

Senator Loni Hancock
SCA 5
State Budget – Simple Majority Budget

PURPOSE OF THE BILL

SCA 5 would change General Fund appropriations in the Budget Bill from the 2/3 vote requirement to a simple majority.

PROBLEM & NEED FOR THE BILL

Year after year the California budget process has been delayed and distorted due to the constitutionally required 2/3 vote to pass the budget. Budgets have been late 15 of the last 20 years and with less transparency so that the public has difficulty knowing who to hold accountable. A minority of legislators have been able to hold the budget process hostage, even extracting non-budget item concessions from the majority, in order to secure their votes on the passage of the budget.

These concessions have come at a great price and have damaged the state and future of California in numerous ways. There have been deep and damaging cuts to education and social safety services, a weakening of labor and environmental laws, additional borrowing, and the placement of constitutional amendments on the state ballot that have nothing to do with the state budget. This process has lead California on a downward spiral of inadequate education, decaying infrastructure, and loss of public confidence, greatly damaging the democracy of our state.

California is one of only three states with the 2/3rds vote requirement for passing budgets. Forty-seven other states, the United States Congress, and every city, county and school district in California pass budgets with a simple majority vote.

Changing the way California adopts a budget will enable a majority of legislators to negotiate a budget and be held accountable for that budget, like the US Congress and all levels of local government and forty-seven other states. The structurally dysfunctional budget process cannot continue. It has failed the people of California. There has been too much damage to the state because of the 2/3 vote requirement to pass the budget. It is time for a change to a more democratic and efficient process.

WHAT THIS BILL WOULD DO

SCA 5 would bring accountability, efficiency and democracy back to the budget process by changing the 2/3 requirement for passing the Budget Bill to a simple majority. This would allow a majority of legislators to negotiate a budget, allow for budget negotiations to be solely on budgetary matters, and for legislators to be clearly accountable to the voters in the next election.

Senator Loni Hancock
1515 Clay Street, Suite 2202
Oakland, CA 94612
Phone: (510) 286-1333 Fax: (510) 286-3885
www.senate.ca.gov/hancock