close of the campaign. The TV spot, likening rival Dianne Feinstein to Leona Helmsley, the New York City hotelier and convicted tax cheat, infuriated women and many of Davis' Jewish supporters. It took years—and repeated apologies—to live down.

And yet, while Davis has opened himself to charges of opportunism, his record shows a pattern of ideological consistency.

As far back as the Brown administration Davis spoke of slashing regulations and creating a more business-friendly environment, a theme he took up 20 years later in his inaugural address as lieutenant governor.

He supported the death penalty—even when most elected Democrats did not—

and broke with many in his party by endorsing a constitutional ban on flag burning and national welfare reform legislation. Somewhere between the New Deal and the new millennium, Democrats got "off the track [and] people expected to be paid because they're in a certain category," Davis said in a 1995 interview. He urged his party "to honor work, reward people who work, speak to people who work."

It was that pitch-perfect tone that helped Davis withstand the Republican wave that swept through California in November 1994. Davis not only hung on to win the lieutenant governor's office, but also managed to pull more votes—over 4 million—than any other Democrat in America.

Among those who lost that day was Kathleen Brown, California's Democratic nominee for governor and Jerry Brown's younger sister. Davis had been prepared to serve another eight years as a Brown understudy before taking his own shot at the governor's chair, advisors say.

But with her loss—and term limits forcing incumbent Republican Pete Wilson from office—Davis' timetable was moved up.

In 1998, he was ready with a slogan tweaking his millionaire primary opponents—businessman Al Checchi and South Bay Rep. Jane Harman—and, felicitously, turning his own job-hopping into a virtue: "Experience money can't buy." On election night Davis romped to the Democratic nomination, an intermediate stop on the way to a November landslide over Republican Dan Lungren. As he savored his primary win, the man who had built his success on a foundation of tactical maneuvers and stacks of campaign cash found a moment that transcended any price tag.

"My friends," Davis told supporters in a glitzy Los Angeles ballroom, "this is truly an experience which money can't buy."

Simon Describes His Anchor Politics:

GOP candidate says faith and family support him.

Los Angeles Times

August 11, 2002

By MATEA GOLD, Times Staff Writer

SAN DIEGO -- It was the end of another long day on the campaign trail for Bill Simon Jr., at the end of what has been a very long month.

Over the course of four weeks, California's GOP gubernatorial nominee has taken a beating about his tax returns and business dealings, his family investment firm has been hit with a multimillion-dollar fraud judgment, and Vice President Dick Cheney swung through California without publicly offering his fellow Republican a word of support.

For Simon, however, there was refuge late last week in a familiar ritual, one he rarely discusses but often practices. He prayed.

"If I didn't have my wife and my kids and my faith to go home to, I don't know what I'd do," Simon said in an uncharacteristically personal interview Thursday evening, sipping a Diet Coke as he sat by a pool at his hotel. "I think I would feel very empty and depressed. Those are anchors for me."

Reflecting on recent events in his campaign, Simon said that faith has helped sustain him, even as he has been pummeled up and down California with questions about taxes and lawsuits and GOP politics.

"I have a very, very strong belief in God, a very strong belief in human nature, and a very strong belief that if you try to do the right thing, that it's not going to be like God's going to pay you back, but you'll end up in a good place," he said. Simon added that he prays every day and reads the Bible regularly.

Those close to him say that Simon's religious convictions have allowed him to put

into perspective the series of frustrating turns in the campaign.

"I think it probably brings him back to what is really most important in life," said Msgr. Lloyd Torgerson, Simon's pastor at St. Monica Catholic Church. "Ultimately and finally, it's not about prestige and power. What really matters is, he has a faith in God, and he has people around him who care about him."

Former Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan, a fellow parishioner at St. Monica's, was tough on Simon during the gubernatorial primary, once calling him a "sanctimonious hypocrite."

RIORDAN SYMPATHETIC

Last week, however, Riordan sympathized with Simon and said he believed his former rival's faith was helping him: "There are things much more important in his life than all these grenades being thrown at him."

For Simon, those grenades have seemed to keep coming. Just as he had appeared to conclude a round of questions about his personal taxes, which he reluctantly made briefly available to reporters, he was forced on the defensive again when a jury found that his family investment firm had defrauded a former business partner.

The subject dogged Simon on the campaign trail all last week, but he managed to look upbeat, patiently answering questions about the litigation at every stop. During a speech to the Oakland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce on Wednesday, Simon spoke about the need for class-action reform, then added with a chuckle: "God knows I know a little bit about litigation recently."

"I think he believes [the verdict] was unfair, and he believes it will be overturned, and that's where his faith comes into play," said a friend, Stephen Kaplan. "A lot of people might be depressed and say, 'Why is this happening to me?' Bill keeps moving forward."

Simon said his conviction that there is a larger purpose at work has kept him

from feeling dismayed.

"There's a bigger plan, and it may be you don't always know what the future will hold," he said. "Not everything is bottled up in one event. If things don't go well on Thursday, things could turn around on Friday."

For Simon, those notions are deeply felt but rarely expressed, except to those closest to him. Indeed, several friends said last week that they were surprised he had spoken to a reporter about them.

Throughout nearly a year of campaigning, first in the Republican primary and now as the party's nominee for governor, Simon has almost never mentioned his religious beliefs, except in response to direct questions.

In fact, he often seems to go out of his way to avoid the topic--perhaps in recognition that some tenets of his faith are at odds with the California electorate.

ABORTION QUESTION

Simon, for instance, shares the Catholic Church's official opposition to abortion, but most California voters do not, and Simon has tried to neutralize that issue by saying, repeatedly, that he would uphold California's legal protection of abortion.

Other issues with religious overtones periodically crop up on the campaign as well. At a reception with Latino supporters in San Diego on Thursday evening, he dodged a question from a woman who said she was upset about the recent appellate court ruling against the use of the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance and the prohibition on teaching religion in public schools.

"The best thing we can do is focus on the fundamentals," Simon said, stressing the importance of reading, math and science.

But those who know him say it is evident that his faith shapes him profoundly, especially when it comes to his charitable giving, and that it is helping him weather the rigors of a political campaign.

'SOURCE OF STRENGTH'

"I have no question that it's a source of strength for him," said a friend and neighbor, John Morrissey.

