



California Labor Federation | AFL-CIO

Headquarters: 600 Grand Av., Ste 410, Oakland, CA 94610-3561 (510) 663-4000 FAX (510) 663-4099
Legislative Office: 1127 11th St., Suite 425, Sacramento, CA 95814-3809 (916) 444-3676 FAX (916) 444-7693
ART PULASKI, Executive Secretary-Treasurer CONNIE LEYVA, President www.calaborfed.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Wednesday, November 3, 2004

Contact: Chloe Osmer, California Labor Federation (510) 663-4051

Statement on the Election

by Art Pulaski

OAKLAND — Despite the outcome of the Presidential election, Organized Labor will continue to fight for America's working families and against the corporate interests that George Bush represents.

Governor Schwarzenegger targeted several union-supported legislators for defeat in this election. He failed at each. He has shown his colors as a partisan Republican. Voters in all of the challenged assembly districts recognized that the union-endorsed candidate was the one who would represent their interests.

Proposition 72 achieved 49.1% of the vote. This razor-thin margin shows that Californians know that we are in a health care crisis. One out of five Californians has no health insurance. And the problem worsens weekly. As the cost of health insurance increases and job security becomes rare, more Californians are losing the coverage they have and too many Californians are going without the coverage they need.

Health care isn't an option. Health care is a matter of justice. Health care isn't just for the wealthy. All Californians deserve health care.

Our failure to guarantee health care for working Californians is our greatest failure as a state. California cannot have the best work force in the nation if it does not have the healthiest work force in the nation. The best employers in this state understand that and stood with us in this fight.

The largest – and the most profitable -- corporate special interests like Wal-Mart, McDonalds and others spent \$16.1 million to wage a deceptive campaign of misinformation, confusion and scare tactics to try to convince California voters that Proposition 72 would drive jobs and business out of the state.

The truth is that Proposition 72 would have made California businesses stronger and their workers more productive. Proposition 72 would not have cut jobs. Proposition 72 was not government-controlled health care.

Proposition 72 would not have hurt small businesses. They were exempt.

But big corporations are not the only ones who acted shamefully. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger won office by promising to look out for all Californians. He broke that bond of trust by denying California's workers access to health care.

Gov. Schwarzenegger said he was "the people's Governor." Instead he has backed those same special interests who fund his campaigns. He is raising more special interest money from corporations than his predecessor – and more money than any other governor in the country. He is becoming the biggest "special interest" governor in America. And he is leaving the interests of the working Californians behind.

The public deserved the truth from Gov. Schwarzenegger and from these corporations and they didn't get it. Instead this governor and these corporations shirked their responsibilities to California workers. And California taxpayers like you and I are the ones who will pay the bill.

More of us will lose our health coverage. Most of us will pay more for it. And all of us will continue to subsidize Wal-Mart, McDonalds, and others through both higher insurance premiums and more taxes.

The corporate interests opposed our efforts, saying they support health care reform, just "not this health care reform." Now it is time for them to live up to their claims; we now challenge them to be part of a health care solution. They think they can return to business as usual. We are not going to let them.

We are being called to action as we have been called before at critical times in this state's history. Union workers are going to stand up for this basic and fundamental right, for this urgent need for all Californians to have affordable health care. We will hold corporations accountable to California's workers.

Protecting what we have is critical; helping others get what they deserve is even more so. We will do what is right until we win.

Top NO on 72 Campaign Contributors

CA Restaurant Association and Issues PAC: \$4.5 million
McDonald's (McDonald's Corp. and franchise owners)\$1.5 million
Wal-Mart \$648,000
Round Table Pizza (includes franchises) \$482,000
Macy's \$400,000
CA Business Properties Association PAC \$325,000
Outback Steakhouse \$323,000
Sears \$300,000
Robinson May \$300,000
Best Buy Purchasing \$300,000
Jack in the Box \$260,000
CA Chamber of Commerce Business PAC \$255,000
Target \$250,000

###