Inventory of the Robert J. Campbell Papers

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Inventory of the Robert J. Campbell Papers

Collection number: LP400

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Office of the Secretary of State
Sacramento, California

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Descriptive Summary
Title: Robert J. Campbell Papers
Dates: 1975-1996
Collection number: LP400
Creator: Robert J. Campbell, California Legislator
Collection Size: 15 cubic feet
Repository: California State Archives
Sacramento, California

Abstract: Robert J. Campbell, a Democrat, was elected to the California State Assembly in 1980 to represent the Eleventh Assembly District. The Robert J. Campbell Papers consist of 15 cubic feet of records reflecting the interests and political activities of Assembly Member Campbell during his 16 years in the California State Legislature.

Physical location: California State Archives
Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English
Access
Collection is open for research.

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Preferred Citation
[Identification of item], Robert J. Campbell Papers, LP400:[folder number], California State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, Sacramento, California.

Acquisition and Custodial History
The California State Archives acquired the Robert J. Campbell Papers following his final term in the State Legislature.

Biography
California legislator Robert J. Campbell was born December 20, 1937 in Los Angeles. His family moved to Richmond, in the San Francisco Bay Area, when Campbell was a child, and he attended high school there. His undergraduate work was done at Contra Costa College and San Francisco State University, where he played on the football team and received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1961. Three years later, he received his Master of Arts in History from the University of California, Berkeley and taught history courses there for two years. Campbell served in the U.S. Army and California National Guard from 1961 to 1972. After teaching, he worked in the insurance industry in Richmond, becoming president and chief stockholder of a prominent company in 1980.

His interest in politics began in college; in 1959 and 1960, he volunteered for John F. Kennedy's presidential campaign. Subsequently he worked on the election campaigns of Richmond Councilmember Ned Bates, State Assembly Member John
Knox, U.S. Representative George Miller and U.S. Senator Alan Cranston. In 1975, Campbell was elected to the Richmond City Council, his first experience in elective office. During his tenure on the City Council, he served as Richmond's representative on the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) Legislative and Government Committee.

In 1980, he won election to the California State Assembly, representing the Eleventh Assembly District. It was a heavily Democratic district, meaning that the only real contest was in the June primary, which Campbell won by a vote of 58 to 42 percent. He defeated his Republican challenger in the November general election by 68 to 23 percent; he was reelected with little or no opposition consistently for the remainder of his Assembly career. When term limits forced Campbell to retire from the Assembly in 1996, he ran for the State Senate from the Ninth Senatorial District, but lost the Democratic primary to fellow Assembly Member Barbara Lee, by 60 to 40 percent.

Assembly Member Campbell’s legislative priorities were education and environmental protection. He chaired the Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education, the main subcommittee dealing with education funding, for six years (1985-1991) and served on the Water, Parks and Wildlife Committee for fifteen years (1981-1995).

The Eleventh Assembly District during Campbell's tenure was located entirely in Contra Costa County, and contained the cities of Hercules, Martinez, Pinole, Pittsburg, Richmond, and San Pablo. It was an overwhelmingly Democratic district, with voter registration ranging from 54 to 66 percent Democratic during Campbell's service in the Assembly.

During his legislative career, Campbell served on the following committees:

**State Assembly, 1980-1996**

**Standing Committees**
- Agriculture, 1981-1982
- *Vice Chair, 1983-1984*
- Elections and Reapportionment, 1981-1982
- Health, 1996
- Housing and Community Development, 1995-1996
- *Vice Chair, 1996*
- *Chair, 1989-1990*
- Public Safety, 1985-1988
- Revenue and Taxation, 1991-1992
- Transportation, 1995-1996

**Subcommittees**
- *Chair, 1985-1990*

**Joint Committees**
- Joint Legislative Audit Committee, 1996
- *Chair, 1996*
- Joint Legislative Budget Committee, 1991-1994

**Select Committees**
- Select Committee on California-Mexico Affairs, 1991-1996

**Scope and Content**

The Robert J. Campbell Papers consist of 15 cubic feet of records reflecting the interests and political activities of Assembly Member Campbell during his 16 years in the California State Legislature. The records are divided into six series: bill files, subject files, correspondence, press releases, and proposed legislation files.

The bill files are the most comprehensive series in this collection; most of them contain bill analyses from multiple committees and state agencies, proposed and enacted amendments, transcripts of committee testimony on their behalf, press releases, newspaper clippings, and correspondence.
Prominent environmental legislation authored by Campbell included Assembly Bill 384 of the 1983-1984 session, which created a check-off field on California state income tax forms for taxpayers to contribute to the Endangered and Rare Fish, Wildlife, and Plant Species Conservation and Enhancement Account; and Assembly Bill 3270 of the 1985-1986 session, which made it easier for citizens and interest groups to petition the Fish and Game Commission to designate new plant and animal species as endangered or threatened. Feeling that environmentalists were underrepresented on the state Fish and Game Commission, Campbell authored two failed Assembly Constitutional Amendments which would have changed the structure of the Commission: ACA 44 of the 1987-1988 session, and ACA 51 of the 1989-1990 session.