As Simon reads and rereads the Bible, he said, he is particularly moved by Proverbs, the Old Testament collection of wisdom, much of it taken from Solomon, the son of David. In them, the faithful are urged to honor God, to learn justice and wisdom, to turn from evil and to resist pride.

Reflecting on those texts, Simon said he is continually struck by the range of life that they convey. Moreover, he said, he often reflects on the lives of David and Solomon, whose stories Simon said resonate strongly with him.

"There's ones where he's saying to God, 'Boy oh boy, why did you do this to me?' And then there's other ones where he's doing great," Simon said. "You can kind of see the ups and the downs."

GOP rallies round Simon

Sacramento Bee

March 13, 2002

By Emily Bazar

Republican state legislators threw aside their primary-election allegiances Tuesday, rallying around GOP gubernatorial candidate Bill Simon.

The Republican senators and Assembly members emerged from the closed-door meeting at the Hyatt Regency to announce that all 44 now endorse Simon in his bid to unseat Democratic Gov. Gray Davis.

During the primary, the Pacific Palisades businessman and philanthropist had the support of only nine GOP legislators. The rest either endorsed his opponents -- former Los Angeles Mayor Richard Riordan and Secretary of State Bill Jones -- or remained neutral.

"We need to be united as Republicans going forward, and we are united," Simon said. "We all together want to impact and improve the lives of all Californians."

In addition to meeting with the entire group of legislators, Simon met separately with the Republican Women's Caucus. The meeting with the four assemblywomen was particularly important for the candidate, who was criticized in the weeks before the primary for not hiring enough women and members of minority groups into positions of power in his campaign and in his business.

Riordan also argued during the primary that the Republican Party could not win the governorship if it chooses a nominee who opposes abortion rights. Riordan supports legal abortion while Simon does not.

Assemblywoman Lynn Daucher, R-Brea, endorsed Riordan in the primary. Though his beliefs differed greatly from Simon's, she said she's confident that Simon will focus on quality-of-life issues that are important to women, such as education and

transportation.

"My goal is to have a Republican governor elected in November," said Daucher, who supports abortion rights with some qualifications. "Bill Simon assured me that women would be at the table in his administration and his campaign."

Assemblyman Tim Leslie, R-Tahoe City, also backed Riordan in the primary, but for different reasons. Leslie is more philosophically aligned with Simon, who called himself the "true conservative" during the primary campaign.

But Leslie made a "pragmatic" decision to support Riordan nonetheless, believing at the time that the former mayor had the best chance to win.

"It was a pragmatic decision" to support Riordan, he said. "Now, it's a heart decision. My heart is saying this is exciting. ... Mr. Simon believes in what I stand for."

Whether they're recent converts or longtime supporters, Republican legislators said Tuesday that they believe Simon can beat Davis. Citing the California energy crisis and the budget fight that will dominate the next several months in the Legislature, they said Davis is vulnerable.

"We, on a daily basis, watch Gov. Davis fail to lead," said Assembly Republican leader Dave Cox of Fair Oaks, who endorsed Jones in the primary. "Bill Simon's agenda, as it relates to the economy, as it relates to education, as it relates to the quality of life for California, is different. ... We don't need another four years of failed leadership."

Dems' hopes rest on Davis

Governor's recent troubles generate doubts at convention.

The Fresno Bee

February 16, 2002

By John Ellis

LOS ANGELES -- California Democrats starting their three-day convention Friday were met in the check-in line at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel by supporters pushing their candidates.

But there's only one candidate here who truly matters this weekend. Even with no serious primary competition and a general election eight months distant, the focus of the convention is squarely on Gov. Davis.

With polls showing Davis as potentially vulnerable, delegates are wondering whether he can win re-election. If not, some of these same delegates worry that Davis may be a liability in November, dragging down other party hopefuls.

Last year, as the party gathered in Anaheim, lights were dimmed because of the energy crisis and delegates seemed ready to hang their leader from the nearest power pole.

This year, there is a grudging acceptance of Davis as he seeks a second term.

"I have not heard that people are 100% behind him, not with the enthusiasm we had before," said Fresno delegate Billie MacDougall.

Still, her conclusion is the same as many other delegates': Despite Davis' shortcomings on major issues such as energy and the budget, he's better than any of the Republican gubernatorial hopefuls.

"We'll be defending him from all the accusations and defending his record," MacDougall said.

Delegate Ross Mitchell, a 72-year-old retired psychiatrist from Pasadena, said,

"There are many people who think Davis is much too conservative. Yes, in many ways he is. But he has also been a strong Democrat, and he has many moderate and liberal positions."

Ask Art Torres, chairman of the California Democratic Party, and he says all is well among the party's rank and file. "When you ask why people aren't excited about Gray Davis, people aren't excited because there isn't a campaign going on," he said. As November draws closer and Davis and his Republican challenger begin to square off, the enthusiasm for Davis will emerge, Torres said:

"A campaign for any office -- whether you are running for the city council, or governor of the state of California or president of the United States -- doesn't take shape or form until the candidate starts talking about what they've achieved while they've been in office. Once that starts to happen ... the voters will become educated."

Still, this year as last, a winning aura that should be emanating from the state's Democrats is missing.

This is the party that controls all the statewide offices except one, has a registration edge over Republicans of almost 1.6 million voters and is almost ensured of domination for the next decade since the congressional and state legislative lines were redrawn last year.

Instead, there is an uneasiness, and it is centered on Davis, who after two years of smooth sailing has found turbulent waters the past 18 months.

"They're California Democrats in the same position as the Democrats were in 1996 with President Clinton: He [Davis] may be a disappointment, but he's our disappointment," said John Pitney, a government professor at Claremont McKenna College in Southern California.

Republicans have been unrelenting in their attacks on Davis, first for his handling of the state's energy crisis, and now for governing while a huge state surplus turned into an equally huge deficit.

Polls show Davis is vulnerable, especially to GOP gubernatorial hopeful Richard Riordan. Already, Davis has lashed out at Riordan in a series of television ads.

Torres said Friday that "it doesn't matter who the opponent is. ... What you have to do is get out there and attack who you perceive to be the front-runner of the other side, and early."

Still, some delegates and political experts say Davis does not want to face Riordan. On many issues, especially social issues such as abortion, Riordan and Davis are in step. (Both favor abortion rights.)

