

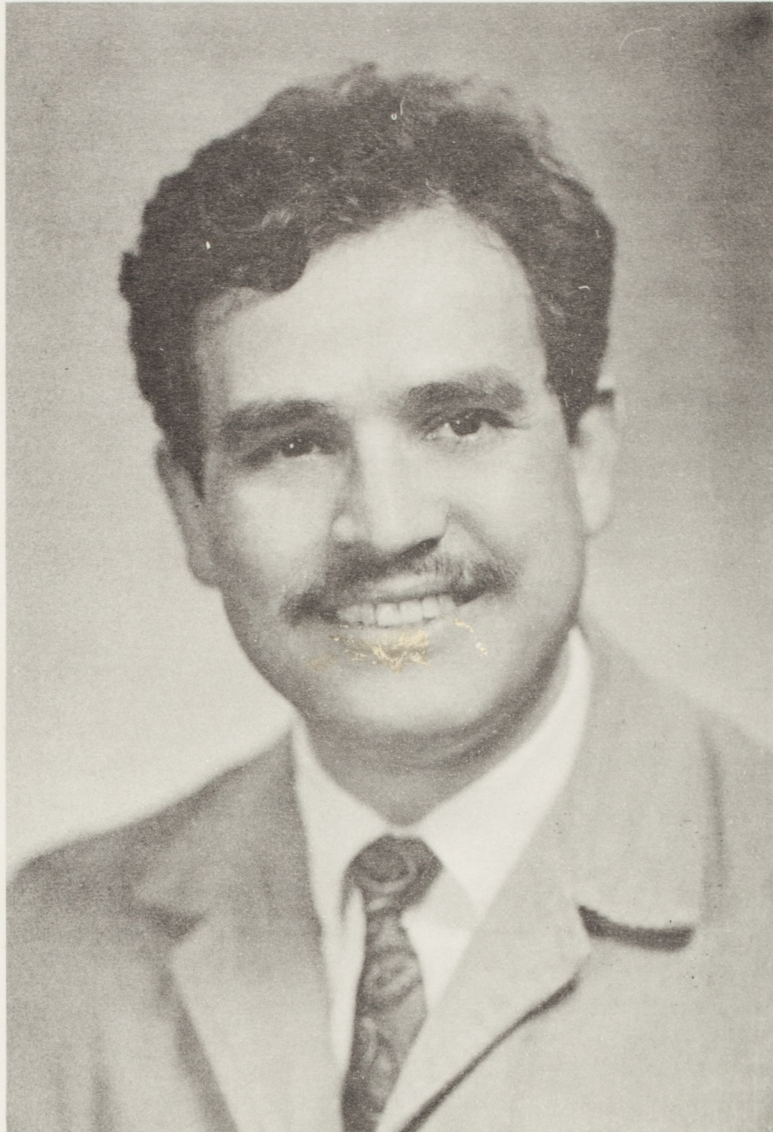
**LET'S MOVE FORWARD  
ELECT**



**PETER  
CHACON  
DEMOCRATIC CANDIDATE  
79<sup>th</sup> ASSEMBLY DISTRICT**

# **ROMO for Governor FUND RAISER**

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**Given By  
National City MAPA Chapter**

**Guest Speakers**

**RICARADO ROMO  
BERT CORONA  
ABE TAPIA**

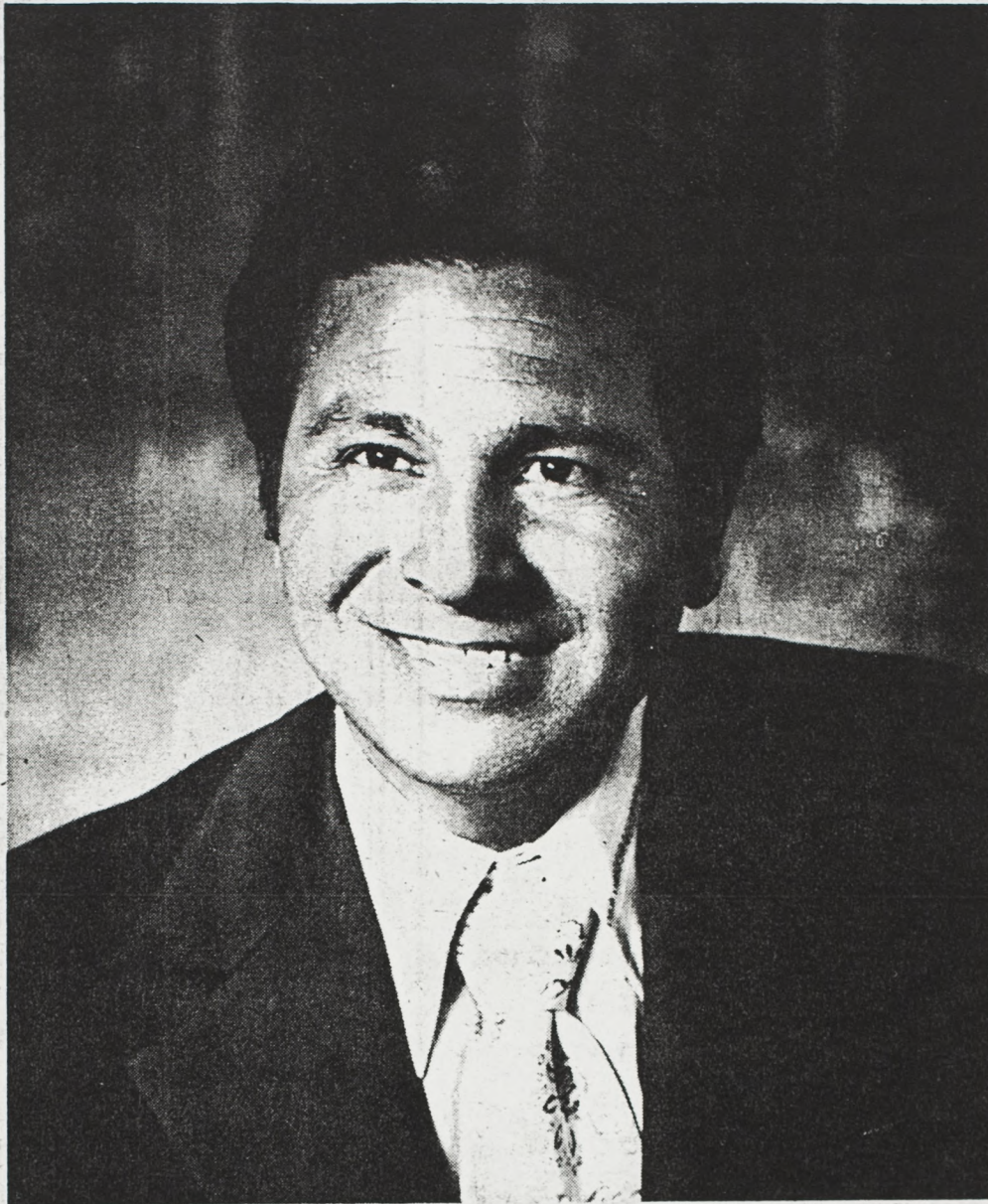
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**Sept. 11, 1970  
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*Calpirg Political Profiles Project*

