

OPINION

EDITORIALS

Now is not the time for voter fatigue

Each election carries the potential and power to change our community for the better.

Election season never quite seems to end for Long Beach residents. Only two months after Long Beach's April 8 primary election, the June 3 primary election is upon us, and the November election is only a couple months down the road.

Undoubtedly, the prospects of a seemingly endless election have the potential to fatigue any voter. But in a city where electoral turnout continues to be disastrously low (only 17.5 percent of registered voters voted in the April 8 primary), every vote cast matters all the more. After all, history shows that Long Beach elections are often won and lost by only a few hundred votes.

Long Beach voters will decide this week whether Damon Dunn or Robert Garcia should become the next mayor. Also on the local list is Lena Gonzalez and her opponent, Misi Tagaloa, in District 1, Stacy Mungo or opponent Carl Kemp in District 5 and Charles Parkin or opponent James Johnson in the city attorney race (below you will find the Register's Editorial Board recommendations). And as our local voters decide the final victors in four city races, they will also make choices that impact a host of county, state and national races.

Even though California's top-two open primary system was established by voter initiative in 2010, the system is still new enough, and seems complicated enough, that some clarification of that system is needed as the June 3 election moves us into the state-and-national primary phase.

First, the top-two open primary system was originally designed to make the November elections more competitive by placing a moderating effect on primary

voters, who often vote from the wings of their party.

Under the top-two system, all voters, including independents, can vote for any candidate they wish and the top two highest vote getters, regardless of percentage or party, move on to a runoff in November.

So far, though, according to a recent report from Public Policy Institute of California, that expected competitiveness doesn't seem to be reflected in turnout.

"California's new top-two primary system did not produce the increase in voter turnout that many had hoped for in 2012," the report states.

The analysts did note, however, that the primary "did appear to engage independent voters," which is certainly a welcome by-product. As for whether or not it has created a moderating effect is open to discussion, but the system is still relatively new and must be given time to present either its genius or its flaws.

Most importantly to note, however, is that not all races are held to this new standard. Change of office takes place more immediately in some cases. For example, the state Superintendent of Public Instruction race only requires a simple majority in the primary to win, as do all countywide races. In some down ballot races, like the county board of education, the highest vote-getter will win outright on Tuesday.

Despite the changes in the California primary, there will still be winners and losers on Tuesday and every vote will count, especially in our Long Beach community races. So don't give in to voter fatigue. Do your homework on each candidate, and then make your voice heard by getting out and voting June 3.

Election 2014: Editorial Board endorsements

Editor's note: Our Register Editorial Board met with the runoff candidates from the April 8 election to identify the ones we thought were the most qualified for the position and had the most substantive plans for Long Beach's growth and economic development. Below are our picks and the criteria for our choices:

MAYORAL RACE:
DAMON DUNN

Jobs and economic growth are the highest hurdles facing our city, and Mr. Dunn was more substantive on these issues. His website hosts a 25-plus point jobs plan that provides solutions, including determining small business needs through surveys, along with training and development services to help businesses grow.

COUNCIL SEAT, DISTRICT 1:
LENA GONZALES

Though Ms. Gonzalez has received endorsements, and considerable funding, from a host of labor and other interest groups, her experience as a field deputy for Councilman Robert Garcia

makes her more suited for the job, especially with a council of relative newcomers.

COUNCIL SEAT, DISTRICT 5:
STACY MUNGO

Ms. Mungo's experiences throughout the community and as a budget officer for L.A. County were the most compelling and will be needed as the city grapples with a return to levels of service slashed in the economic downturn and makes larger required payments into the state pension system. Her grasp of numbers will be an invaluable asset to the council.

CITY ATTORNEY:
CHARLES PARKIN

Mr. Parkin has a commendable track record as the city's legal representative and is the candidate we continue to trust to keep Long Beach on the strongest legal footing.

