

ELECTION 2004

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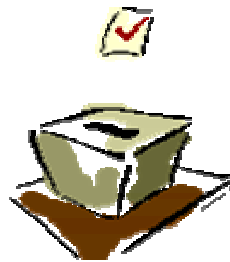
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CHILDREN CAN'T VOTE — BUT YOU CAN



For more than twenty years, the Children's Network has been dedicated to improving the lives of Solano County children through education, advocacy, and coordination of services. We work closely with state and local legislators on behalf of children, convening and supporting various councils concerned with children's issues, and providing research and analysis on the effectiveness of children's programs in our county. In order to learn more about their vision for children in our community, we asked all local candidates for State Assembly and Senate the following three questions. We requested that they keep their responses to 200 words per question.

1. Referrals for child abuse and foster care placements are increasing in Solano County. The governor stated in the 2004-2005 State budget that prevention programs that promote family stability save the state money. Do you agree with this analysis? If yes, what would you do to increase the availability of these programs? If not, how would you approach reducing the incidence of child abuse in our county and our state?
2. For many families, the cost of quality childcare is their second biggest expense- second only to housing. Yet, these families tell us they need affordable, accessible, good quality child care to maintain

employment. What role, if any, do you believe state legislators should play in assuring that quality childcare and early learning opportunities are available for all working families regardless of income?

3. Solano County is proud to be one of the most successful counties in the state in securing health insurance for nearly all of our children. However, rapidly rising health insurance costs threaten our ability to maintain this success, and place significant costs on both public and private employers and upon the families themselves. What do you believe is the state's role in addressing this challenge, if any?

For candidates' responses, see pages 2-N. We also encourage you to be fully informed about congressional, senatorial, and presidential races, and the ballot initiatives. You can link to further information by going to our website, www.childnet.org, and clicking on **Register to Vote**, or by contacting our office for either of the following materials:

- # *Children's Advocate Newsletter* (analysis of ballot initiatives impacting children)
- # *Easy voter guide* (short and sweet candidate statements and summaries of all ballot initiatives)

Remember, our children are counting on you to carefully consider the available options and VOTE in this very important election. Their futures are in your hands.