It would be easier for Davis to draw distinctions between himself and the GOP's more conservative candidates -- Secretary of State Bill Jones and investment banker William Simon Jr.

Torres did nothing to dispel the speculation Friday, hitting Riordan and saying he felt in his "gut" that Simon would pull out a win in next month's GOP primary.

Grass-roots Democratic Party activists wonder whether frustration over Davis may lead some registered Democrats to abandon the party and vote Republican. If Riordan with his socially liberal positions is the GOP's nominee, they say, the chances of this are even greater.

"The key to the [governor's] race really is what happens to Democrats," said Bruce Cain, director of the Institute of Governmental Studies at University of California at Berkeley. "Polls indicate Riordan would win in Los Angeles, and a quarter of the Democratic vote is in L.A. No Democrat can win losing that many Democratic voters. So, I would think priority one would be consolidating the Democratic vote."

But Pitney said the party will likely come together for the common good: "Nothing unites a party like a real fight against a real enemy."

**News Stories:
The Issues**

Television

Newspaper

Television: The Issues

Simon Education Policy (1 min.)

KRON 4



Newspaper: The Issues

Debate at a Glance

Los Angeles Times

From Associated Press

October 7, 2002

Here's a look at some of the issues at the first debate between Gov. Gray Davis and his Republican challenger Bill Simon:

NEW TAXES

Simon says the state can balance its budget, even with a large deficit expected next year, without raising taxes and criticizes Davis for a budget that grew 35 percent while the state's population grew by 7 percent. Davis, a Democrat, counters that he has managed the budget crisis, which he blames on national economic woes, without raising taxes.

ETHICS

Simon asks Davis "yes or no" if he's ever taken a campaign contribution in his office or a government building. Davis doesn't answer directly, but says, "I have conducted myself in the law." He then attacks Simon for the investigations of his own business practices. The governor says: "You're not in any place to be questioning anyone's ethics." Responds Simon: "Your remarks about these investigations is totally false and misleading in every regard."

ENERGY

Simon says Davis should "apologize for failing to act and then panicking during

the energy crisis ... He promised us no bankruptcies, no bailouts, no rate hikes, yet he's given us all three." Davis defends his actions during the energy crisis, saying he was a "lone voice" standing up to Enron and other energy companies he accuses of bilking the state out of \$20 billion. Davis says if he knew then what he knows now, he would have asked the U.S. attorney general to start a criminal investigation earlier.

ENVIRONMENT

Simon says he would not have signed a bill targeting California auto emissions to reduce global warming and adds: "So I believe, yes, we should reduce greenhouse gases and I believe, yes, scientific evidence indicates that there has been warming, but the cause is not agreed upon right now." Davis criticizes Simon for wanting to weaken the California Environmental Quality Act and cites his own endorsements by the Sierra Club and League of Conservation Voters.

TRAFFIC

Davis touts billions of dollars he's spent on congestion relief in California, saying, "No governor has spent as much time as I'm spending today to get you where you want to be." Simon says demand on California's roads is outstripping supply by six times and criticizes Davis for remarks last year that California is building the last freeway on its books. He advocates public-private partnerships on infrastructure projects and says Davis is "the one who's out of step. He's the one who may be locked in the 13th Century, actually."

DEBATE STYLE

Davis links Simon with conservative agenda, calls him pro-gun, anti-choice and a "true-blue, think-tank conservative, a son of the first family of the far right." Twice he points out Simon's endorsement by National Rifle Association and notes that Simon

didn't vote in numerous California elections.

Simon repeatedly cites "failures of the last four years" and demands apologies from Davis, to Californians for the ethical tone of his administration and for the campaign he's run, "full of distortion, false attacks against me, my family, and even now, my late father."

DEBATE DRESS

Simon: White shirt, dark suit, red tie.

Davis: White shirt, dark suit, red tie with stripes.

Latino Caucus Won't Support Davis Reelection

Campaign: Lawmakers respond to vetoes of bills to allow drivers' licenses for illegal immigrants.

Los Angeles Times

October 5, 2002

By DAN MORAIN, Times Staff Writer

SACRAMENTO -- The Legislature's Democratic Latino caucus, angry that Gov. Gray Davis vetoed legislation to permit some illegal immigrants to obtain driver's licenses, is taking the extraordinary step of not endorsing their fellow Democrat for reelection, several legislators said Friday.

Latino members of the Senate and Assembly circulated a letter Friday, informing Davis of their decision and saying that they are "unable" to endorse him because of the vetoes.

The vetoes "contradict our Democratic core value of inclusion," says the letter, signed by Sen. Richard Polanco (D-Los Angeles), chairman of the Latino caucus, and the incoming chairman, Assemblyman Marco Firebaugh (D-Los Angeles).

The practical effect of the refusal of the 22-member caucus to endorse Davis remains to be seen. Some Latino legislators who have endorsed Davis have no intention of revoking their personal commitments. Others said that, though they won't vote for Republican Bill Simon Jr., they have no intention of voting for Davis or dispatching volunteers to help turn out the vote for him.

"I'm not going to lift a finger for the governor," said Sen. Martha Escutia (D-Whittier). "I'm not going to send my volunteers. My volunteers won't be there."

Davis' campaign spokesman dismissed the development as "unfortunate" but said the decision by the caucus does not represent the views of Latino voters. "One or two legislators do not the Latino community make," said the spokesman, Roger Salazar.

The governor's veto of the driver's license legislation came as a surprise to some lawmakers, because he had been working on compromise language with one bill's author, Assemblyman Gil Cedillo (D-Los Angeles), and had seemed to indicate a willingness to sign the final package.

"People who contribute to our economy and pay taxes are deserving of that privilege of obtaining a license," the governor said in August.

As approved by the Legislature, the two measures would have permitted immigrants to obtain driver's licenses, provided that they were California residents, had passed criminal background checks, had federal taxpayer numbers and were in the process of becoming citizens.

Davis issued the vetoes despite a promise a year ago that he would compromise.

Because of that promise, Cedillo agreed to pull back measures last year that already had received legislative approval and would have permitted illegal immigrants to obtain licenses.

By August of this year, Cedillo had agreed to Davis' demand that illegal immigrants seeking licenses submit to criminal background checks. Several top law enforcement officials, including Los Angeles County Sheriff Lee Baca and Atty. Gen. Bill Lockyer, endorsed the legislation, which had bipartisan support.