# *State Assembly*

*San Diego County*



# **PETER R. CHACON**

79th District

Written by Mary Lou Austin and John Harrison

# PROFILE: PETER R. CHACON

## INTRODUCTION

...government of the people, by the people, and for the people shall not perish from the earth.

-Abraham Lincoln

The American system of government was designed to be controlled by, and responsive to, the people. Today, with public skepticism near an all-time high, a definite gap has developed between the government and the people. The challenge to bridge this gap involves a shift from the concept of "politics" to "citizenship," and with it a greater public involvement in self-government. A major step in an attempt to meet this challenge is

citizen familiarization with their state and local representatives in government.

For the average citizen, this is a nearly impossible task. The public is exposed to its legislators' performances in only the most haphazard or biased ways—through campaign advertisements, occasional snatches in the media, or a few hundred words in a voter's pamphlet. This circumstance detracts from the ability of a democratic government to fulfill its goal, which is to enable the people, through enlightened selection of representatives, to have their will done in the institutions of government.

This profile is an attempt to answer this deficiency of information. CALPIRG volunteer

researchers spent months gathering information—through interviews, press clippings, campaign finance documents, and the like. The result is what we hope is a fair, un-biased capsule of information about a San Diego County office-holder. Insofar as is humanly possible, we have kept our own prejudices and preconceptions out of the report, relying instead upon voting records, financial data, and the opinions of other interest groups and individuals.

A undertaking of the magnitude of the Political Profiles Project could not be completed without the dedication of many people. The methodology was developed in part by Ralph Nader's Congress Project,

and we are particularly indebted to Bob Fellmeth for his guidance. We were fortunate to have the expert assistance of several San Diego reporters, who, along with the lobbyists we spoke with, wished to remain anonymous. The office-holders being profiled, and their staffs, were almost without exception helpful and generous with their time. Lastly, to the CALPIRG volunteers whose names appear in this profile, and too many others to list, goes our tremendous gratitude for the hundreds of hours of tedious labor and dedication which made this project a reality.

Dan Franklin,  
Director  
CALPIRG

### CHACON

Peter Chacon once described himself as a "moderate among militants." The description fits him well, for as the two-term Democratic Assemblyman from the 79th District, Chacon has succeeded in placating his liberal constituency while dealing with a conservative State Senate and Governor.

Born and raised in Phoenix, Arizona, Chacon was one of seven children in a poor family. "We put cardboard in our shoes to cover the holes," he later remembered. "We took our wagons and hunted boxes to burn in our weed-burning stove. My mother washed outside in a big tub." Chacon later reflected upon his childhood, explaining "I had the feeling of inferiority typical of the poor in a minority family. I had a feeling of ignorance." He remembered his first years in school, where he was told "to speak

English or go back to Mexico."<sup>2</sup>

in 1946, after serving for two years as an Air Force gunman in World War II, Chacon moved to San Diego where he attended City College. A philosophy professor there convinced him that he should continue his studies at a four-year college. Ultimately, he received his bachelors and masters degrees in education from San Diego State University. He taught in the Vista School District for fourteen years, and 1968 was named vice-principal of Sherman Elementary School. One year later, Chacon was appointed coordinator of compensatory education for the elementary division of the San Diego City School System.

In addition to his tenure in educational administration, the Assemblyman was a Mexican-American activist. At the time of his election to office, he was chairman

(Continued on Page 2)

### 79th DISTRICT Voter Registration

New District*	Republicans	Old District**
28,243		20,533
52,530	Democrats	44,722
88,709	TOTAL	71,238