STATE ASSEMBLY, DISTRICT 7

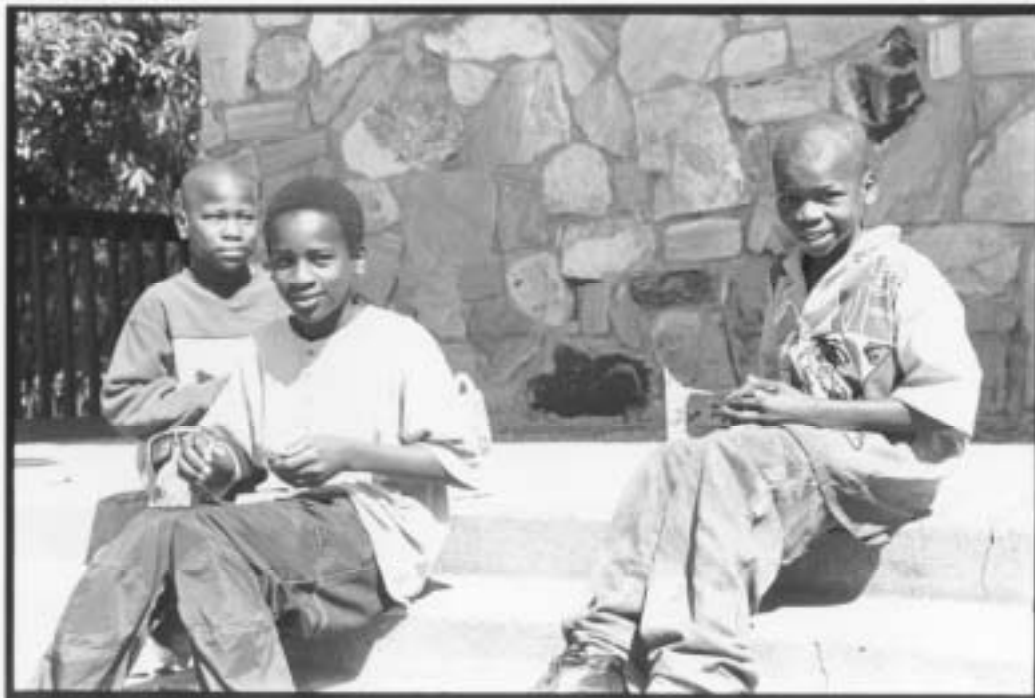
NOREEN EVANS

1) While I certainly believe that family stability programs can reduce child abuse and that overall the state must provide sufficient investment in and prevention program, we need to invest just as vigorously in safety net programs. The biggest problem with social services is the lack of consistent state investment. In times of fiscal surpluses, social services are the last to receive funding increases above normal cost-of-living adjustments, and in times of state fiscal shortages, social services are the first to receive funding cuts. In order for local communities to develop and appropriately fund effective prevention and treatment programs such as training professionals in the detection and reporting of abuse or promoting to the general public on how they can help, locals need to have to a reliable budget. To rectify this instability, the state needs to develop funding priorities in the budget, making programs that protect the health and welfare of our citizenry, especially our children and elderly, number one.

2) As a working mother, I know firsthand the need for affordable, reliable child care. As with most social services, the top priority is to invest more money in the system. California simply does not provide enough subsidized childcare and does not reimburse providers enough. While there are many ways to improve the quality of care such as best practices models and to increase the number of quality providers through promotion of accreditation processes, the federal and state governments need to ensure that the cost of

providing quality childcare remains affordable. If the costs of providing care remain too high, our working families will be priced out of the market or there will simply not be enough care available. As a Santa Rosa City Councilmember I participated in developing a city-wide Child Care Action Plan and would like to see the State create the same kind of action-oriented plan to create more child care facilities. I also support universal preschool.

3) As with child abuse, the state needs to make protecting the health and welfare of its citizenry the top priority. On the issue of health insurance, in each of the last two State budgets, each of the last two governors tried to drastically reduce Medi-Cal reimbursement rates. Even during times of fiscal surpluses, every governor has balked at increasing Medi-Cal reimbursement rates. If serving the poor is not profitable, physicians will not serve patients on Medi-Cal, leaving only emergency medical care available for the poor. As with child abuse, prevention programs save the state money. That same concept applies to medical care. The best way to keep health care premiums affordable is to invest in preventative health care. I support Proposition 72 that would expand the availability of health care insurance.



STATE ASSEMBLY, DISTRICT 7 (CONTINUED)

F. AARON SMITH

- 1) The F. Aaron Smith campaign for State Assembly is committed to community based solutions focused on improving the quality of life for families and children in California. The government's responsibility is to remove individuals from society who have been convicted of such crimes through due process under the law. As a candidate for State Assembly, I do not feel that government programs will ever be effective in preventing violence in the family. The loss of participation at the individual and community level due to our state government's ever-expanding role in areas social welfare and education is a major problem.

I am certain that the vast majority of individuals are absolutely opposed to child abuse of any kind and would contribute towards preventive programs though their involvement with private institutions already proven successful if certain incentives were in place to restore a sense of responsibility and involvement. The state can encourage such community participation by making the following policy changes:

- ↓# 100% tax reimbursement for those who choose to donate to charities for children's welfare, education and family stability.
- ↓# reduce barriers to entrepreneurship, fostering a stronger economy so that fewer families will be below the poverty level.

- 2) I sincerely understand the growing need for childcare and early education in our state. As a candidate for the State Assembly, I support measures that would encourage innovative, market-based solutions to this problem. As a legislator I would explore sensible solutions such as providing tax incentives to employers who provide on-site childcare and tax reimbursements to parents electing to place their children in a pre-school program. Additionally, if we roll back the massive government spending in California we can dramatically reduce taxes making it easier for some families to be provided for on one income. By in large, parents know what is best for their families NOT state politicians and bureaucrats.

- 3) I think it is very important to recognize that the large number of uninsured people, without reliable access to basic health services, is at a level that has very serious

implications for all of us. Easy access to affordable, quality healthcare is a mark of the kind of society that we all want to be part of.

As an elected representative, I would:

- ↓#actively monitor the availability of health insurance and health services in the state
- ↓#work to make it easier for individuals and families to make provisions for their health-care needs
- ↓#work to make it easier for health services providers to do their jobs.

I oppose any system that would make it mandatory for employers or government to be a primary healthcare provider. Government-sponsored healthcare penalizes taxpayers with good habits with the costs of healthcare for those with bad habits, and puts private lifestyle choices under public scrutiny and regulation.