In his veto message, the governor said the bills lacked a requirement that illegal immigrants prove they were working before obtaining licenses. Davis also said the legislation, SB 804 and AB 60, would allow an applicant to obtain a license, even with an arrest warrant pending "for treason, espionage, sabotage, homicide, kidnapping, sexual assault, drug trafficking, flight escape or smuggling." Lawmakers dispute that contention.

Davis cited last year's terrorist attacks, saying they "made it abundantly clear that the driver's license is more than just a license to drive."

"It is one of the primary documents we use to identify ourselves," Davis wrote.

"Unfortunately, a driver's license was in the hands of terrorists who attacked America on that fateful day."

Polanco vowed that the legislation would be reintroduced next year. "We're not going to go away with this issue," he said.

Salazar, the Davis campaign spokesman, blamed Cedillo for the Latino caucus' decision not to endorse Davis, noting that a single member can block an endorsement.

Salazar added that Davis "enjoys overwhelming support from the Latino community."

Salazar cited an array of actions taken by Davis in his first term to help Latinos, including his agreement to expand health care for poor people, his seeking to improve schools and his siding with workers on employment issues.

"It is unfortunate," Salazar said of the Latino legislators' decision. "But the fact is, Gov. Davis has fought hard for Latinos for 26 years, throughout his career in public service."

Cedillo was upset over Davis' vetoes. But Escutia and other Latino lawmakers disputed Salazar's contention that Cedillo had stood alone to block the endorsement. Escutia said that legislators from Sacramento, Salinas, Fresno, San Diego and Los Angeles had joined a Friday morning conference call to discuss the endorsement question.

"This has gone way beyond one person," Escutia said. "They want to marginalize Gilbert [Cedillo]. But they are marginalizing themselves."

Legislators who were contacted Friday said the decision against endorsing Davis does not mean that they will vote for Simon.

Sen. Deborah Ortiz (D-Sacramento), for one, said she intends to urge her constituents to vote for the Democratic ticket, even though she supported the Latino caucus' decision not to endorse Davis for reelection.

"In the end, it is a sound position, given the significant, substantive amendments

that were agreed to," Ortiz said.

"It is strong statement and a bold position and it comes with a deeply held belief," she added.

Other lawmakers said they would not vote for Davis.

"I'm not going to vote for Gov. Davis. I can't," Cedillo said. "He gave me his word that we would get this done, and it didn't happen. I can't reward that."

At Last, a Chance to Compare Davis and Simon on the Issues

Los Angeles Times

October 3, 2002

By George Skelton

SACRAMENTO -- The debate over issues--real, substantive issues--finally has been joined in the race for governor. Credit the natural rhythm of government, rather than the candidates.

This is a significant event because, after all, issues are what voters continually tell pollsters they want candidates to talk about. Deep down, of course, we all know it's smash-mouth politics that grab the voters' attention and are the most effective strategy for candidates. So bill-signing month-- September--is a blessing. A governor is forced to approve or reject hundreds of measures. He must venture beyond mere rhetoric and actually act.

We've now seen what it means to have a Gov. Gray Davis rather than a Gov. Bill Simon passing judgment on legislation. More than clashes of ideas, it's about real-world competing interests. Not just debate, but deeds.

The bill-signing exercise was politicized, but that's built into democracy. Davis was pressured by the public's will--his Democratic Party's will--to take certain actions. More than he normally does, Davis acted like a Democrat to shore up his soft liberal base while running for reelection.

Simon, in turn, reacted like a conservative Republican trying to solidify his party's hard core.

Here are major examples of how they differed on key bills--and why it matters who's governor:

FAMILY LEAVE

Davis made California the first state to enact comprehensive paid family leave.

"I don't want parents to have to choose between being a good parent and a good employee," he said at the bill signing.

The governor's action reaped national attention and no doubt bolstered his support among women.

The program will be funded by employee payroll deductions.

"It amounts to a tax on all employees," Simon said, declaring he would have vetoed the bill. "People are taxed enough."

Complaining about an anti-business climate in California, Simon said that, if elected, he'll work to repeal two other bills previously signed by Davis: increasing workers' compensation benefits and resurrecting the eight-hour workday.

GLOBAL WARMING

Davis also made California the first state to fight global warming by requiring reduced tailpipe emissions of greenhouse gases.

"We are going to set an example for the rest of the country," the governor said, reaffirming his environmental credentials. "I would prefer to have Washington take the lead, but ... "

Last spring, Simon called the bill "social engineering." Later, he agreed that "reducing global warming--if indeed there is such a thing as global warming--is always a good idea." Most recently, he has said, "I'd leave it up to the scientists."

STEM CELL RESEARCH

Davis signed a bill positioning California at the forefront of stem cell research, thus challenging President Bush's attempts to limit this controversial field.

"It could potentially save millions of lives," Davis said. "I am determined to keep

California at the forefront of medical research and scientific innovation."

Simon would have vetoed the bill. "I'm comfortable with President Bush's position."

ABORTION

Davis signed a bill protecting abortion rights in California even if the Supreme Court ever overturns its landmark 1973 Roe vs. Wade decision.

"Our current Supreme Court is narrowly divided," Davis said. "California is not going to sit idly by and wait for that gavel to drop."

Simon would have vetoed the bill, he explained, because it is "duplicative" of current law.

That may be. But Davis scored by reminding pro-choice women of the difference between the two candidates on this litmus-test issue.

FARM WORKERS

After long agonizing, Davis signed the nation's first bill giving farm workers the right to mandatory mediation in deadlocked contract negotiations with growers.

Davis was caught between the farm workers union, Latino politicians and organized labor on one side--and, on the other, wealthy growers who had contributed heavily to his campaign. He went with his party base and avoided a potential revolt.

Simon would have vetoed the bill. "It will put our state's farmers at a competitive disadvantage to every other state and, indeed, to foreign competition."

GUNS

Davis signed legislation allowing firearms manufacturers to be held liable for their products' harm, particularly when a gun maker pitches a weapon to thugs. One ad promoted a gun as resistant to fingerprints.

Simon would have vetoed the bill. "We have enough gun laws."

Unfortunately, voters usually have to fight through the candidates' mudslinging to find where they stand on issues.

