



Dave Palmer
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May 22, 2009

Darrell Steinberg
Senate President Pro Tem

Re: Ongoing Budgetary Problems

Dear Senator Steinberg:

Firstly, as I suspect you know by now, I was unfortunately forced to file a lawsuit yesterday due to the Senate Rules Committee's specious refusal to comply with my request for public records, which included copies of (a) lodging, meal and airfare receipts, (b) gas charge card receipts, (c) logs differentiating personal v. official use of state cars, and (d) telephone billing records for outgoing long distance calls on publicly-funded land and/or cell phones. It is indeed a rather sad state of affairs that over-taxed Californians are now made to fund the defense of a lawsuit that was only necessary because of your recalcitrance in refusing to allow transparency in regards to how public funds are being spent by State Senators. Hopefully, you will personally intervene in this matter to assure the requested records are provided promptly, thereby saving the taxpayers tens-of-thousands in attempting to defend the indefensible.

I would be quite grateful if you could explain to me how a review of your ***past*** lodging and meal receipts while attending an out-of-state conference in 2007 would "pose a serious security risk." After spending several minutes explaining this novel claim to my 7-year-old grandson and asking him to respond (had to wait for him to stop laughing) he said, "Is this guy stupid Grandpa?"

In a May 21 *LA Times* story: "California legislative leaders: We are going to cut," Assemblywoman Karen Bass' stated, "Whatever needs to be done. We're going to put everything on the table." You then responded by saying, "The people were telling us: Don't bring this problem to our doorstep. We are going to cut....We're not shying away from that."

I must say that it's comforting to know that you are not going to "shy away" from cutting any obvious waste of public funds. With that said, how about voluntarily agreeing to immediately eliminate the following egregious waste?

- Returning the 2007 Prius the public paid \$29,572 for in Dec. 2006
- Immediately accepting the 18% salary reduction (\$20,895)
- Require all Senators to return state cars for immediate sale
- Immediate sale of cars provided to legislators from Southern California for personal use in Sacramento
- Reducing staff salaries from \$100,000 or more per year to levels paid by local governments and/or private corporations

Also, how can you justify retaining a \$57,000 Lexus 400H at the Senate for use by the Sergeant of Arms to transport senators to the airport? The cost of this abusive largess likely amounts to at least \$100 per trip when counting vehicle costs and labor. On May 19, 2009 I flew from Sacramento to Columbus, Ohio. Unlike the potentates in the Senate, I spent \$2.00 for bus fare from downtown Sacramento to the airport (dropped off right in front of US Airway terminal). The pickup points for Yolobus for travel to the airport are within walking distance (1 or 2 blocks) from the statehouse. Moreover, Dave's Taxi Service here in Sacramento performs the same service for \$28 for one person and \$14 for two or more.

Apparently, our esteemed senators are above utilizing public transportation or even a taxi for that matter, right Darrell? I guess what's good for the Gooses (that'd be us) isn't quite up to snuff for the Ganders (that'd be you and your fellow senators), right

According to the Nov. 30, 2008 Senate Journal, the total expenditures in 2007 to operate the Senate was \$187 million, which equates to \$4.6 million per senator. This is an astonishing amount and must be construed as totally unwarranted. In my humble opinion, this could be easily reduced by at least \$35 million a year with no appreciable loss in the alleged services provided to Californians.

If in fact your statement to the *LA Times* was true (We are going to cut....We're not shying away from that" was true, then the time to so act is now!

Thanks for your time and attention to this matter and I anxiously await your prompt response.

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May 22, 2009

Dennis Hollingsworth
36th Senate District

Re: Ongoing Budgetary Problems

Dear Senator Hollingsworth:

On May 21, 2009, the *San Diego Union Tribune* in a story titled: “**Panel Oks 18% cut in salary for legislators**” your spokeswoman Melanie Reagan said in an e-mail “The senator feels the same as other Californians. Everybody is cutting back, and legislators should do the same.” Also on May 21, the *Sacramento Bee* in a story titled: “Deep cuts in California services inevitable, state leaders say,” you were quoted as saying “Unfortunately, all the choices are bad now.”

With all due respect, I found your comments to be hyperbolic to say the least given your record of playing fast and loose with public funds. A review of public records proves that you give hypocrisy a bad name in regards to your unwarranted and unjustified expenditures for luxury vehicles. Those obscene expenditures are as follows:

- \$42,732.39 in Dec. 2002 for a 2003 GMC Yukon
- \$44,549.18 in March 2007 for a 2007 Eddie Bauer Expedition
- \$25,937.66 for fuel costs from 2003 to 2008
- \$15,017.71 for maintenance costs from 2003 to 2008
- \$24,948 for lease costs
- \$3,100.00 for liability insurance for your rides

How can you justify the repeated purchase of expensive four-wheel-drive SUVs on the taxpayer’s dime Mr. Hollingsworth? Moreover, why do you require four-wheel-drive vehicles in Sonoma County? I’m just an old fellow from Toledo, Ohio who has never traveled in the district you represent. In Toledo, we experienced our heaviest snowfalls in January and February. I’m assuming that the same is true for annual snowfalls in your district, right? If not true, then why the need for four-wheel-drive SUVs, right Dennis?

