

Anti-Chiropractic Governor Faces Recall

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Less than eight months after California Governor Gray Davis' re-election, the state is embroiled in its 32nd effort to recall a governor. While none of the previous efforts have qualified for the ballot, more than 700,000 people (of the 900,000 needed) have already signed the petition to get Davis recalled as California's governor. Among various other reasons for the recall, the petition cites: "Failing to deal with the state's major problems until they get to a crisis stage."

That point couldn't apply better to the chiropractic profession, which has been ignored by Davis repeatedly and attacked in his budget proposal, offered in January.

The California Board of Chiropractic Examiners (CBCE) was essentially shut down by Davis in July 2002 when he refused to make any appointments to the CBCE during his first three years in office.¹ By not making appointments, Davis drove the board membership to below the minimum number of members necessary to hold a meeting.²

During this same time, Davis made numerous appointments to other licensing boards, including 13 to the medical board, four to the osteopathic board and two to the physical therapy board. Despite having plenty of applications from interested DCs when he took office in 1998, Davis decided not to make any appointments to the CBCE until March 21, 2002, when he was taken to task by two articles in *Dynamic Chiropractic*.³

Rather than fill the remaining five board seats at that time, Davis chose to appoint only two new members: a DC and an attorney. This left the CBCE with four members - barely the number needed to hold meetings and take action, provided they all voted unanimously.

The publication of two more articles in *Dynamic Chiropractic* regarding this issue brought another Davis appointment on May 22, which still left two vacancies.⁴ It is speculated that his re-election efforts may have been the only reason Davis filled any of the chiropractic vacancies during 2002.⁵

Davis won re-election in 2002 by a slim 5-percent margin. Some political analysts have suggested that essentially, he bought the elections by outspending challenger Bill Simon by a 3-to-1 margin.

Less than two months after his re-election, Davis unveiled his budget proposal for the 2003-2004 fiscal year. It included another slap in the face for chiropractic - a proposal to strip chiropractic benefits from Medi-Cal.⁶ Fortunately, the California legislature has not been quick to adopt his proposal. Removing chiropractic from the state's medical benefits is still being debated at this time.

The efforts to recall Davis are enjoying broad support. Chiropractic is not the only group that has been negatively affected by him. However, there are still almost 200,000 signatures needed to put the recall on the ballot.

While doctors and students of chiropractic weren't successful in defeating Davis at the polls,⁷ they have a new opportunity with this recall effort. The chiropractic profession has a second chance to be among those vocally opposed to his abuses over the last four-plus years.

This is a second chance to send a message to Davis and other politicians, letting them know that we may not be the biggest profession in the state, but we are willing to stand up for ourselves, and oppose those who oppose us and jeopardize the welfare of our patients.

Participation is easy. There is a Web site; www.RecallGrayDavis.com, that has everything you need. You can endorse the recall, download petitions and pass them around for your family, friends and patients to sign. Just make certain that the person signing is a registered voter and is registered in the county you designate at the top of the petition. It should only take about two weeks to get most of your signatures. Once they are completed, send them in as soon as possible. The final deadline is Sept. 2, but the petitions need to reach the organizers much sooner than that.

Also, remember to fill out the declaration section at the bottom of the petition as the person circulating the petition. Be sure to add your "D.C." after your name, so that the organizers know the chiropractic profession is participating actively.

The 900,000 signatures needed to recall Davis must be "qualified" signatures. As signatures can be disqualified for a number of reasons, an additional 100,000 - 200,000 needs to be collected to be certain of getting the recall on the ballot. This is why following the directions is so important; not doing so could disqualify signatures.

This is a unique opportunity for the doctors and students of chiropractic to be heard. A recall is a grassroots effort in which everyone has the same voice. United, we can ensure that chiropractic's voice is loud and clear. We can ensure that our next California governor has respect and appreciation for the state's 10,000-plus doctors of chiropractic, our students and our millions of patients.

References

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JULY 2003