Ethics, experience and ideas all matter. But a politician's policy decisions matter most.

**NRA Strongly Backs Simon;
Politics: Group vows to defeat Davis, who has signed gun-control
legislation. Its endorsement is expected to help the Republican with
conservatives.**

Los Angeles Times

October 1, 2002

By MICHAEL FINNEGAN

The National Rifle Assn. on Monday announced its endorsement of Republican Bill Simon Jr. for governor, saying "we will do everything we can" to defeat the Democratic incumbent, Gray Davis.

The NRA endorsement could help Simon solidify his conservative base, but it complicates his efforts to appeal to moderates--particularly women and suburbanites--whose votes he needs to beat Davis.

The governor has showcased his support for gun control in television ads that depict Simon as too conservative for mainstream Californians. Davis angered the NRA last week by signing a law that removes gun manufacturers' liability protection. Chris Cox, the NRA's chief lobbyist, said Davis "has handled the 2nd Amendment about as well as he's handled California's energy crisis."

"Gray Davis does not trust California's hunters, sportsmen and law-abiding gun owners to protect themselves and their loved ones," Cox said. "What Gray Davis has demonstrated is his utter disregard for common sense."

The gun liability legislation, he said, "jeopardizes a legitimate American industry by holding them responsible for the criminal acts of those that ought to be incarcerated."

Cox declined to say how much money the NRA might put into Simon's campaign. "We will certainly do everything we can to communicate to our members that Gray Davis is probably the worst governor in the country when it comes to defending their 2nd

Amendment freedoms," he said.

Simon reiterated his opposition to gun control in an interview Monday morning on a conservative radio talk show on KRLA-AM 870 in Los Angeles.

"I think we have enough gun laws, and I think we should have a moratorium on new gun legislation," Simon said. "What we ought to be doing is enforcing our gun laws."

The Simon campaign welcomed the NRA endorsement.

"We're pleased that a group that permits safe use of firearms supports us," campaign spokesman Mark Miner said.

Davis spokesman Roger Salazar said, "Bill Simon ending up in the hip holster of the NRA underscores how out of step he is with Californians."

The NRA announcement came on a day when Simon was emphasizing tax cuts and other conservative themes at the Richard Nixon Library in Yorba Linda.

In a speech to nearly 200 supporters, he renewed his pledge to cut capital gains taxes and roll back state regulations that apply to the timber, agriculture and home-building industries.

Simon also accused Davis of undermining California's economy by hitting employers with higher costs for electricity and for insurance to cover workers injured on the job.

Davis campaign spokesman Gabriel Sanchez denied that there has been any "mass exodus of businesses leaving the state," saying that 900,000 jobs have been created in California since the governor took office.

For his part, Davis released three new television ads Monday.

Two of them promote the governor's record on crime, health care and other issues. The third, the latest in a series of Davis spots that question Simon's record as an investment banker, says that the U.S. Justice Department was "suing Simon's company for defrauding the Postal Service."

"Bill Simon: If we can't trust his business practices, how can we trust him in the

governor's office?" a narrator asks.

The ad refers to a federal government lawsuit against Pacific Precision Metals Inc., a company owned by William E. Simon & Sons, the candidate's family investment firm.

Simon said he had not seen the ad, but called it "just another lie by Gray Davis."

He said his firm had invested in Pacific Precision Metals, but "I had no personal involvement myself. Neither myself nor our firm are being investigated."

"It's about time we start talking about what the citizens of California really want to hear about," Simon said. "And that's his track record and my vision. His track record is failed."

Simon Calls Davis Labor Policies Bad for Business

Los Angeles Times

September 24, 2002

By MATEA GOLD

Republican gubernatorial nominee Bill Simon Jr. accused Gov. Gray Davis on Monday of creating an anti-business climate in California that is pushing companies to insolvency and contributing to the state's unemployment.

On the same day that Davis signed a landmark paid family leave bill, Simon said he would work to reverse workers' compensation increases, the eight-hour workday and other labor regulations that he said are "strangling" businesses and slowing economic growth.

"We know our state is not friendly to job growth," the GOP candidate told several hundred members of a women's business forum during a morning address at a Long Beach airport hotel.

Though Simon expressed mixed feelings about the paid family leave measure—saying that he supports the concept but not the bill—he fiercely criticized other labor laws signed by the governor.

Simon said Davis' approval in February of legislation that almost doubled injury and death benefits for workers has burdened businesses and failed to help employees.

"California's workers' compensation system is broken," he said. "How else could you describe a system in which employers pay the highest premiums in the nation, and injured workers get among the worst benefits?"

Davis' aides disputed Simon's contention.

"The governor has created a positive business environment, meeting the needs of both business and labor," said a Davis spokesman, Gabriel Sanchez, adding that California had gained 900,000 jobs in the last four years.

"We're facing a national recession and, despite all that, California is still doing better than the national economy," he said.

Sanchez said the labor laws that Simon wants to roll back "have benefited millions of Californians."

Simon's address kicked off a week in which he plans to pitch his message about curtailing business regulations at campaign stops in the Silicon Valley, Ontario and Los Angeles.

"Opportunity, a level playing field, a chance to succeed—that's what you all want," he said Monday to enthusiastic applause.

"You don't want the government giving you a handout, do you? You just want the government getting out of the way, right?" he said.

Some political experts warned that although Simon's message about limiting government rules may resonate with the Republican Party faithful and business leaders, it may not connect with the broad swath of voters who have different financial concerns.

"Workers' comp and things of this sort are not at the top of people's agenda," said Lawrence Giventer, a professor of political science at Cal State Stanislaus.

"Financially, what people are worried about is maintaining employment, if they have it, and getting jobs if they don't," he said.

"And those in the middle class are still stewing about their 401(k)s," he added.

After his speech, Simon joined several business owners in a round-table discussion about state-mandated expenses that they say are harming their companies.

Scott Anderson, president of a company that makes paper bags for fast-food restaurants, said a 120% increase in his workers' compensation premiums this year will force him to lay off 40 employees.

"It breaks my heart. It really does," Anderson said.

"Now they're going to be on the street because of a party that claims to be for the people," Anderson added.

Maria de Lourdes Sobrino, founder of a dessert company based in Vernon, said workers' compensation and overtime costs threaten her ability to make a profit.

