Inventory of the Gerald R. (Jerry) Eaves Papers

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Inventory of the Gerald R. (Jerry) Eaves Papers

Collection number: LP396

California State Archives
Office of the Secretary of State
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Descriptive Summary
Title: Gerald R. (Jerry) Eaves Papers
Dates: 1985-1992
Collection number: LP396
Creator: Gerald R. (Jerry) Eaves, California Legislator
Collection Size: 5 cubic feet
Repository: California State Archives
Sacramento, California
Abstract: Democrat Gerald R. "Jerry" Eaves was first elected to the California State Assembly in 1984. The Jerry Eaves Papers consist of 5 cubic feet of textual records reflecting Eaves's legislative interests during his eight years in the California State Assembly.
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], Gerald R. (Jerry) Eaves Papers, LP396.[folder number], California State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, Sacramento, California.

Acquisition and Custodial History
The California State Archives acquired the Gerald R. (Jerry) Eaves Papers following his final term in the State Legislature.

Biography
Gerald R. "Jerry" Eaves was born May 17, 1939 in Miami, Arizona and moved to San Bernardino, California in 1955. He attended San Bernardino Valley College and then California State University, San Bernardino, where he majored in Business Administration. During high school and college he worked at Fontana's Kaiser Steel Mill, working his way up to a management position in 1965.
Eaves began his political career in local government; he served on the city council of Rialto from 1977 to 1980 and as mayor from 1980 to 1984. In 1984, he successfully defeated incumbent 66th district Assembly Member Terry Goggin in the Democratic primary; Goggin had served in the Assembly for over a decade but no longer maintained a residence in the district. Eaves took advantage of this and defeated Goggin, 43.9 to 40.5 percent. Eaves went on to win the November 1984 general election by a margin of 56 to 42 percent. He faced no significant primary or general election opposition in 1986 and...
was handily reelected.

In the June 1988 Democratic primary, Eaves was challenged by San Bernardino Valley College District board member Joe Baca, who would succeed Eaves in 1992. Eaves defeated Baca, 56 to 44 percent, an unusually close margin for an incumbent legislator. He went on to win the 1988 general election, 55 to 41 percent. Eaves subsequently defeated Baca in a 1990 primary rematch by 57 to 43 percent and won that year’s general election 59 to 41 percent. The 66th District was overwhelmingly Democratic throughout Eaves’s legislative career, with Democrats typically enjoying at least a 20-point registration edge over Republicans.

In 1988, Eaves was part of the so-called “Gang of Five” legislators who attempted to topple Assembly Speaker Willie Brown from his leadership post; when they failed, Brown publicly humiliated them by moving them to smaller Capitol offices and removing them from their committee assignments. The 1988 primary challenge from Joe Baca was orchestrated by Brown as retribution for this failed attempt.

In the Assembly, Eaves was considered a moderate Democrat, who often broke with his party leadership on issues such as criminal justice (he favored lengthy prison sentences and “victims’ rights” legislation) and gun control (which he largely opposed). He did, however, receive consistently high marks from liberal interest groups such as teachers’ unions and those fighting for increased government AIDS research.

Eaves left the State Assembly in 1992 to serve on the San Bernardino County Board of Supervisors. In August 2001, Eaves was indicted by federal and state prosecutors for allegedly accepting illegal bribes, in the form of family trips to Las Vegas, from Orange County businessman William “Shep” McCook. A lengthy investigation and trial, which lasted nearly two years, ended in Eaves pleading guilty to one of the felony charges against him and resigning his seat on the Board of Supervisors in January 2004.

According to the California Legislature at Sacramento (Handbooks), Eaves served on the following committees:

**State Assembly, 1984-1992**

*Standing Committees*

- Finance and Insurance, 1984-1988
- Governmental Organization, 1988-1992
- Housing and Community Development, 1984-1988
- Local Government, 1984-1988
- Rules, 1990-1992
- Transportation, 1984-1992

*Joint Committees*

- Rules, 1988-1990
- Select Committees
  - Aviation, 1988-1990
  - Pipeline, Chemical Plant, and Refinery Safety, 1988-1990

*Subcommittees*

- Finance and Insurance Subcommittee on Unemployment and Disability, 1984-1986
  - Chair, 1984-1986
- Governmental Organization Subcommittee on Alcohol Regulations, 1988-1990
- Governmental Organization Subcommittee on Horse Breeding and Ownership, 1988-1990
  - Chair, 1988-1990

**Scope and Content**

The Jerry Eaves Papers consist of 5 cubic feet of textual records reflecting Eaves’s legislative interests during his eight years in the California State Assembly. The collection contains two series: bill files and correspondence.