I favor emphasizing preventative healthcare, which would decrease or eliminate many of the leading causes of illness in California today. That said, I believe it is an individual's personal responsibility and not the role of government to ensure that these basic measures are taken.



Note: Pat Krueger did not provide responses to the questions posed.

STATE ASSEMBLY, DISTRICT 8



LOIS WOLK

- 1) My record over the past two years is extensive. I support the prevention approach of the state based on the multiyear stakeholder process that concluded this session. As chair of the Human Services Committee, we passed legislation implementing a key part of the Program Improvement Plan giving counties flexibility to provide services. In March of this year, I convened a hearing highlighting a group of local innovative programs that counties have created to protect vulnerable children and stabilize their families. AB 1986, AB 2795 and AB 2475 were passed with bipartisan support and signed by the Governor. I am also proud to have received the Outstanding Advocate Award from Easter Seals this year. *[More information on bills referred to available at Wolk's office.]*
- 2) Child Care is a major issue in California and the 8th district. We have learned that the early years are so important in future success in school and life. Quality early child care and education are increasingly recognized as essential to a solid start in life. As Chair of Human Services, child care legislation passes through my committee. *[More information on child care legislation passed available at Wolk's office.]* Child care funding was at risk in each budget year. The Womens' Caucus fought to protect the funding each year. Close cooperation existed between the child care community and the legislators during the budget debates. I also believe that after school programs are essential for the older child – the post elementary school and pre junior high age often latch-key child. All areas of child care are underfunded and the need is high.
- 3) I am proud to represent Solano County especially when your record of health insurance and access is among the best in the state. I know from my years on the Yolo Board of Supervisors and chair of First Five that this takes partnership and energy. Partnership Health is a good partner. I also know that the advocacy that you provide in this area is also essential to its success. The entire health care system needs attention since it is widely recognized that no one who comes into contact with today's health care system is satisfied – nurse, doctor, patient, or administrator. I serve on the Health Committee and there were some bills specifically targeted to children and access although the challenge is broader than children. *[More information on these bills available at Wolk's office.]*

Note: John R. Munn did not provide responses to the questions posed.

STATE SENATE, DISTRICT 5

MICHAEL J. MACHADO

- 1) The state needs to continue to fund programs that assist children who are the victims of abuse and who are in the foster care system. Children are our future and that state must step in and assist those children who are abused or in the foster care system. Continued funding of these types of programs in the budget should be a priority.
- 2) It is important that the state continue to fund quality childcare programs in order for working families to make a better life for themselves, whether it is going to school or working. Families who need help with childcare and do not receive assistance will never be able to make a better life for their children and their children's children.
- 3) We should continue to ensure that accessible and affordable health care is available to the working poor, disabled, and elderly population. Cutting programs like Healthy Families, a program that helps children get health coverage is not the answer. We must work to ensure reforms and innovations in health care that expands coverage for the working uninsured and provides health care to all of California's children. That's why I worked with doctors and nurses to pass the Health Insurance Act of 2003 - which will help provide health care for over 1 million Californians. It is time to do something about the health care crisis we face in this state.



GARY A. PODESTO

- 1) The Gray Davis debt legacy required cuts that none of us liked, but were the direct result of a failure to properly budget and control waste and inefficiency in that Administration. We need to make every effort to distinguish between programs that work and those that don't. In Stockton, I am active with the Child Abuse Prevention Council. The CAPC is a safe haven program where children can be brought to when their parents are under stress. In fact, I was honored by CAPC last year. I know these programs work, and I support them.
 - 2) State leaders can provide tax incentives to child-care providers, in making childcare more affordable to all working families regardless of income. Legislators can also provide tax breaks to working families as well, making childcare more accessible and affordable to obtain.
 - 3) Healthy Families must continue to be able to do the work that they do, in fact an expansion of Healthy Families to adults, as proposed by Assemblyman Richman, would serve the state well. Also, cutting down on frivolous lawsuits against the healthcare system would help keep costs in check. A major problem is that health insurance premiums paid by individuals are not deductible under federal tax laws, while employer-paid premiums are. I would like to see a refundable health care premium tax credit at the federal level to remove this penalty.

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A united voice for the children of Solano County

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