



# The Progressive Republican

California Republican League  
888 Robb Road  
Palo Alto CA 94306

## The California Republican League's Newsletter

Special Post Election Issue [www.republicanleague.org](http://www.republicanleague.org)

Fall 2008

### THE DENIAL CONTINUES: The California GOP and Abortion

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by Mark Herrick  
State President, CRL

It is said that insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. Republicans keep running pro-life candidates state wide in California, losing every time, and run them again expecting a different result. Right now, after the 2008 debacle, Republicans are doing all this analysis and soul searching to figure out how to start winning elections again. One solution is as plain as the nose on my face, and therefore, does not need any more analysis or debate. The solution is: don't run pro-life candidates statewide in California.

However, one man clearly didn't get the memo. Chuck Devore just announced his candidacy for the U.S. Senate. Chuck Devore won't win. He might win the primary but he will never be a U.S. Senator from California. I can say that with absolute certainty. Why? Chuck Devore is pro-life. That disqualifies him as a viable candidate in California. Now I don't want anyone to misunderstand me here; being pro-choice does not guarantee you are going to win, but you have to be pro-choice to have a chance at winning. In addition, I am only talking about California. In other states, the exact opposite might even be true. But in California, a pro-life candidate cannot get elected statewide. You may ask how I could possibly make such a bold statement with such certainty. Especially when the political winds are always changing and anything can happen in politics. Look at President-elect Obama.

Who could have thought he could have become president just six years ago. So it is true - there are very few

consistent rules in politics, but there is one rule in California politics that is consistent and unbending. The rule is that a pro-life Candidate can't win statewide in California. It's as certain as gravity.

The last U.S. Senator from California who was pro-life was George Murphy — and he was appointed in 1965 and lost his only election in 1970. That means a pro-life U.S. Senator from California has not been elected in my life time. I am forty two years old. Two generations of Californians have been born and reached adulthood without being represented by a pro-life U.S. Senator. The last time a pro-life candidate won state wide in California (besides U.S. Senator that includes the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Controller, Treasurer, Attorney General, Insurance Commissioner, and the Superintendent of Public Instruction) was in 1994. That was Dan Lungren.

The only other Republican to win in 1994 was Chuck Quakenbush and he was pro-choice. And of course, Dan Lungren had the advantage of incumbency that year. When Mr. Lungren ran for Governor four years later he was trounced by Gray Davis. So the record for pro-life state wide candidates in the last fourteen years is one in twenty four. And the one pro-life candidate that did win in that fourteen year period, was an incumbent, and was trounced four years later by Gray Davis; who you have to admit, was not the most charismatic or formidable candidate. In the last ten years the pro-life candidates have had a zero rate of success. That means they are zero and sixteen.

If you need more convincing, a pro-life candidate for President has not

captured California's electoral votes since 1992, and that was George HW Bush who had earlier switched his views on abortion. The last pro-life governor in California was Ronald Reagan and he was elected the year I was born. On the subject of California Governors, pro-choice Arnold Schwarzenegger trounced Gray Davis just eight months after pro-life Bill Simon lost to him. When Bill Simon ran against Gray Davis, Gray Davis had the lowest approval ratings of any Governor in the history of California. He had the same chances at reelection as Herbert Hoover did in 1932. Yet somehow bill Simon found a way to lose to Gray Davis. Do you think his position on abortion had something to do with it? And like I said, just eight months later, pro-choice Arnold Schwarzenegger trounced Gray Davis. Seeing a trend here?

You may wonder how a political rule such as the one I am claiming could exist. You just need to look at the views of the average California voter. The most recent PPIC poll (January of 2007) showed that 71% of California voters support Roe v. Wade. In 2002, 71% of voters said they considered themselves pro-choice. That number represents almost ¾ of the California electorate. I can't think of any other current hot political issue where ¾ of the California electorate supports one side. Can you?

If you are still not convinced, look at propositions seventy three, eighty five, and most recently; proposition four. Three times the pro-life activists in this state have tried to pass a proposition that would just require a minor to notify their parents before they

have an abortion. This proposition was rejected not once, but thrice by the voters of this state.

Think about what that means is going on in the California voters' mind. They are fine with the fact that a doctor can't even give a minor an aspirin without getting their parent's consent and yet the California electorate insisted three times that a female minor be able to get an abortion not only without her parent's consent, but she doesn't even have to notify them. Californians are so pro-choice they have given the right of an abortion to a minor when they haven't given them the right to vote, drive a car, have a beer or choose to buy a cigarette. And yet somehow, Chuck DeVore, expects this same firmly pro-choice electorate to elect candidates that think abortion should be illegal in the first trimester.

