

# Controller: Go with two with actual records

---

**B**akersfieldcalifornian.com/opinion/our-view/x588887440/Controller-Go-with-two-with-actual-records

Voters elect California's controller to maintain a watch on state government spending. A controller sounds the alarm when budgets are out of whack and when problems -- such as upside-down pension funds -- crop up. Consider when the current controller, John Chiang, sounded the alarm by refusing to pay legislators after he concluded their gimmick-filled state budget was out of balance.

Clearly the controller's job requires independence, financial competence and guts. Voters will find these qualities in Republican Ashley Swearingin and Democrat Betty Yee, who are among the top contenders in the June primary election. The two top vote-getters in June will face each other in November.

Swearingin is the mayor of Fresno and Yee is an elected member of the state Board of Equalization. Both have years of experience developing and managing public budgets. The best-financed candidate is Democratic Assembly Speaker John Perez, who is termed out and seeking the controller's post as a way to keep his political career alive. Swearingin and Yee, on the other hand, have long been focused on public financing. They will bring a substantive debate over issues to the general election.

Yee has more than 30 years of public service. Before being elected to the state tax board in 2006, she served as chief deputy director for budget with the California Department of Finance, helping develop the governor's budget and negotiating with legislators.

A recent Field Poll showed Swearingin leading in the race, helped by Republicans who've thrown their support behind a candidate with a well-earned reputation for tackling Fresno's financial problems in her years as mayor.

The choice for California's next controller should be between candidates focused on California's financial health, not someone who's clearly eyeing the job as another rung on his political career ladder.