\* As of July 14, 1974

\*\* As of September, 1973

#### Selected Floor Votes

From 1973-74 Legislative Session as of March 1, 1974

#### ITEM NUMBER

##### Health and Education

	S	C	C	D	P	W			
ITEM NUMBER	M	H	S	H	R	E	I		
ITEM NUMBER	L	A	U	C	V	D	L		
ITEM NUMBER	L	D	L	O	E	E	F		
ITEM NUMBER	S	E	L	N	N	H	F		
ITEM NUMBER	N	N	H	F	N	O	OUTCOME		
1. SB 361 Appropriations for higher education opportunity program based upon student need	Y	Y	A	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Veto
2. SB 1285 Requires a high school course in women and ethnic history in California's social science curricula	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Passed
3. AB 558 State and federal funds for bilingual-bicultural education programs approved by the State Board of Education	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Passed
4. SB 1302 Child nutrition education act	Y	A	A	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Veto
5. ACR 87 Directs Dept. of Consumer Affairs and Education to study current consumer education programs	Y	Y	N	A	A	Y	Y	Y	Passed
6. SB 1290 Establishes a statewide child health care service including medical and dental care for needy families	Y	Y	N						Pending in Assembly
7. AB 705 Revision of Medi-Cal guidelines as to monthly limits, billing, and identification	Y	N	N	A	A	Y	Y	Y	Veto
8. AB 758 Acts to have Medi-Cal cover hospitalization due to pregnancy or delivery	Y	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Veto
9. AB 1600 Requires State Dept. of Health to conduct unannounced inspection of nursing homes, cite violations of code, assess fines of up to \$5,000 upon failure to correct deficiencies	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Passed
10. SB 1176 Widen family planning services and establish office of Family Planning Taxation	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Passed

Key: Y = Yes N = No A = Absent

Voting record taken from daily legislative journal for 1973-74 session

(Continued from Page 1)

of the Chicano Federation, a coalition of fourteen Mexican American groups in San Diego County. Also, he was a member of the Executive Board of the Urban Coalition, the National Conference of Christians and Jews, the Salvation Army, and the Urban League. Service in these organizations, Chacon has stated, "prepared me for public service."

Chacon, his wife Joan and their four children live in the Colorado Cays area. Formerly residents of University Heights, the Chacons' recent move became an issue in the 1974 primary election; opponents argued that Coronado will not become a part of the 79th District until January, 1975.<sup>3</sup>

**Challenges Hom**

Chacon first sought the Democratic nomination for the 79th Assembly seat in 1970. Immediately identifying the Republican incumbent, Tom Hom, as his opponent, Chacon preferred to ignore his Democratic opposition. Hom, Chacon charged, had "failed to initiate any legislation beneficial to the district, and has been absent from the district so often the citizens hardly know who he is."<sup>4</sup> According to an article in the *San Diego Union*, Chacon specified his primary goal, if elected, to alleviate the effects of inflation in the district. Additionally, he voiced concern about crime, consumer affairs, and the problems of the elderly, small businessmen, and minorities. Through his candidacy, he said, he hoped to improve the ethnic balance of the Legislature. In the area of crime control, Chacon called for a better balance between short and long-range solutions, classifying what he termed tough law enforcement as an immediate solution, while improved communications, public relations, and elimination of alienation would be a long-range solution to crime problems.

Chacon also promised to concentrate on tax relief for homeowners, increased state aid to schools, improved rehabilitative programs for drug offenders, the improvement of the educational system in low-income areas, and stronger environmental pollution controls.<sup>5</sup>

At the onset of the campaign, Chacon trailed Hom considerably; according to polls taken in the district, Chacon was expected to take merely 20% of the vote to the incumbent's expected 60%. However, midway through the campaign Hom was indicted in the Yellow Cab case. The indictment, issued by the San Diego County Grand Jury, alleged that Hom, along with eight other persons, were involved in bribery and conspiracy in actions connected with fare increases granted to the San Diego Yellow Cab Company in 1967.

Chacon was an easy victor. Hom blamed his defeat on his indictment stating, "Four weeks before the election I had 65% of the support, when the indictments were announced, it fell to 38%." Although Hom declared that "it is unrealistic to say the indictments had no effect" on the election outcome, Chacon

maintained that "indictment or no indictment, I would have won." He labeled his victory as a victory for the Democrats and "as indication that the people of the low and middle income 79th had realized that a Republican could not represent them."<sup>6</sup>

Chacon, whose financial support came primarily from labor unions, outspent his opponent considerably, spending \$26,250 to Hom's \$10,399.<sup>7</sup>

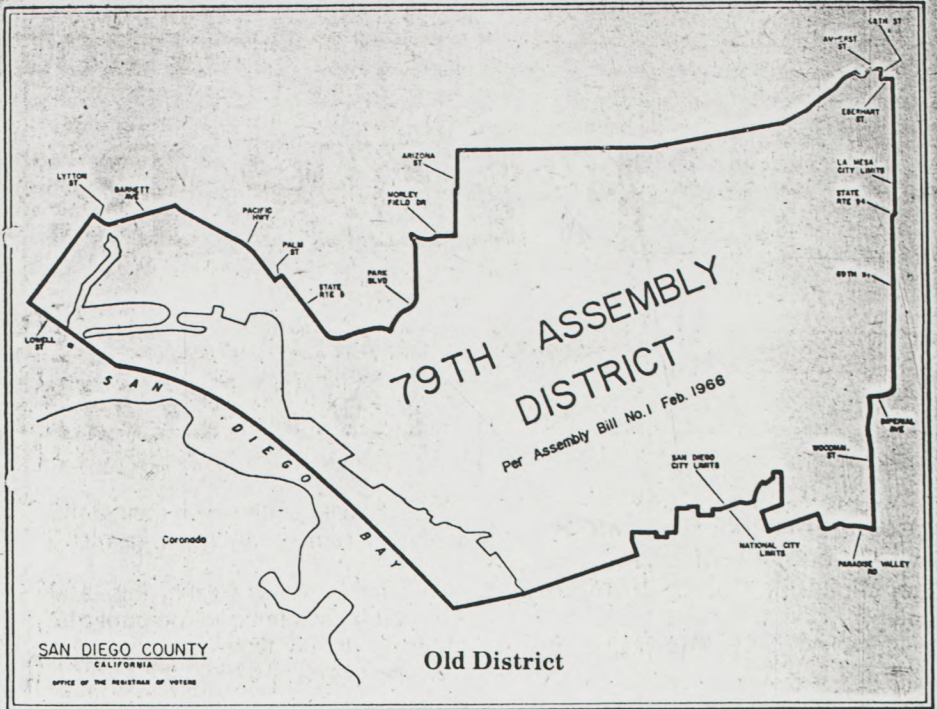
**The District**

The 79th Assembly District is a metropolitan area containing a disproportionately large share of minorities and lower-income residents. Historically, the district has consisted of the older section of the City of San Diego, that part of the city lying between Mission Valley and National City. In 1973, when the State Legislature was reapportioned, the northern boundary of the 79th District was pushed southward a few blocks to University Ave., the eastern boundary was extended beyond the San Diego city limits into Lemon Grove, and the City of Coronado was included into the District.