Given the undisputable fact of your wealth and income outside of the excessive wages, per diem and free ride you now receive, I cannot imagine that you could provide to me

and/or the overburdened taxpayers of California a valid reason for retaining “our” 2007 Eddie Bauer Expedition. Therefore, if you’re truly interested in cutting waste and abuse, then I would hereby ask that you immediately return the Expedition so that it can be sold and the funds returned to the State (not the Senate Rules Committee).

Lastly, I noticed on your web site that you are an avid supporter of properly funding education here in California. If you were truly interested in supporting higher education, you would have never hosed (pun intended) the taxpayers via the purchase of expensive vehicles. The \$156,000 spent so far on your publicly-funded rides would have paid annual tuitions for fifty-two (52) students from middle-income families to attend Fresno State. I guess we no know what your priorities are, right Dennis?

Thanks for your time and attention to this matter and I anxiously await your prompt response.

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May 22, 2009

Jeff Denham
12th Senate District

Re: Ongoing Budgetary Problems

Dear Senator Denham:

On May 21, the *Sacramento Bee* in a story titled: "Deep cuts in California services inevitable," and while pointing to the University of California's administration as ripe for spending cuts you said, "Does the UC president's office need 1,000 employees or can he do it with 500? Do we need to have presidents and chancellors that are making \$400,000 plus a year?"

Your comments about the salaries of UC presidents and chancellors are correct and I hope that you will take immediate actions to reduce this obvious waste and abuse. However, I find you ranting to be a hybrid form of hyperbolic linguistics in that you found it perfectly acceptable to expend the following funds to provide yourself with taxpayer-funded rides from 2003 to 2008.

- \$45,066.32 in Dec. 2002 for a 2003 Ford Expedition
- \$34,366.48 in Oct. 2004 for a 2005 Ford Escape
- \$45,936.38 in March 2007 for a 2007 Highlander
- \$27,986.64 for fuel costs from 2003 to 2008
- \$9,710.85 for maintenance costs from 2003 to 2008
- \$24,970 for lease costs
- \$3,100.00 for liability insurance for your rides

How in the world can you justify purchasing three (3) cars at a cost of \$125,000 over a six-year (6) period of time when the hard-working citizens of California are lucky if they can afford a new car every 6 years?

Rather than incessantly whine about the obscene expenditures by UC presidents, maybe you should take a moment and look in the mirror and ask: "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the most wasteful of them all?" I'm sure the mirror would respond by saying, "It's you, you silly boy!" By the way, was it really necessary to spend \$677,478 on office staff in 2007? How does this compare to what the UC president spends annually?

I noticed on your web site that you're adamantly opposed to raising taxes. To be honest sir, the burden on Californians would be much less if you and your fellow legislators exhibited a modicum of ethics and never engaged in hosing the public by awarding yourselves with luxury vehicles, free and unlimited fuel and maintenance costs.

The time has now arrived for you' to remove your snout from the public trough and personally incur the costs of transportation just like your hard working constituents do. You can do so by immediately returning our Highlander for sale with the proceeds being turned over to the state (not the Senate Rules Committee.

Thanks for your time and attention to this matter and I anxiously await your prompt response.

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Karen Bass
47th Assembly District

Re: Ongoing Budgetary Problems

Dear Ms. Bass:

In a May 20, 2009 LA Times story titled: "California legislative leaders: We are going to cut," you said, "Whatever needs to be done, you do it. We're going to put everything on the table."

Well, if this statement that "everything is on the table," was true, then how do you justify the following costs to provide you with a free publicly-funded ride?

- \$30,000 in Dec. 2004 for a 2005 Ford 500
- \$6,315.30 for fuel costs from 2003 to 2008
- \$2,563.35 for maintenance costs from 2005 to 2008
- \$15,228 for lease costs
- \$2,000.00 for liability insurance for your rides

If you're truly interested in cutting budgetary waste and abuse, I would respectfully suggest that you immediately return our car so it can be sold and the proceeds return to the general fund (not the Assembly Rules Committee). Moreover, the Assembly spent over \$590,000 last year to provide luxury taxpayer-subsidized rides to its members. Again, if you really care about your overburdened constituents, then I would suggest that you require the return of each and every one of these vehicles for immediate sale.

Thanks for your time and attention to this matter and I anxiously await your prompt response.

David Palmer
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