Lt. Governor Garamendi Delivers Solutions to California's Ongoing Budget Deadlocks at Today's California Constitutional Convention Summit

Structural Reforms Highlighted

SACRAMENTO – Before a standing room only audience during today's California Constitutional Convention Summit, Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi called for bold reforms that will help end California's continual budget stalemates.

"We have tied ourselves in knots with the two-thirds vote requirement. It's time to go back to what this nation established years ago – a majority rule plan, plain and simple, on every issue," Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi said. "That would solve a lot of problems. Whatever the minority party is, they should not dominate the policies of the state of California. That's the two-thirds vote requirement on appropriations including the budget and taxes."

Garamendi, who has served in both the California Assembly and Senate before becoming state insurance commissioner and deputy interior secretary in the Clinton Administration, laid out three specific reforms he would like to see implemented through a constitutional convention process or through the traditional ballot initiative process:

- Restoring majority rule to California by abolishing the two-thirds requirement to pass budgets and change taxes in the legislature;
- Reforming California's current term limits system, allowing California's legislators to develop the experience necessary to effectively develop policies, pass budgets and govern. Members would be allowed to serve up to 14 years in a single house;
- Transitioning to a 120-member unicameral legislature to allow representatives to better represent smaller districts and stop the ongoing gridlock between the two houses.

"It seems to me we can be far more effective, efficient and responsible. Yes there are multiple parties but it's the Senate versus the Assembly where the real fighting occurs. So go unicameral with 14 years for each member and no games played. We must be straight forward with the people of California," Garamendi said.

The California Constitutional Convention Summit was sponsored by a number of good government and civic-oriented groups, including the Bay Area Council, Center for Government Studies, Common Cause, Courage Campaign, Greenlining Institute, Joint Venture: Silicon Valley Network, League of Women Voters, New America Foundation, Planning and Conservation League, and the William C. Velasquez Institute.

The following audio links are from Garamendi's speech:

Lt. Governor Garamendi's full speech before the California Constitutional Convention Summit (higher quality audio file available upon request).
http://www.ltg.ca.gov/images/stories/garamendiconstitutionalconventionfullspeech.mp3

Lt. Governor Garamendi on the two-thirds requirement to pass budgets and change taxes.
http://www.ltg.ca.gov/images/stories/garamendiconstitutionalconventiontermlimitssize.mp3

Lt. Governor Garamendi on the size of current legislative districts.
http://www.ltg.ca.gov/images/stories/garamendiconstitutionalconventiontermlimits.mp3

Lt. Governor Garamendi on the need to reform term limits.
http://www.ltg.ca.gov/images/stories/garamendiconstitutionalconventiontermlimitslength.mp3

Lt. Governor Garamendi continues his thoughts on term limits.
http://www.ltg.ca.gov/images/stories/garamendiconstitutionalconventiontwothirds.mp3

Lt. Governor Garamendi explains why he supports abolishing the two-house legislative system in favor of a unicameral legislature.
http://www.ltg.ca.gov/images/stories/garamendiconstitutionalconventionunicameral.mp3