

CLAIM THE FUTURE
Strengthening the Middle Class

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STRENGTHENING THE MIDDLE CLASS**

**MAKING GOVERNMENT WORK
FOR THE PEOPLE**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
LEGISLATIVE PACKAGE TO EARN TRUST IN GOVERNMENT
CALIFORNIA ASSEMBLY REPUBLICAN CAUCUS**

MARCH 12, 2015



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Exercising Fiscal Discipline: Introduce Cost-Oversight & Long-Term Planning To The Budget

1. **Zero-Based Budget (ACR 45, Grove):** End auto-pilot budgeting to better ensure that state resources are spent effectively.
 - Current practice uses prior year budget allocations as a baseline for future funding without regard to practical need or program performance.
 - This Concurrent Resolution will state the intent of the Legislature to use Zero-Based Budgeting on the 40 largest agency / department budgets as of FY 2014-15. Only departments with state operations and state positions would be considered. The Legislature should evaluate eight of the 40 largest budgets on a rotating basis, so that they are all reviewed within a five-year period.

2. **Biennial Budget (ACA 5, Grove):** Formally integrate oversight into the budget process and allow legislators to plan for both short- and long-term fiscal priorities.
 - Current law conducts the budget process every year with low and informal priority placed on spending oversight or long-term fiscal planning.
 - This constitutional amendment will establish a two-year state budget for California. Every two years, the Governor will submit a budget proposal for the following two fiscal years.
 - In odd-numbered years, the Legislature shall only conduct hearings to develop the two-year budget and conduct oversight hearings.
 - In even-numbered years, the Legislature shall conduct hearings to consider and enact new resolutions, laws, and constitutional amendments not related to the budget.

Modernizing The Legislative Process: Harness The Power Of Instant Communication To Provide Public Transparency

3. **72 Hour In-Print Rule & Expediting Committee Action (ACA 1, Olsen):** Give lawmakers and the public time to review and engage on finalized bills, and reduce outdated waiting periods.
- **72 Hour In-Print Rule:** Under current law, bills that go through the legislative process are debated and amended. Once a bill is finalized, and as soon as minutes later, legislators may take the bill up for a vote.
 - This constitutional amendment will require bills to be posted and accessible to the public for 72 hours prior to a vote by the Legislature.
 - **Expediting Committee Action.** Current law requires bills to sit for 30 days before a policy committee can take it up. This law is a relic of provisions dating back to 1911 when the legislature was required to recess for 30 days to allow the state printer time to publish bills.
 - This constitutional amendment recognizes advances in modern communication where information can be posted online instantly and, accordingly, cuts the waiting period before committee action to 15 days.
4. **Focus the Legislature's Policy Agenda (HR 14, Melendez):** Support legislative discipline by encouraging lawmakers to introduce bills based upon a clear set of priorities and a strategic agenda.
- The current Standing Rules of the Assembly allows members to introduce 40 bills per two-year session.
 - This House Resolution will focus the Legislature's policy agenda by reducing the number of bills legislators are allowed to introduce down to 20 bills per two-year session.

5. Full & Free Disclosure Of Legislative Committee Documents (AB 410, Obernolte): Ensure that all reports authored by state agencies and submitted to legislative committees are posted online and freely accessible to the public.

- Under existing law, legally mandated documents submitted to legislative committees by a state agency are considered public information. However, these documents are not required to be posted on the Internet. The costly and time-consuming process in place to obtain these documents is an unnecessary barrier to public information.
- This bill would require any legally mandated document submitted by a state agency to a legislative committee to be posted on the agency's website.

Restoring Institutional Integrity: Root out Corruption

6. Legislative Whistleblower Protection (AB 289, Melendez): Ensure that government is one of honor and integrity and take every step necessary to fight corruption.

- Under current law, the California Whistleblower Protection Act provides protection to state employees in the executive and judicial branches who choose to exercise their right to make a protected disclosure of improper governmental activity. Employees of the Legislature, however, are not covered under this Act, nor do they have a process for reporting questionable governmental behavior.
- This bill extends whistleblower protection to legislative staff who report illegal or unethical behavior in the Legislature and establishes a clear process for bringing these allegations forward.

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