The bill files, which are the most comprehensive and informative series in the collection, focus largely on the issues Eaves prioritized in the legislature - economic development and employment opportunities (particularly for groups perceived as disadvantaged in these fields, such as minorities and women), increased penalties for violent criminals and drug offenders,
personal privacy rights, and services for victims of domestic abuse.

One of Eaves's early successes was his Assembly Bill 2635 of the 1985-1986 session which redefined "nontraditional employment" for women as any industry in which females made up less than 25 percent of the workforce. This bill required the Employment Development Department to take this figure into account and to actively engage in recruiting and training women to work in such industries. On the subject of privacy rights, Eaves also authored unsuccessful legislation in the 1985-1986 session, AB3498, which would have restricted the use of voter registration information to certain government agencies. Eaves had received complaints from some constituents that the military, various tax collectors, and other government agencies had been consulting voter registration rolls to obtain contact information regarding citizens.

In the 1987-1988 session, Eaves's most headline-grabbing bill was AB251, which allowed nudists in registered nudist camps to purchase and consume alcohol without first putting on clothes. State law at the time forbade the serving of alcohol to anyone not wearing clothing. He also continued to support personal privacy rights, authoring AB595 and AB596, both of which proposed to strengthen restrictions on information released by credit reporting agencies. Both bills failed, however, as credit card companies and credit bureaus lobbied heavily against them.

At the beginning of the 1989-1990 session, Eaves immediately proposed legislation to remedy what he saw as a legal loophole that his 1988 primary opponent, Joe Baca, had used against him. Baca's campaign had sent out literature implying that U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy had endorsed Baca, when Kennedy had merely written Baca a praiseful letter. Eaves saw this as fraud and proposed AB5 in 1989 to classify such material as illegal impersonation of elected officials; the bill died, however. Also in the 1989-1990 session, Eaves was frustrated by failed legislation (AB807) which would have expanded the prohibition on the sale of pornographic magazines in coin-operated vending machines. When the bill died in the Assembly Public Safety Committee which was chaired by John Burton, a close ally of Speaker Willie Brown, Eaves sent out an angry press release assailing his fellow Democrats for their "liberal thinking."

Eaves's biggest successes in the 1991-1992 session, his final term in the Assembly, came in the areas of privacy rights and defending the victims of domestic violence. AB785 allowed the use of expert testimony in court cases involving Battered Women's Syndrome, in an attempt to reduce sentences for battered women who had killed their husbands. AB1446 guaranteed telephone users the right to have their number "blocked" on Caller ID machines, a very new technology at the time. Both of these bills passed and became law.

Researchers looking for material relating to Eaves's role in the "Gang of Five" and Willie Brown's subsequent attempt to remove Eaves from the Assembly with Joe Baca's 1988 primary challenge will find very little of interest in this collection, with the exception of AB5 of the 1989-1990 session and a few letters in the District Office correspondence files.

**Related Material at the California State Archives**

Assembly Governmental Organization Committee Records

**Indexing Terms**

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

Eaves, Gerald

Privacy, Right of

Economic development
Series 1 Bill Files 1985-1992

Physical Description: 94 file folders

Arrangement

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

Scope and Content Note

Bill files typically include analyses of the legislation, proposed amendments, correspondence from interest groups both in support and in opposition, editorials and newspaper clippings, press releases from Eaves's office, veto messages from the Governor (when applicable), and other relevant information. Major topics covered include economic development and employment opportunities, San Bernardino County local issues, real estate laws and regulations, criminal penalties, and health care.


Series 2 Correspondence 1988

Physical Description: 5 file folders

Arrangement

Arranged into three subseries: Capitol Office Alphabetical, Capitol Office Chronological, and District Office. The first subseries is arranged alphabetically by last name of the recipient of the correspondence; the second and third are each arranged chronologically by the date the correspondence was sent.

Scope and Content Note

Correspondence consists entirely of letters sent from Assembly Member Eaves to others. The two series containing Capitol Office correspondence consist largely of letters from Eaves to other members of the Legislature, such as the Speaker and various committee chairs, typically regarding legislation proposed by Eaves. District Office correspondence consists largely of letters from Eaves to constituents in his district, regarding controversial issues of the day, both local and statewide. Researchers looking for a clearer picture of Eaves's political ideology will find some items of interest in the correspondence files; Eaves was very forthright with his constituents regarding his position on issues such as gun control, business regulations, and education.