

Chamber of Commerce targets 'job killer' bills

The chamber hopes to kill 26 proposals that it says would harm job creation and economic recovery.

<http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-capitol-business-beat-20140414,0,2000625.story?track=rss#axzz2ypQLDvm9>



Patsy Alvarado and her children attend a rally by the Service Employees International Union Local 1000 at the Capitol. The Chamber of Commerce's annual "job killers" list of bills is often at odds with labor unions and other traditional business community adversaries who support issues such as minimum wage hikes. (Hector Amezcua, Sacramento Bee /June 30, 2010)

By Marc Lifsher

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SACRAMENTO — It's the season at the California Capitol for flowering dogwoods, blooming azaleas and the state Chamber of Commerce's annual "job killer" list.

Never short of targets, the 13,000-member chamber this year is eyeing 26 bills that it contends would harm the job-creation climate and the ongoing economic recovery if passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the governor.

Most of the proposals deal with the workplace, including minimum wage hikes and paid sick days; taxes and legal and regulatory matters.

"The economic recovery is still the No. 1 issue for Californians," said Allan Zaremborg, the chamber president. "These bills pose a serious threat to our economy and, if enacted, would dampen job growth."

Of course, what is a job killer to the chamber may be something entirely different to labor unions, environmentalists and other traditional business community adversaries.

"By placing measures to give workers earned sick days and combat wage theft on their hit list, the Chamber, once again, has shown how tone-deaf it is to the needs of most California families," said Steve Smith, a spokesman for the California Labor Federation.

The chamber's campaign is simple, but it's effective, said Mark Baldassare, president of the Public Policy Institute of California, a nonprofit think tank that analyzes and makes recommendations on social and political issues. "It's something that definitely has gained a following over time in the Legislature. It seems to have really captured people's attention and imagination."

That sentiment could be why the chamber has such a successful track record in killing bills. Last year, only one of 38 bills on the list became law: an increase in the state's minimum wage.

Sugary drink warnings

Legislation that would slap health warning labels on vending machines, fountains and containers of soda and other sugar-laden drinks narrowly passed the Senate Health Committee last week. With opposition from the beverage industry, retailers and dozens of other business lobbyists, it will face trouble ahead.

"Drinking beverages with added sugars contributes to obesity, diabetes and tooth decay," said Sen. Bill Monning (D-Carmel), the author of SB 1000. "This warning label seeks to provide notice to consumers of the proven, known, scientific data that is fueling a public-health epidemic."

Opponents dismissed the bill, which defines a "sugar-sweetened beverage" as a drink containing 75 calories or more per 12 fluid ounces, as well-intentioned but ineffective and confusing. It now goes to the Appropriations Committee.

Fewer potholes

Think the Golden State's highways are full of potholes? Not true, says the Department of Transportation.

In a recent pavement survey, [Caltrans](#) bragged that the percentage of lane miles deemed "healthy" rose to 84% in 2013 from 75% in 2011.

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