"I want to give more benefits to my employees, but I can't," Sobrino said.

Cristi Cristich, founder of an electronic component company, said the overhead in California is so high that when she recently decided to expand her Anaheim business, she concluded that it would be cheaper to add a second plant in Arizona.

The neighboring state offered her free land, state-reimbursed training and other perks, she said.

"This is an example of the state and business community working to create a better environment, and that's what we need back in California," she said.

Simon said one of his first priorities as governor would be to balance the budget by scaling back government operations.

"We've got to cut government, bottom line," he said.

**The civil-union task force that never was;
Both sides want to know if Davis has kept his promise on same-sex panel**

San Francisco Chronicle

October 5, 2002

By Carla Marinucci

Nine months after Gov. Gray Davis announced that he would start a statewide gay and lesbian task force to study the issue of Vermont-style civil unions in California, the governor's staff says it doesn't exist -- and may never be convened.

The issue came to light in court this week during a legal tug-of-war over documents relating to the task force. Davis, last March, told the Bay Area Reporter that he was "establishing a task force to review what Vermont has done to find out if any of those means are applicable in California."

The governor's statements to the Reporter, a gay and lesbian newspaper, were met with enthusiasm and endorsements by gay and lesbian groups. Officials of the groups said it signaled a welcome softening of the governor's position on civil unions in California. But since then, a conservative group has sought documents relating to the task force through the state's public records act.

"The governor has withheld and refused to disclose virtually all such records" requested by the Proposition 22 Legal Defense and Education Fund, according to Sacramento Superior Court documents. The group seeks agendas, schedules and other documentation relating to appointments to the commission.

Proposition 22, called the Knight Initiative, defined marriage as between a man and a woman. It was approved by voters in March 2000.

'INTENSE PUBLIC INTEREST'

"The issue of civil unions and entitling same sex couples to all the legal

recognition of marriage is an issue of intense public interest," said Andrew Pugno, counsel for the Proposition 22 group. "And to the extent the governor creates a task force to work toward civil unions, that information should be open to the public.

"What's disturbing is that the governor's office for months has been a moving target, constantly evading our requests -- and changing its story," he said.

A Sacramento Superior Court judge ruled that Davis must either turn over task force records -- or show why he has refused.

But a week ago, Eric Bauman, the governor's special assistant for gay and lesbian issues, stated in a court affidavit that "no such task force has been created." And, he added, "no final decision to create a task force has been made at this time."

Bauman told The Chronicle in an interview that Davis promised to create a task force -- but the governor has been "so tied up getting the extended budget in place" and dealing with the flood of legislation that the matter has simply been delayed.

He argues "the governor's commitment to gays and lesbians continues to be evident" in dozens of bills he's signed and strongly supported -- including the landmark law on domestic partnerships and legislation that revoked the state's policy of automatically opposing gay adoption and foster parents.

INTENDS TO KEEP HIS PROMISE

Davis said "the staff would look at civil unions," Bauman said, and the governor intends to hold to that promise.

Still, Republicans say the matter has placed Davis in a legal and political bind.

If the incumbent Democrat has failed on a high-profile promise, he risks angering a valuable constituency; if a task force has actually been at work, then he has lied to the court about it.

With just a month until the Nov. 5 election, the court fight underscores the importance of politically active gay and lesbian voters in California -- and the possible

damage of appearing to flip-flop on their issues.

Republican Bill Simon recently faced considerable heat on both sides of the political spectrum -- from gay rights' advocates and conservative groups -- when it appeared last month that he had switched positions on gay rights issues.

Rob Stutzman, state GOP spokesman, said the court fight over the task force provides "direct evidence of the governor's duplicitous nature -- to tell people what they want to hear, and not follow through or worse, to lie to them. It's one reason why he is so despised by his own Democratic base."

Ilona Turner, legislative advocate for the California Alliance for Pride and Equality (CAPE), the state's largest gay rights group, said the task force heralded by Davis was considered "incredibly important."

'A MAJOR GOAL OF GAYS'

"When (Davis) made that announcement, it signaled he was seriously thinking about bringing civil unions to California, and that's a major goal of gays and lesbians, to have nearly full legal recognition of our relationship," said Turner, whose organization endorsed Davis earlier this year, citing the task force formation as a major advance. "He should convene it."

In April, Davis told the Palm Springs-based Desert Sun newspaper that he had already put the group together.

Davis, who opposed the Knight Initiative, said he had not taken a position on civil unions, but "I want to wait for the recommendations from people who will study Vermont's law and what, if any, (portion) of that law can be implemented in California," he said.

Jean Harris, former CAPE executive director, said the matter should be a message to gay and lesbian voters.

"If we're knowledgeable, registered and actually go out and vote -- we can't let

these elected officials, either Republicans or Democrats, take us for granted," she said.

Davis signs bills with eye on votes;

Labor wins; Democrats wooed

San Francisco Chronicle

October 2, 2002

By Mark Martin

Sacramento -- With a legislative session marked by a bruising budget battle and squabbling special interests behind him, Gov. Gray Davis can now stump for re-election touting left-leaning accomplishments that experts say he'll need to make California Democrats feel better about voting for him.

Davis, faced with lukewarm support even among hard-core party loyalists, signed off this year on legislation loved by labor, Latinos and environmentalists. The famously centrist governor didn't give his biggest backers everything they wanted, and in some ways continued his habit of balancing various special interests' demands.

But by approving well-publicized bills that gave the United Farm Workers union more power, forced automakers to create cleaner cars and gave workers more paid time off, Davis shored up the core support he needs to beat Republican challenger Bill Simon in November, experts said. "It's very much the behavior of a Democrat in an election year," said Jack Pitney, a political science professor at Claremont McKenna College.

Davis was propelled to victory in 1998 largely through the help of labor unions, which were his biggest contributors and also contributed vast resources to his campaign.

That help was rewarded this year -- labor unions fared the best of any special interest group.

The governor signed legislation upping the amount of benefits paid to injured workers, and last week gave workers up to six weeks of partially paid time off to take care of newborns or sick relatives -- both high-priority measures for unions, which have given the governor more than \$9 million during his first term in office.

"He's done a lot to enthruse the base of voters that support him," noted Art Pulaski of the California Labor Federation. The federation, an umbrella organization for labor groups, will spend millions on mailers promoting Davis and organize phone banks and door-to-door campaigns in support of the governor.