With the addition of Coronado, the 79th District can be divided into three fairly homogeneous parts. The area to the north and east of Balboa Park is a relatively quiet, white middle-class neighborhood with a large percentage of elderly residents. The crime rate here is about average for the city as a whole, and the infant mortality rate is lower than average. South of the Park lies "The Model Neighborhood", where three-fourths of San Diego County's blacks reside. Large numbers of Chicanos and other minorities also live in this area.<sup>8</sup> This section of town has all the problems of a contemporary American urban ghetto: serious crime, sub-standard housing, and those effects of poverty in general. Thirdly, there is Coronado, across San Diego Bay from the rest of the district.

The 1970 census shows that the district, which comprises only 17% of the County's population, contains over 75% of the County's blacks. disparity in the percentages of persons of Spanish language or Spanish surname is not nearly so great (about 15% for the district against 11% for the county). This is a measure of the much more uniform distribution of the Spanish-speaking community throughout the county. Apart from these two ethnic groups, Chacon's constituency seems to have personal characteristics that are representative of the county. The seemingly large percentage of males can be accounted for by the inclusion of a large Navy installation in the population figures for the new district.

The socio-economic characteristics of the population and housing statistics for the district provide the most direct evidence that this is a district with more than its share of problems. Over 66% of the families in Chacon's present district have incomes less than \$10,000 per year, compared to 49% in the



County, according to the 1970 census. This preponderance of low income families is directly related to the low average education in the district, and the high unemployment rate.

In summary, the present 79th Assembly District consists of an area where most residents are lower or lower middle class minorities, and an area that is predominantly lower middle or middle class whites. The Coronado area is very similar to the northern section of the existing district. Its addition to the district will not appreciably affect the current demography since it will contain less than 10% of the population in the new district.

**Assemblyman Chacon**

As an Assemblyman, Chacon quickly learned the techniques of lawmaking. In his first term, he was aided by senior Democrats who assigned freshmen bills which had been researched and drafted; thus Chacon was able to present bills of major importance early in his tenure. The purpose behind the so-called freshmen program was explained by then Majority Leader Walter Karabian (D-Monterey Park): "Sometimes a freshman legislator has gone through a full two-year term before he has been able to draft major legislation that has brought him to the attention of voters in his district." Chacon introduced 22 bills and resolutions during the first fourteen weeks of the legislative session.<sup>9</sup>

Chacon also learned what he called the realities of law-making. Maintaining that the real work of the Legislature is done in committees, he underscored the influence various interests have: "Before the Education Committee, for instance, there will be student groups, labor groups, and industry representatives, and all of this really can have an impact on the vote the legislator will make." The Assemblyman also realized the importance of the real working grounds in the Legislature. "Most people don't realize that bills put before the Assembly will very

often die in committee," Chacon explained. "They don't realize that it is really in committee that the bills get their full hearing, not on the floor."<sup>10</sup>

Chacon's interest in urban problems landed him the chairmanship of the Urban Development and Housing Committee in the State Assembly. Other committees on which he serves are: Government Administration Committee, Select Committee on Manpower Development, Joint Committee on Educational Goals and Evaluation, Joint Committee on State's Economy, Joint Subcommittee on Economic Conversion, Commission of the Californias, Equal Educational Opportunities Commission, and the Ways and Means Committee.

Assemblyman Chacon's greatest interests and accomplishments in-

(Continued on Page 3)

Project Director: Judith Aboud  
This project was financed by the Associated Students, Grossmont College, Inc., and the students of Mesa College, San Diego State University, the University of California, San Diego, the University of San Diego, and the University of San Diego School of Law.

Additional copies of this report can be obtained for 20¢ each from CALPIRG, 621 Fourth Avenue, Room 207, San Diego, California 92101. An entire set of the

Written by Mary Lou Austin and John Harrison  
Researchers: Steve Brault, Dave Gutzler, John Harrison, and Wendy Zenn

Political Profiles, including reports on the five members of the Board of Supervisors, and San Diego's five State Assemblymen and three State Senators can be purchased for \$2.00

