

## It's All in the Relationship

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There is much written about politics. Most of it suggests politicians are less than ethical and less than honorable.

At times, this is true. What isn't stated very often is the importance that relationships play in the overall political arena. Current events in California underscore this truth.

California has more doctors of chiropractic than any other state - almost 11,000 DCs, or more than one-sixth of the nation's chiropractors. And while this may seem like a large group, it is severely dwarfed by the state's population of approximately 38 million.

As is true with many states, California has more than one chiropractic state association. And, as you might expect, the membership of two associations together is a relatively small percentage of the total.

So, when the majority of the democratic legislators decided to attack the California Chiropractic Act, the chiropractic profession was in no position to outspend our enemies. In short, we didn't have the money or the political muscle to change the vote and kill the House and Senate bills.<sup>1</sup>

But money and muscle don't always win the day. Most politicians, when possible, will remain true to the people that originally supported them when they first came into office. They will continue to serve the "people that got them there."

This seems to hold true for Governor Schwarzenegger. The chiropractic issue would probably not be high on his list except for the relationships he has with individual members of the California Board of Chiropractic Examiners (BCE) and the International Chiropractors Association (ICA). These are the people who supported him long before he ran for office.

And while it may have come with a political price tag, Governor Schwarzenegger has done the right thing for the chiropractic profession because of the relationships he had long before he thought about running for office. (Please see the top story on page 1 of this issue for additional information.)

There's a lesson to be learned from all this, and it's a pretty simple one. Chiropractic will probably never have enough money to compete politically with organized medicine and the drug companies. Together, they have budgets larger than most states.<sup>2</sup> But we can build relationships with up-and-coming legislators when they need it the most - at the beginning of their careers. This is when even small donations can make a difference.

Make an effort to get to know those running for office in your community. Invite them to meet with all of the DCs in your legislative district and ask them the hard questions about their support for chiropractic. If they meet your criteria, you can support them with your money and your patients. Remember, your vote is only one vote. But if 10 DCs each has an average of 200 patients, that total can have an impact on the outcome of a local election.

If you continue your relationship with your political friends, you will be in a position to ask them to support the chiropractic profession when our enemies attack. Even if you don't call them every time a bill is discussed, they will likely think of you as they vote on issues relating to chiropractic.

This may not seem important, or even worth your time. But it can make all the difference. Just ask the almost 11,000 California DCs. They are very happy that a few of their colleagues took the time to support their governor.

### *References*

1. Chiropractic's California Crisis. *Dynamic Chiropractic*, July 16, 2007.  
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2. The Brainwashing Is Working. *Dynamic Chiropractic*, Sept. 24, 2007.  
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