In the field of education, Campbell was particularly interested in California's higher education systems. He coauthored, with State Senator John Seymour, the Seymour-Campbell Matriculation Act of 1986, which was encompassed by Campbell's Assembly Bill 3 of 1985-1986 (available in the Campbell papers) and Seymour's Senate Bill 1171 of the same session (not available in the Campbell papers, but extensive information is contained in the AB 3 file). This legislation provided statutory authorization for community college matriculation programs, defined such programs, and set minimum standards of services for colleges choosing to provide them. In an attempt to offset budget cuts to the community college system, he authored Assembly Bill 2782 of the 1991-1992 session, which required community college students with a bachelor's degree to pay an additional $50 fee; according to Who's Who in the California Legislature, 1995-96, this legislation may have caused 60,000 students to drop out.

Public concern over salaries and bonuses paid to University of California (UC) chancellors and administrators caused Campbell to propose Assembly Constitutional Amendment 11 in the 1993-1994 session, which would have increased legislative oversight of the UC Board of Regents, while also modifying the Board's composition and the Regents' terms of office.

His interest in increased K-12 education funding led him to author Assembly Bill 1168 of the 1995-1996 session, a school facilities bond measure which was placed before the voters as Proposition 203 in the March 1996 statewide primary election, and passed by a margin of 62 to 38 percent. A more controversial bill regarding K-12 education was Assembly Bill 3037 of the 1981-1982 legislative session, which required those applying for teaching credentials to disclose any prior criminal history.

Some of the most controversial issues Campbell dealt with were local concerns. His Assembly Bill 2226 of the 1981-1982 session authorized the development of a senior housing complex in El Cerrito, using private funds but on property paid for by the state; it was very controversial, and Campbell received a high volume of correspondence both in favor of and opposed to it. Also controversial was his proposal to have the state bail out the Richmond Unified School District, which was on the verge of bankruptcy, with an emergency loan; this passed and was signed into law as Assembly Bill 128 of the 1991-1992 session.

Another area of interest for Campbell was Native American issues. In the 1981-1982 legislative session, he authored a failed proposal (Assembly Bill 3312) to classify the disturbance of Native American burial sites as a felony. More successful was his Assembly Bill 2477 of the 1989-1990 session, which reauthorized the statewide American Indian Early Childhood program, to help Native American children succeed in public schools.

Researchers studying animal rights legislation in California may be interested in Campbell's Assembly Bill 1058 of the 1993-1994 session, which proposed banning the force-feeding of ducks to produce pate foie gras for human consumption. Although it failed to pass during Campbell's tenure, this remained a contentious issue in California for many years, and a similar bill passed in the 2003-2004 session: Senate Bill 1520 (Burton).

**Indexing Terms**

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.

Campbell, Robert J.

Education

Environmental protection
Series 1 Bill Files 1981-1996

Physical Description: 254 file folders

Arrangement
Bill files are arranged chronologically by legislative session, then numerically by bill number.

Scope and Content Note
Most bill files include all or some of the following items: bill analyses, amendments and resolutions, author's statements, press releases, newspaper clippings, and correspondence. Of particular interest are those relating to Campbell's two main areas of legislative interest: education and environmental protection. Prominent environmental legislation includes AB 384 (1983-1984 session), which created a check-off field on California state income tax forms for taxpayers to contribute to the Endangered and Rare Fish, Wildlife, and Plant Species Conservation and Enhancement Account; and AB 1572 (1991-1992), which increased fines for air pollution violations, as well as the earlier, unsuccessful version of that same bill, AB 3783 of the 1989-1990 session.


Series 2 Subject Files 1975-1986

Physical Description: 49 file folders

Arrangement
Subject Files are arranged alphabetically by subject heading.

Scope and Content Note
Included in Subject Files are correspondence from constituents and other legislators, news clippings, government reports and other publications, and internal memoranda between Campbell and his staff. Subject Files relate largely to local issues Campbell dealt with and are less relevant to his legislative focus than are the Bill Files.

For a complete list of subjects see Appendix A in Master Finding Aid at the California State Archives.

Series 3 Correspondence 1981-1994

Physical Description: 4 file folders

Arrangement
Correspondence is arranged chronologically by year.

Scope and Content Note
Correspondence covers a variety of subjects, ranging from impending legislation (including Campbell's legislation and proposals by other legislators), controversial issues of the day, and local issues and problems constituents requiring Campbell's assistance. Correspondence is not comprehensive and most, if not all, of the subjects addressed in the correspondence files are addressed in greater detail in the Subject Files and Bill Files of this collection. However, researchers looking for clear and unambiguous statements regarding Campbell's position on important issues of the 1980s and early 1990s will find much of interest in this series.

Physical Description: 2 file folders

Arrangement
Press releases are arranged chronologically.

Scope and Content Note
Press releases in this series begin in December 1980, when Campbell was first sworn in to the State Assembly, and continue through December 1987. Most press releases do not focus on legislation Campbell authored; those are located in their respective bill files. Rather, the press releases series concerns other matters of interest to Campbell and his district, such as his committee assignments in the Assembly, local events at which he appeared, and statements he wished to make public.

Series 5 Proposed Legislation 1986-1989

Physical Description: 2 file folders

Arrangement
Proposed legislation files are arranged chronologically by year.

Scope and Content Note
This series contains files relating to legislation Campbell either introduced or considered introducing, but which was withdrawn before being formally assigned a bill number by the Legislative Analyst. The subjects concerned are largely the same as those addressed by his legislation—particularly education. Files include correspondence from individuals and interest groups asking Campbell to carry legislation, memoranda to and from Campbell and the Legislative Analyst regarding proposed legislation and legal opinions, and pre-printed copies of legislation that was withdrawn.