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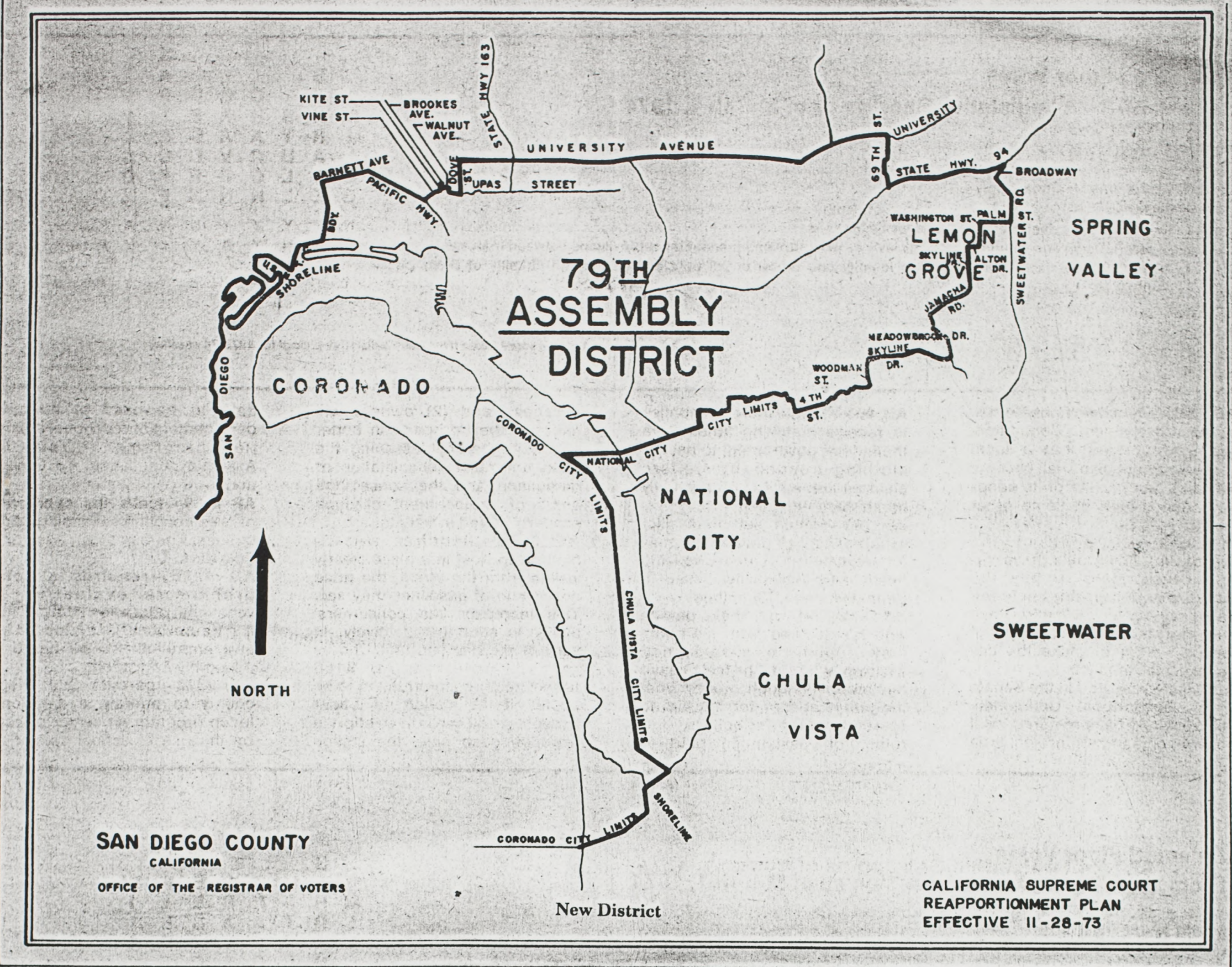
**Selected Floor Votes  
From 1973-74 Legislative Session as of March 1, 1974**

**ITEM NUMBER**

**Public Work**

1. SCA 15 Use of gas tax revenue for mass transit and air pollution control	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	A	Passed
2. AB 1727 Reduction of 60% to majority vote required for approval of bond issues for the Southern California Rapid Transit District	Y	N	N	Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Passed
California residential restoration act approves issuance and sale of bonds by local agencies to make residential restoration	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Passed

	S	C	C	D	P	W	K	
M	H	S	H	R	E	I	A	
I	R	T	A	A	D	L		
L	A	U	C	V	D	O		
L	D	L	O	E	E	F		
S	E	L	N	N	H	F	N	OUTCOME



clude the areas of education, housing, and consumer protection. A chairman of the Urban Development and Housing Committee saying, "He has not done a thing with his committee, one of the best committees in the Legislature." A consultant to the committee, Renee Franken, disputed the charges and stated that although Chacon did not have a specific background in housing, he has learned a lot during his tenure as chairman. According to a public interest lobbyist, the committee "is so liberal that anything it passes is suspect on the floor." Again Ms. Franken disputes the charges, maintaining that the committee is composed of four Democrats and three Republicans. "Major housing bills," she claims, "had bi-partisan support."

The committee's problems, Ms. Franken explained, are accentuated by an extremely conservative Governor and State Senate, which serves as "a burial ground for a lot

of bills." Ronald Reagan, who does not want the state involved in housing, thus many bills are lost. "The effectiveness of a legislator," Ms. Franken concluded, "really does not depend solely upon how many bills he introduces and how many bills he gets through, Look at how substantial the bills are, the quality of the bills, not the number."

Chacon's opponent in the 1974 Democratic primary, Al Puente, saw things differently: "Chacon blames Reagan, but the fact is that most (of his bills) have never gotten to the Governor."

The following are bills proposed by Assemblyman Chacon:

**Ab 558**—Authorizes the State Board of Education to approve or disapprove bilingual education programs funded with state or federal funds. Also would permit the Grossmont Union High School District to contract with non-profit organization to acquire, construct or improve recreation centers on school

property. \*Signed by governor.

**AB 559**—Would have required schools serving areas in which 15 per cent or more of the pupils speak a primary language other than English to hire, through attrition, bilingual employees, \*Vetoed by governor.

**AB 2313**—Permits the San Diego City Schools to receive state matching funds from the State Allocation Board for the rebuilding of San Diego High School. \*Signed by governor.

**AB 2211**—Permits county governments and city governments to require that all relocation assistance for displaced persons be funneled through a central agency within their jurisdictions. \*Signed by governor.

**AB 1152**—Would have created a State Housing Finance Agency for construction of low cost housing and put a \$200 million general bond issue on the November, 1974 ballot to finance its activities. \*Vetoed by governor.

**AB 484**—Defeated in the Senate Transportation Committee, the bill would have required any bus carrying school pupils exclusively to require that every student be seated in his own seat.

