

# The Chiropractic Profession in Calif. Must Support Prop. 77

## REDISTRICTING FOR REAL REPRESENTATION

Having dealt directly with political issues in California over the past several years, I would sum up the chiropractic profession's ability to positively influence the political process in this state as being about as effective as it is for every other non-deep-pocket interest group like us. The word "minimally" comes to mind.

It is true that during our recent battles to help our patients maintain access to our offices, we have had wins. Access to our services would have been significantly impeded without the advocacy we have had in this state. However, small, independent businesses (yes, that means chiropractic offices), and the political groups that represent those interests, have had difficulty defending themselves against the major players.

Of course the big boys in the state, like Safeway and the insurance carriers, have been able to bully their agendas through. We have them to thank for much of our recent workers' compensation reforms. It's the little guys who have been kept out of the process. Passage of Proposition 77 will help stop that and force our elected representatives to be accountable to us, by taking the power to draw district lines away from the elected officials and putting it in the hands of a nonpartisan group of retired judges.

Shawn Steel, a chiropractic attorney if there ever was one, has been advocating for a redistricting approach like Proposition 77 for many years. "The positive changes that Proposition 77 will bring to this state will include a newfound level fairness to our representative form of government as well as an enhanced voice for the little guys," said Mr. Steel. "Without passage of 77 this state will continue to be stuck in a partisan political muck for years."

One reason we small independent businesses have had little clout is that the elected officials in this state drew the district boundaries so as to be safe for the incumbent party. That's right. If you are a Democrat in a "D" district, or a Republican in an "R" district, and you won the primary, there was no chance of you losing the November 2004 general election.

We have all seen the result. The party extremes - the more liberal Democrats and conservative Republicans - are being elected and it seems their only interest is in bickering over issues that mirror those of their deep-pocketed supporters. The result has been political gridlock in California and a near lockout of non-deep-pocketed groups from the political process, because elected officials no longer need to worry about being accountable to their constituents.

Mike Schroeder, former attorney for the California Chiropractic Association, also has strong opinions about Proposition 77: "Not only will Proposition 77 get rid of the inherent conflict of interest that legislators have in picking their voters by drawing the lines to their individual districts, it will get rid of the outrageously drawn district lines that separate communities from being involved in the political process," said Mr. Schroeder.

I live in one of those communities. From my house in Los Gatos, a small town in Silicon Valley, I

can drive five minutes and be in three separate state senate districts. However, if I wanted to see the southern end of my district, I'd have to fill up my car with gas and travel over 200 miles down the state to get to the other end of SD 15 - near Santa Maria. It makes local political activism difficult at best. The truly bad news is that without the ability of local interests to influence elected officials, only the deep-pocketed media campaigns of the large interest groups are left to provide influence. To me, it seems like the voters of this state have been divided and concurred.

I'm tired of it and I want my elected officials to know that they will be held accountable, which is why we must pass Proposition 77 to ensure that legislative districts are less "safe."

Join me in voting YES on Proposition 77 and please do all you can to get your patients to support it as well.

To read the initiative and the arguments for and against it, go to:  
[www.ss.ca.gov/elections/bp\\_nov05/voter\\_info\\_pdf/entire77.pdf](http://www.ss.ca.gov/elections/bp_nov05/voter_info_pdf/entire77.pdf).

For resources, see: [www.yeson77.com](http://www.yeson77.com).

*Bill Updyke, DC*  
*Los Gatos, California*

NOVEMBER 2005