Davis also delivered for other core backers, although he continued his habit of trying to balance the wants of various powerful Sacramento groups.

He vetoed controversial legislation that would have allowed some undocumented immigrants to obtain driver's licenses, a high-priority bill for many Latino groups.

But the veto came late Monday night, hours after he signed legislation granting Cesar Chavez's union a much better chance at winning contracts with farmers. That signing attracted more media coverage and may have appeased Latinos, even if it upset farmers, according to Pitney.

"A Democratic governor can figure he might not be the top choice among farmers, but he's got to be the top choice for labor and Latinos," he said.

Davis drives environmentalists mad with his back-and-forth decisions on their issues, and he used the same tactic this year.

In July he signed a landmark bill that will require carmakers to reduce the amount of greenhouse-gas emissions from vehicles. He signed the bill at San Francisco's Presidio with Robert Redford at his side; that signing has been used in some of the governor's television ads and led some environmentalists to declare Davis a "world leader" in combatting global warming.

But late Monday he rejected a bill that would have required computer and television manufacturers to add \$10 to the price of their products to pay for recycling programs. Both TVs and computers have high amounts of lead and other toxins.

In his veto message, Davis indicated obsolete computers were becoming a problem that must be dealt with, but he suggested manufacturers and environmentalists work together and give him a new bill next year.

Still, many environmentalists said Davis had done enough to win their vote.

"We can still be disappointed in someone we support," said Mark Murray, executive director of Californians Against Waste, which pushed for the measure.

Polls show Davis ahead of Simon by 7 or 8 percent -- not the overwhelming victory needed to convince national party leaders that Davis can run outside of California if he considers a presidential bid in four years, said Sherry Bebitch Jeffe, a political analyst and senior scholar at the University of Southern California.

Simon seems to have based his campaign largely on bashing Davis for his prodigious fund-raising, drawing connections to decisions the governor makes that are in-line with his donors' wants.

Davis' fund-raising excesses have even disgusted many Democratic backers.

But Davis may be able to fight that claim by pointing to the UFW bill, which pitted a union that doesn't contribute money to politicians against the agriculture industry, which has given Davis more than \$1.5 million.

"He can say he's for the little guys even when big business was pushing for a veto," said Bebitch Jeffe.

Simon rips Davis on environment

He says campaign donors get special treatment from the Coastal Commission.

Sacramento Bee

October 5, 2002

By Laura Mecoy and Ed Fletcher

SANTA BARBARA -- Claiming Gov. Gray Davis is auctioning off the environment, Bill Simon on Friday attacked the Democratic incumbent for turning the California Coastal Commission into a "conservatory for political hack friends."

Citing a Sacramento Bee story about the continuing influence of the wealthy and campaign contributors on commission decisions, the Republican gubernatorial candidate questioned whether people "who may not have contributed to his campaign" would get the same treatment as Davis' big donors.

Simon also attacked Davis for firing one of his appointees to the commission after the commissioner bucked the governor on a vote before the coastal panel. He said Davis then appointed a "more compliant" commissioner.

In the case of the firing, though, Simon referred to the wrong vote.

He claimed the appointee, Kitch Eitzen, voted against a Davis contributor's request for a seawall, apparently referring to a request made by music producer David Geffen for his Malibu compound. What she actually voted for was a measure opposed by developers that would have required more state review of federal habitat conservation plans. She cast the vote at her first -- and what turned out to be her final -- meeting.

State Resources Secretary Mary Nichols has said Eitzen was dismissed because the governor's office made a mistake -- not because of the vote she cast. Nichols said someone in the governor's office mistakenly signed the paperwork appointing Eitzen. And she said Davis doesn't pressure the commission on behalf of his campaign

contributors.

Earlier Friday in San Pedro, Simon said Davis should have done more to avert and later to solve the dockworker lockout that is further threatening an already weak economy.

After failing to reach a new labor pact, West Coast port operators locked out dockworkers a week ago, costing the U.S. economy as much as \$2 billion a day. Ports from Seattle to San Diego are closed -- 29 in all.

Simon said Davis "has taken no action" and should have "used his bully pulpit" to bring the two sides together.

Administration officials said Davis has been trying to do just that, noting that on Sept. 27 he had encouraged both sides to return to the bargaining table. On Friday, Davis and Democratic Govs. Gary Locke of Washington and John Kitzhaber of Oregon sent a joint letter to port labor and management urging them to resume operations while they continue to negotiate.

"There is too much at stake in this current economic environment to allow these ports -- which generate \$1 billion a day in revenue -- to remain closed," Davis says in a taped audio statement about the letter. "Workers have a right to bargain in good faith, but that can be done without putting the American economy in peril."

State officials have quietly been meeting with both sides sporadically since around the time the dock workers' contract expired June 30. Although the state has no jurisdiction, officials including Davis have offered the use of state mediators, who are typically used when public-sector contract negotiations break down.

Both sides in the port dispute have been in federal mediation since Wednesday.

Simon, campaigning along the coast Friday, said that if the lockout continues into the holiday season, "shelves will be empty." He said Davis has put the state at risk with his handling of the energy and budget crises, but "jeopardizing the holiday season marks a new low."

Davis campaign spokesman Roger Salazar said Simon was chasing headlines, not showing leadership.

"All Bill Simon is trying to do is try to score some cheap political points," Salazar said. "The governor did everything within his power to get both sides back to the table."

State deficit growing, Simon warns

But a Davis spokesman dismisses the \$20 billion prediction as rhetoric.

Sacramento Bee

September 27, 2002

By Gary Delsohn

LOS ANGELES -- Bill Simon, who has been ripping Gov. Gray Davis' record on California's economy wherever he goes, predicted Thursday that next year's budget deficit could reach \$20 billion -- twice what anyone has projected so far.

Elizabeth Hill, the state's legislative analyst, who spoke on a panel with former Gov. Jerry Brown just before Simon's speech to the Milken Institute's annual State of the State conference here, has projected that next year's budget will be about \$10 billion in the red.

"His next budget is going to be a train wreck," Simon said of Davis, who declined an invitation to address the group, citing the Monday deadline for signing or vetoing hundreds of bills still on his desk.