**AB 1026**—Defeated in the Assembly Education Committee, the bill would have permitted school boards to delegate the authority for approving new personnel appointments, transfers, salary increases, and promotions.

**AB 1076**—Defeated in the Assembly Education Committee, the bill would have permitted school boards to adopt interim salary schedules pending adoption of their fiscal year budgets.

**AB 1911**—Dropped by the author, the bill would have permitted the taking of anchovies off the California coast for live bait from Aug. 1 to Nov. 1, and directed the Department of Fish and Game to report on the law's effect after two years of operation.

(Continued on Page 4)

**Selected Floor Votes  
From 1973-74 Legislative Session as of March 1, 1974**

**ITEM NUMBER**

**Energy and Environment**

- 1. SB 144 Develops energy conservation standards for all new commercial buildings
- 2. SB 283 Creates State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission to research, forecast energy demands and supplies, conservation programs
- 3. SB 1051 Propose a change in Section 21001 of the California Environmental Quality Act that declares that it is state policy to "Ensure that the long term protection of the environment shall be the guiding criterion in public decisions—the measure would make such protection "a guiding criterion"

	S					K	
	C	C	C	D	P	A	
M	H	S	H	R	E	I	L
I	R	T	A	A	D	L	L
L	A	U	C	V	D	O	S
L	D	L	O	E	E	F	O
S	E	L	N	N	H	F	N
							<b>OUTCOME</b>

Y Y A Y A Y A Y Passed  
 Y N N N N Y Y N Veto  
 Y Y A Dead in Assembly

Key: Y = Yes N = No A = Absent

Voting record taken from daily legislative journal for 1973-74 session

**Selected Floor Votes  
From 1973-74 Legislative Session as of March 1, 1974**

**ITEM NUMBER**

**Justice**

ITEM NUMBER	S	C	C	D	P	W	OUTCOME	
	M	H	S	H	R	E	I	
	L	A	U	C	V	D	O	
	L	D	L	O	E	E	F	
	S	E	L	N	N	H	F	
1. SB 450 Restores death sentence for specified crimes	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	A Passed
2. SB 569 Revision of community property laws as to control and management provisions between man and wife	Y	N	N	Y	A	Y	Y	Y Passed
3. ACR 33 Directs each state agency to identify and report on all policies that abridge equality of rights on account of sex	Y	N	N	A	Y	Y	Y	Y Passed

Key: Y = Yes N = No A = Absent

Voting record taken from daily legislative journal for 1973-74 session

**AB 2387**—Defeated in the Senate Local Government Committee, the bill declared that a local redevelopment plan shall become effective on the date of its adoption, rather than at some other time.

**AB 2312**—Dropped by the author, the bill would have required the state to pay the difference in salaries between part-time city council and a full time city council, if the people of the city voted to make the city council a full-time job.

**AB 2388**—Defeated in the Senate Local Government Committee, the bill would have required local governments to form project area

**AB 906**—Would permit counties to receive matching funds from the federal government to pay for clothing needed by welfare children in the event of unusually harsh weather. Failed.

**Ab 796**—Would set up a pilot program in two California cities for developing data on housing needs and availability. Failed in Senate Finance Committee.

**AB 2212**—Provides that a person who is relocated from his home may appeal to a relocation assistance board if he feels he did not receive enough money from the public agency forcing him to relocate. Also specifies that relocation assistance paid to

purchase and (2) owners will maintain their property in better condition thereby lessening the need for major rehabilitation or demolition and the consequent costs of replacement of such property. Killed in Senate.

**AB 3158**—Requires service stations to post in a place clearly visible from the street, the price and grade of gasolines they sell. This increases the consumers' ability to shop competitively. In view of the gas shortage and its related problems, AB 3158 further requires information to be posted if the station no longer accepts credit cards in an effort to expedite each sale, the station

data to be used in effective development of vocational education programs. Passed by Assembly Education. To Governor.

**AB 4239**—funds the operations of Area Vocational Planning Committees. To be heard in Assembly Education.

**AB 4240**—requires a comprehensive evaluation of vocational education in order that it may be consistently upgraded and improved. To be heard in Assembly Education.

**AB 2818**—permits San Diego county to operate a nutritional lunch program for senior citizens by the use of school cafeterias.

**Selected Floor Votes  
From 1973-74 Legislative Session as of March 1, 1974**

**ITEM NUMBER**

**Taxation**

ITEM NUMBER	S	C	C	D	P	W	OUTCOME	
	M	H	S	H	R	E	I	
	L	A	U	C	V	D	O	
	L	D	L	O	E	E	F	
	S	E	L	N	N	H	F	
1. AB 1267 Gives \$235 million in new state support for the schools and reduces property taxes in school districts by about \$280 million, correcting short-comings of SB 90 (Inacted 1972)								
2. SB 425 Delays 1¢ increase in state sales tax for 6 months, sets a maximum of \$200 for 1973 state income tax rebates	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y Veto
3. SB 15 Repeals provisions prohibiting public assistance recipients from receiving senior citizen property tax assistance	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y Passed

Key: Y = Yes N = No A = Absent

Voting record taken from daily legislative journal for 1973-74 session

committees, consisting of residents in the area, whenever a redevelopment project affects 50 or more low to moderate income families, rather than the "substantial" number of families the law now requires.

**AB 664**—Would increase from \$6,000 to \$7,550 a year the minimum salary for teachers in California. Failed in Senate Finance Committee.

**AB 1261**—Would change the methods of assessing property taxes on federally assisted housing to reflect the income the housing brings the owner, rather than its potential resale value. Died in Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee

welfare recipients shall not be figured in as a part of a welfare payment. Signed by the Governor.

**AB 2817**—This bill continues and expands the funding for Bilingual Education programs in fiscal year 1974-75. It adds funding to increase the supply of bilingual teachers for such programs. AB 2817 has been passed by the Assembly Education and Ways and Means Committees.