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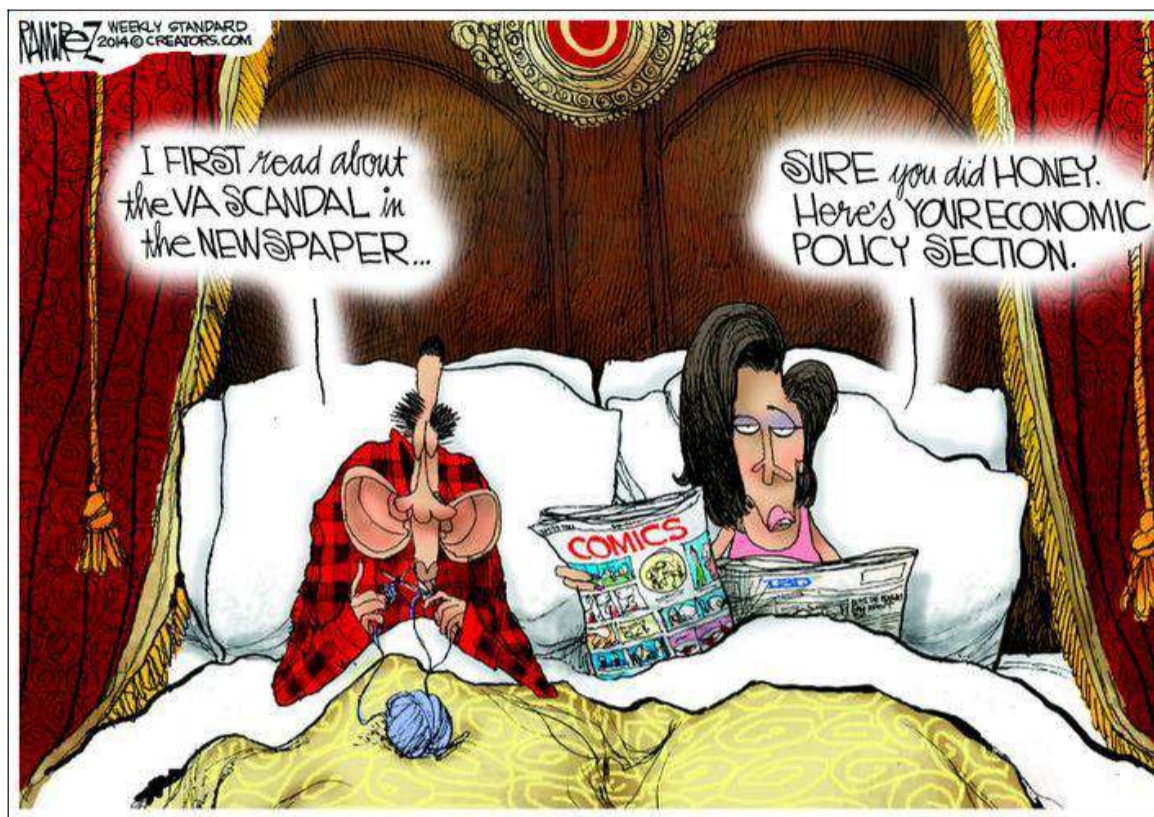
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ECONOMY

Those graduation highs and lows

California and private sector must collaborate to create jobs.

By WILLIAM JEYNES
CONTRIBUTING COLUMNIST

It's graduation time in many high schools and colleges across Southern California. Commencement services recently took place at Cal State Long Beach, and high school seniors are preparing for their big day all across the southland. To be sure, many readers have fond memories of throwing caps to the sky, with dreams for success soaring even higher. However, today's graduates enter a different world. According to an NBC/Wall Street Journal poll, 57 percent of Americans still believe we are in a recession. A Fox New poll puts the number at 74 percent. Granted, the unemployment rate is slowly coming down, but Americans and Californians are smarter than most politicians realize. They comprehend a number of ongoing realities.

- First, many of those who have regained employment are working at a lower wage than before.
- Second, unemployment is down in part because "discouraged workers" are leaving the labor force.
- Third, government taxation and regulatory policies handcuff America's companies. This has contributed to the United States ceding its position of economic leadership to China and more than 100 corporations moving their corporate headquarters out of California. It has also contributed to California's unemployment rank being 48th in the country.
- Fourth, they realize that both the U.S. and California are in so much debt that most foreign leaders no longer regard the U.S. as a superpower. No won-

der most Americans and Californians believe the United States is still in a recession.

There is no question that the economy and education both influence one another. The economy affects the perceived opportunity that comes with education, and a well-educated citizenry stimulates the long-

capita, but ranks 47th in education expenditures per capita. Countless research studies confirm that education is one of the most reliable means of overcoming poverty. These statistics indicate that California may be helping its poor, but it is not helping them sufficiently to overcome their poverty. This

orientation is shortsighted and needs to change if its citizens are to again be filled with hope.

- Third, government leaders must seek to work with those in the private sector, rather than portray them as adversaries. Currently, the U.S. has a combined federal and state corporate tax rate of 39.3 percent, which ranks just behind Japan's 39.5 percent as the highest in the world. Politicians act like they are somehow doing the public a favor by raising corporate taxes. However, as companies like Toyota, Raytheon and

Bausch & Lomb leave California, people are beginning to understand that it is the public that ultimately pays the price for higher corporate taxes.

Only the naïve assume that companies will respond to more taxes by simply making less money. Rather, the result is fewer local jobs and higher prices. Companies move elsewhere, because they pass on the added costs of doing business to the consumer.

Much can be done to reduce the stress of the state's graduates, and it can start with a strong dose of these common-sense steps. Graduation in California should not be endless encounters with unexpected realities, but should again be a place where the students' caps and dreams are thrown high toward the golden sun.

William Jeynes is professor of Education at CSULB.



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term prospects for the economy. The U.S. and California can enable hope to again abide in the hearts of today's graduates.

As someone who has served as an educational and economic consultant to the U.S. and South Korean governments during times of crisis, three suggestions come to mind.

- First, California needs more politicians with an education background. About 49 percent of the California budget is spent on kindergarten through college education, yet few of the state's politicians have a background in education. Educational policy that results in economic prosperity seldom originates with leaders who know little about schooling.
- Second, California needs to develop a more productive way of helping its most needy citizens succeed. Currently, California ranks third in the nation in welfare payments given per

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