You may think, well why can't a pro-life candidate just focus on different issues? Unfortunately, a candidate's opponents also has a say on which issues are discussed. And if the Republicans run a pro-life candidate statewide you can bet your bottom dollar their opponent will discuss abortion. It's the Democrat's trump card. When Matt Fong, who thought abortion should be legal in the first trimester, ran against Barbara Boxer in 1998, Boxer ran commercial after commercial showing that he was pro-life when it came to late term abortions and parental consent. She ran those commercials repeatedly against Matt Fong and beat him handily. When it looked as though Tom McClintock might beat Steve Westly for the position as state controller in 2002, at the end of the race, Steve Westly started running television ads pointing out that McClintock was pro-life. He pointed out the one weakness that he new would work, and of course, he beat McClintock. The irony here is that the State Controller has absolutely no influence over the abortion issue, but California voters didn't seem to care.

On most issues you can't get such consistency from the California electorate as you get from them on the abortion issue. Californians

elect candidates all the time that disagree with them on some important issues. For example, Jerry Brown is against the death penalty, and sixty seven percent of Californians support the death penalty (that is over two thirds), and yet two years ago the California voters elected Jerry Brown to the office of Attorney General. You may ask how could a man that has a reputation as being so liberal, and disagrees with two thirds of the electorate on one of the most important issues for an attorney general: the death penalty; win the office of Attorney General? The answer is he ran against a pro-life Republican. It seems no matter how bad a candidate the Democrats put up, that candidate will win if he or she faces a pro-life Republican. This is how we get so many extreme liberals representing such a conservative state; these ultra liberal Democrats slip into an otherwise unobtainable office because we make the mistake of putting up unelectable candidates against them. The last time Jerry Brown ran state wide he lost, but of course when he lost, he ran against a pro-choice Republican; Pete Wilson.

Therefore, it seems Californians will elect candidates that differ with them on many issues, as long as the candidate is with them on most of the other issues and the opposing candidate does not appeal to them. However, the exception to this rule is the abortion issue. Californians will not elect a pro-life candidate state wide no matter how much they agree with that candidate on other issues, and who that candidate is running against.

The tragic comedy about running pro-life candidates statewide in California is that, if elected, they could do absolutely nothing about abortion in California. The U.S. Supreme Court has held that abortion is a right under the US Constitution. Even if the Supreme Court changed its mind, and overturned Roe v. Wade, that would leave the decision whether abortion was legal to the states. And the California Supreme Court has ruled not only that women in California, under the California

Constitution, have a right to abortions, but they have a right to late term abortions and minors have a right to have an abortion without telling their parents. The only way these California Supreme Court decisions could be overturned would be by a proposition, and this proposition would have to be passed by the same electorate that has voted that minors have a right to an abortion without parental consent three times.

So if pro-life candidates can't get elected statewide in California, and even if they could there is nothing they could do to affect the abortion issue in this state, why even run a pro-life candidate? To make a statement? Well while you are making your statement, you are insuring Democrat victories. Every time the Republicans run a pro-life candidate state wide, we are just handing that office to the Democrats. Democrats pray that their opponent will be pro-life. Gray Davis even went so far as to insure that his opponent in his reelection was pro-life (Simon) by running television ads against pro-choice Riordan in the Republican Party primary to help pro-life Simon win. And California Republicans, in our infinite wisdom, let Davis choose his opponent. And what happened – one of the most unpopular incumbents in California history won because we let Gray Davis choose a pro-life candidate as his opponent.

When we nominate pro-life candidates we allow extremely liberal Democrats to get elected. Boxer has reaped the benefit of our inability to run a pro-choice candidate against her multiple times. She is one of the most liberal Senators in the U.S. Senate, but she keeps returning because we run pro-life candidates against her. Think about what this means for the future. Gerry Brown is thinking about running for Governor in 2010. This is a goal he will achieve, if he wins the Democrat primary and we run a pro-life candidate against him. If he runs for Governor, San Francisco District Attorney Kamela D. Harris is thinking about running to replace him as Attorney

General. She is very controversial because she refused to pursue the death penalty for a man that shot and killed a cop in San Francisco. Normally such a woman wouldn't have a chance of winning the office of California Attorney General. However, if she wins the Democrat primary, and we run a pro-life candidate against her, like we did with Gerry Brown, she will win.

In politics you have to respect the wish of the voters or face oblivion. The electorate in California has made it very clear what their position on abortion is and will only vote for candidates that support their position. I don't know how they could make their position on this issue any clearer. Californians are fiscally conservative and generally support most Republican principles. When we put up pro-choice candidates for state wide office, they don't always win but often our candidates win by a landslide. Wilson, Poizner, and Schwarzenegger won all of their state wide elections by huge margins. But when we put up pro-life candidates we **always** get beaten.

Having discussions about how Republicans can win statewide in California, without addressing the abortion issue, is like discussing how you can get your car to win the Indy 500 when it doesn't have wheels. You have to insure you have wheels on the car first, or all other considerations are moot. The same goes for California statewide candidates. Unless they are pro-choice, no matter whom you run, and what their positions are on other issues, how much money they have and how well they run their campaign, they are like that Indy car with no wheels; victory is impossible.