**AB 3032**—allows cities and counties to require owners to obtain a residential building report and a building inspection on residential property they are selling so that (1) the prospective buyer can make an informed decision to

sets minimum or maximum purchase limits, the station participates in some kind of rationing plan (it must indicate which cars will be served each day). The bill further requires the station to post a sign listing the hours it will be open to sell gasoline.

**AB 4237**—revises the structure and operation of Area Vocational Planning Committees to enhance their effectiveness in the vocational education field. Passed by Assembly Education.

**AB 4238**—creates an information system capable of forecasting both labor market demands and the future expected supply of skilled persons in a variety of job classifications as well as other

The legislation, signed by the Governor, is not mandatory, but allows local authorities to decide on programs if they so choose.

Chacon considers his most important legislation to be AB 2284 which he authored last year. The bill appropriates \$5 million for bilingual education. According to the *California News Reporter*, the legislation is aimed at youngsters in the earliest grades, particularly children of Mexican-American descent who have learned little or no English before enrolling in school.<sup>14</sup> According to former Assembly Speaker Bob Moretti, "It is one of the most important pieces of legislation in the

(Continued on Page 5)

**Selected Floor Votes  
From 1973-74 Legislative Session as of March 1, 1974**

**ITEM NUMBER**

**Employment and Consumer Action**

ITEM NUMBER	S	C	C	D	P	W	OUTCOME	
	M	H	S	H	R	E	I	
	L	A	U	C	V	D	O	
	L	D	L	O	E	E	F	
	S	E	L	N	N	H	F	
1. AB 1206 Prohibits employment discrimination on the basis of age	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y Veto
2. AB 809 Establishes eligibility for unemployment compensation disability benefits for women due to pregnancy confinement	Y	Y	Y	Y	B	Y	Y	Y Passed
3. SB 400 Collective bargaining for teachers	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	Y Veto
4. AB 666 Develops California consumer action network, \$1.710 million for local expansion or creation of consumer fraud and consumer affairs bureaus		Y	A	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y Dead in Senate

Voting record taken from daily legislative journal for 1973-74 session

**Selected Floor Votes**  
**From 1973-74 Legislative Session as of March 1, 1974**

**ITEM NUMBER**

S C C D P W  
M H S H A R E I L  
I R T A A D L L  
L A U C V D O S  
S E L N N H F N **OUTCOME**

**Political Reform**

- 1. SB 509 Revises campaign reporting requirements for candidates and ballot measures receipts and expenditure reporting, disclosure of all contributions of over \$100..... Y Y Y Pending in Assembly
- 2. SB 716 Financial disclosures by public officials and candidates for office of all investments over \$1,000 and all income, gifts, loans over \$250 ..... Y N N Y A Y Y Y Passed

Key: Y = Yes N = No A = Absent

Voting record taken from daily legislative journal for 1973-74 session

state's history." A Sacramento lobbyist praised Chacon's accomplishment, terming it "a heck of a selling job." The Assemblyman "had to convince the government that there was value in bilingual education."

**Election 1974**

Assemblyman Chacon is in the midst of his second re-election campaign. Winning the Democratic primary easily over challenger Al Puente, Chacon successfully blocked growing minority opposition. According to Puente, Chacon is an ineffective Assemblyman who is unable to promote substantial legislation for either the 79th District or the State. "The biggest thing I'm griping about," Puente stated, "is his lack of initiative." Contending that Chacon is not responsive to his constituents, Puente charged that the incumbent is committed to special monied interest groups, such as the Teamsters Union, La Costa Land Company, and Standard Oil.<sup>15</sup>

Chacon's Republican opposition in the November general elections is Jesse Albritten. A black, Albritten temporarily withdrew from the race, citing his aversion to participating in a campaign wrought with racial overtones: "I am not interested in taking part in any political activity that is based solely on a person's race." Albritten attributed his withdrawal to articles in the local press and "private information" stating, "For me to continue under the present conditions would only fan the fires among the various races—this San Diego does not need."<sup>16</sup> Because of the urging of his supporters and Republican Central Committee Chairman Leslie Gehres, however, Albritten re-entered the race.

Assemblyman Chacon's tenure has not been free from controversy. Many of his most ardent and vocal critics are Mexican-Americans within his own district. The conflicts have a long and continuous history. In 1971, a fundraising dinner was

held for Democratic presidential hopeful Senator Edmund Muskie. Two Chicano leaders, Gilbert Robledo and Herman Baca charged that Chacon barred them from a meeting between Muskie and Mexican-American leaders. Although Robledo and Baca claimed that Muskie had invited them to discuss local Chicano issues, Chacon disagreed stating he kept them out "because he was directed to do so by the Senator's staff." He continued, the meeting "was for the statewide leaders. Baca and Robledo are local Chicano leaders."

Baca, director of the San Diego chapter of the Mexican-American Political Association, recalled that Muskie's address cited the "gross inequities in the political structure effecting Chicanos in the state (and) expounded on the issue of self-determination for Chicanos." He criticized Chacon's actions: "A

representative of the Democratic Party does exactly the opposite of what is expounded by the front-runner," He added, "We received insulting treatment." Chacon scoffed at the criticism, stating "There was no political insult meant. I made a commitment to Senator Muskie—I had to keep it."