"We will soon, I predict, be looking back at the days when that \$10 billion budget projection for next year's deficit will look good," Simon said.

Hill wouldn't comment directly on Simon's prediction, but she also didn't discount that he could be right.

"It all depends on the course of the economy and if we have increased expenditures," she said after Simon's speech. "The budget also assumes we'll get a lot of money from the federal government, and they're having some of their own problems."

Simon said he based his claim on recent reports showing that state revenues are running behind what the Davis administration projected in May, when it was assumed the economy would be stronger by now. Federal receipts also are down, he said.

Simon, whose chief budget adviser is Jesse Huff, state finance director under

Gov. George Deukmejian, also repeated his call for a state spending limit similar to one used in Colorado. There, Simon said, state spending can't increase from year to year more than the rate of inflation plus population growth.

If such a plan had been in place when Davis took office almost four years ago, Simon said last fiscal year's \$24 billion deficit would have been a slight surplus.

His comments, made at a conference that typically draws some of the state's top economic thinkers, were immediately dismissed as campaign rhetoric by Gabriel Sanchez, a spokesman for Davis' re-election campaign.

"He can say anything he wants," Sanchez said. "He had a whole legislative session to convince some of those Republicans in the Legislature to pick up the mantle of leadership and propose something like this."

Anita Gore, spokeswoman for the state Department of Finance, said no one knows right now how large the next deficit will be. The department is monitoring revenues and expenditures, she said, and the picture will become clear in January, when it does its next revenue projections. If revenues are down, she said, it's partly due to the sinking stock market, which is impossible to forecast with precision, and an anti-business climate following reports of corporate fraud.

"It's certainly a larger number than I've seen before," she said of Simon's \$20 billion prediction. "The department ... makes its estimates based on the best information available at the time."

Toward the end of a week of campaigning and fund raising in Southern California, Simon appeared to be energized by the enthusiastic response to his speech and recent polls showing him within striking distance of Davis.

Following his talk to more than 500 business executives, Simon went out of his way to say hello to two public figures. He gushed when former football great Rosey Grier, who's now a minister, told Simon he gave a great speech and that people need to hear more about the state's real economic problems. Simon said he idolized Grier as a football

fan growing up in New Jersey.

Referring to some of Simon's troubles in the campaign, such as a jury verdict against his family investment firm that was later overturned, Grier said he used to talk to President Clinton when Clinton was enmeshed in scandal and Grier gave Simon the same advice he gave him: "Don't hide from these things. Let it be used as a tool. I never heard you before. All I heard was the problems. Your speech was a real eye-opener."

Simon also sought out former Gov. Jerry Brown and told him he was doing a great job as Oakland mayor and that he admired his late father, former Gov. Pat Brown, a Democrat who Simon said was the last governor to emphasize the need for California to build roads, water projects and other civic undertakings.

Simon had moved on by the time Brown was asked whether he thought Simon was raising a legitimate issue by attacking Davis over his fund-raising activities. Davis was chief of staff when Brown was governor.

"Obviously," said Brown. "I'm the guy who limits my contributions to \$100. I'm definitely concerned about the political process and how it's become profoundly distorted by money."

Davis ag bill OKs blasted

Simon says 2 measures on farm contracts will hurt ag industry.

Fresno Bee

October 3, 2002

By John Ellis

Republican gubernatorial candidate Bill Simon Jr. on Wednesday criticized Gov. Davis for signing a pair of bills that will require mediators and the five-member Agricultural Labor Relations Board to decide the terms of a contract when negotiations between growers and farmworkers fail.

The legislation, which Davis signed Monday, was widely viewed as a victory for the United Farm Workers and a defeat for the state's \$27 billion agriculture industry. But Davis also vetoed UFW-backed legislation that would have more radically overhauled the Agricultural Labor Relations Act by requiring binding arbitration in stalled negotiations.

At a news conference in Fresno, Simon said the bills Davis signed "will put our state's farmers at a competitive disadvantage to every other state in the country. ... The impact of this bill will bypass the normal judicial process, binding farmers to an unfair system in which their well-being and the well-being of the California people is marginalized." Reached for a response, Davis campaign spokesman Gabriel Sanchez said: "It's just too bad that Simon is just whining and not talking about issues." He said the governor "signs bills on their merits. He does what is best for all the people of California."

Simon tied the signing of the bills to campaign contributions from unions. He has repeatedly tried to paint Davis as a politician who exchanges contributions for political favors.

"The union contributions were apparently money well spent," he said, "and the state of California and our farmers are going to have to pay the price as a result."

The UFW itself does not give money to candidates, but other labor organizations that supported the two bills signed by Davis have.

Sanchez replied that Simon "can't get his story straight. The governor is in the pocket of growers, then farm labor, then labor or in the pocket of business."

He said Simon is "the only candidate in this race who has been fined and censured for 'pay to play.'" In 1999, New Jersey regulators fined Simon's family investment and securities firm for a payment it made to a company co-owned by the chief of staff to New Jersey's then-governor. Simon has said it was not "pay to play," but simply improper reporting on documents.

Simon's criticism of Davis comes on the heels of a decision by the Nisei Farmers League to withdraw its endorsement of the governor. Manuel Cunha Jr., president of the Fresno-based organization, called an emergency meeting Tuesday of his board, which voted unanimously to withdraw the endorsement.

"They just feel very strongly about this issue," Cunha said Wednesday.

Simon said he would love to win the group's endorsement, but Cunha said the Nisei farmers are likely to sit out this race. The group has already given \$5,000 to Davis, and Cunha himself contributed \$500.

A Davis spokesman said the governor was not aware of the decision by the Nisei farmers.

Earlier Wednesday, in a meeting with The Bee's editorial board, Simon said:

Local air pollution control districts should have control over vehicle emissions. Such districts currently have none. He said the state should set minimum standards, leaving local districts to enact stricter regulations if they choose.

Later in the meeting, however, Simon said it isn't realistic to try to reduce the use of cars. He used his own family -- wife Cindy and four children -- as an example, saying they often need to go to so many places on a given day that buses could not possibly serve them all.

He would need to know the impacts on agriculture before taking a position on the possibility of restricting agricultural burning.

His campaign plans to spend between \$1.2 million and \$2.2 million a week between now and the Nov. 5 general election. He insisted fund-raising is going well.

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