Baca's response was somewhat prophetic: "The freshman Assemblyman might be a representative of the Democratic Party, but he is not and probably never will be a spokesman for the Chicano community."<sup>17</sup>

The following year, another incident occurred between Chacon and the Mexican-American community. The Assemblyman's offices were picketed because of Chacon's vote for AB 528, a bill which would impose fines of \$200 to \$500 per offense against employers who knowingly hire an illegal alien if the

employment had an adverse effect on resident workers. The demonstrators, organized statewide by the Centro de Accion Social Autonomo of Los Angeles, believed that the law would have an adverse effect on Mexican-Americans, many of whom moved to the United States before immigration procedures were standardized and thus have no papers to prove their legal status. Again Herman Baca criticized Chacon delcaring that, because of the Assemblyman's vote. "It is obvious that Mr. Chacon cares more about the Democratic Party than about his own people."<sup>18</sup>

On another occasion, Chacon briefly tangled with Mexican-Americans who responded to a Senate-proposed reapportionment plan in 1973 as a "racist scheme designed to protect incumbents." Chacon supported the plan, stating that he'd prefer Legislative rather than judicial reapportionment: "I'd pick the legislative reapportionment," he commented, "even if we didn't get a Mexican-American senator." Chacon reminded detractors, "I want to represent all the people in my district—blacks, browns, yellows, and Anglos," and added that he could not devote himself exclusively to Mexican-American causes.<sup>19</sup>

Yet Chacon's interest in minorities is well-documented; he maintains that his legislative record attests to his concern. Although long a supporter and political ally of former Assembly Speaker Bob Moretti, Chacon did not back Moretti's hand picked candidate to succeed him, Willie Brown (D-San Francisco). Instead, Chacon supported the victorious Lee McCarthy (D-San Francisco). To critics who derided Chacon for not supporting Brown, a fellow minority, Chacon pointed out that most members of the Assembly Minority Caucus

(Continued on Page 6)

**1973 Senate and Assembly Ratings**  
**Percentage Legislator Voted with Organizations**

	Labor	CPOA	CRA	LWV	LCV	LB	NOW
<b>Senate</b>							
Mills (D)	86	0	9	79	93	86	84
Schrade (R)	64	50	65	29	77	62	52
Stull (R)	29	88	85	50	80	57	44
<b>Assembly</b>							
Chacon (D)	91	40	45	94	84	72	79
Craven (R)*	--	--	78	29	84	67	56
Deddeh (D)	100	20	15	88	94	96	85
Kapiloff (D)	100	20	20	94	100	100	93
Wilson (D)	100	20	33	94	88	84	87

\*Elected in mid-session

Voting patterns compiled by:

- California Labor Federation AFL-CIO
- California Peace Officers Association (CPOA)
- California Republican Assembly (CRA)
- League of Women Voters (LWV)
- League of Conservative Voters (LCV)
- Legislative Birdwatchers (LB)
- National Organization for Women (NOW)

Source: "How Seven Organizations Grade California Lawmakers," by Joan R. Reiss. "California Journal", June, 1974, pp. 197-8.

**Selected Floor Votes**  
**From 1973-74 Legislative Session as of March 1, 1974**

**ITEM NUMBER**

S C C D P W  
M H S H A R E I L  
I R T A A D L L  
L A U C V D O S  
S E L N N H F N **OUTCOME**

**Subsidies and Spending**

- 1. AB 387 Appropriate funds replacing lost federal social service funds ..... Y Y Y Y B Y Y Y Passed
- 2. SB 700 Appropriate funds replacing lost federal summer youth opportunities funds ..... Y Y N A B Y Y Y Vetoed
- 3. AB 322 Appropriate funds to continue a federal employment program ..... Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Y Dead in Senate
- 4. AB 332 Use \$50 million of budget surplus for acquisition of land within the coastal zone ..... Y Y Y Y Y B Y Y Y Dead in Senate
- 5. SB 1198 Use \$155 million of budget surplus for an environment improvement fund ..... Y N N Y Y Y Y Y Pending in Assembly
- 6. AB 451 Appropriate \$31,662,000 to child centers programs/pre school programs thru June 20, 1975 ..... Y N A Y B Y Y Y Passed
- 7. AB 1244 Appropriate \$9.352 million for child care programs ..... Y N A Y Y Y Y Y Passed
- 8. AB 18 State supplement to aged, blind, disabled to maintain existing level of \$212 a month when federal government institutes national control over program with basic grant of \$130 ..... Y Y N Y A Y Y Y Vetoed

Key: Y = Yes N = No A = Absent

Voting record taken from daily legislative journal for 1973-74 session



(Continued from Page 5)

backed McCarthy. Their reasoning, he asserted, was that Brown would be expected to reaffirm Moretti's appointments; newcomer McCarthy would be able to make new appointments and thus minorities would ultimately fare better.

This ability to look to the long term is one which Chacon admirers refer to with pride. Although he has been criticized for his ability to

straddle the line between both sides of an issue, Chacon's supporters credit his level-headedness and fairness. According to one co-worker, the Assemblyman is a "citizen politician" who wants to listen to all sides and do what is realistic. "He's not in any one camp. He's not just moderate, but more a moderator."<sup>20</sup>

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## FOOTNOTES

1. *San Diego Union*, February 9, 1970
2. *Evening Tribune*, February 18, 1971
3. *San Diego Union*, April 11, 1974
4. *San Diego Union*, February 9, 1970
5. *Ibid.*
6. *San Diego Union*, November 5, 1970
7. *San Diego Union*, October 16, 1970
8. Statistics from *San Diego County Demographic Profile*, written by Richard Schmalensee for Common Cause/San Diego, 1972.
9. *Evening Tribune*, April 23, 1971
10. *San Diego Union*, March 18, 1971
11. Interview with Al Puente, April, 1974
12. Interview with Renee Franken, September, 1974
13. All bills discussed in the *California Journal*
14. *California News Reporter*, December 16-31, 1972
15. Interview with Puente
16. *San Diego Union*, April 25, 1974
17. *San Diego Union*, September 10, 1971
18. *San Diego Union*, February 11, 1972
19. *San Diego Union*, February 18, 1973
20. Interview with Ms. Franken

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