Inventory of the Burt Margolin Papers

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Inventory of the Burt Margolin Papers

Collection number: LP403

California State Archives
Office of the Secretary of State
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Descriptive Summary

Title: Burt Margolin Papers
Dates: 1983-1994
Collection number: LP403
Creator: Burt Margolin, California Legislator
Collection Size: 10.5 cubic feet of textual records and 95 audiocassettes
Repository: California State Archives
Sacramento, California

Abstract: Burt Margolin, a Democrat, was elected to the California Assembly in 1982 to represent the 45th Assembly District. The Burt Margolin Papers consist of 10.5 cubic feet of textual records and 95 audiocassettes documenting Margolin’s activities in the California State Assembly from 1983-1994.

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], Burt Margolin Papers, LP403:[folder number], California State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, Sacramento, California.

Acquisition and Custodial History
The California State Archives acquired the Burt Margolin Papers following his final term in the State Legislature.

Biography
Burt Margolin was born in Chattanooga, Tennessee on September 28, 1950, and moved to California with his family in 1952. He was raised in the Pico-Robertson neighborhood of Los Angeles, where he attended Hamilton High School. Margolin received his Bachelor of Arts degree from University of California, Los Angeles, where he majored in political science. While at UCLA, Margolin served as President of the UCLA Bruin Young Democrats. Later, he was elected state treasurer of the California Federation of Young Democrats. From 1975-1977, Margolin worked as an aide to Congressman Henry Waxman, and then served as a legislative assistant to Assembly majority leader Howard Berman. In 1980, Margolin became Congressman Waxman’s Chief of Staff, and worked in Washington, D.C. until 1982. As Chief of Staff, he handled much of Waxman’s work as Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment.
Margolin was elected to the California Assembly in 1982, winning over 63 percent of the vote. He represented the 45th Assembly District, which at that time included the Los Angeles communities of Beverly-Fairfax, Hollywood, Laurel Canyon, and parts of Studio City, North Hollywood and the City of Burbank. During the first year of his term, Margolin became the first freshman lawmaker to be selected “Outstanding Legislator of the Year” by the California State Council on Developmental Disabilities. Throughout his fourteen years in the Legislature, Margolin focused on issues such as environmental protection, worker’s compensation reform, and food safety. His primary interest was health care, and he authored many legislative measures related to emergency health care services, funding for county health care services, and expanding state assistance to provide health care for the medically disabled, indigent adults, senior citizens and pregnant women. In addition to his legislative activities, Margolin was also a member of the Sierra Club and the American Jewish Committee.

Due to term limits, Margolin left the Assembly in 1994. He currently resides in Los Angeles with his wife, Dr. Laurie Post, a clinical psychologist. He serves as President of the Margolin Group, a health policy and lobbying firm.

According to the California Legislature at Sacramento (Handbooks) and the Assembly Final History, Margolin served on the following Assembly committees:

**State Assembly, 1990-1996**

*Standing Committees*

Criminal Law and Public Safety, 1983-1984
Vice Chair, 1983-1984

Finance and Insurance, 1989-1990
Health, 1983-1994
Chair, 1993-1994

Human Services, 1985-1986
Insurance, 1991-1992
Chair, 1991-1992

Labor and Employment, 1983-1986
Natural Resources, 1989-1994
Rules, 1987-1988
Ways and Means, 1985-1988

*Subcommittees*

County Jails, 1993-1984
Chair, 1983-1984

Health and Worker's Insurance, 1989-1990

*Special Committees*

Medi-Cal Oversight, 1985-1992
Chair, 1987-1992

**Scope and Content**

The Burt Margolin Papers consist of 10.5 cubic feet of textual records and 95 audiocassettes. These materials document Margolin’s activities in the California State Assembly from 1983-1994. They are organized into two series: Bill Files and Hearing Files.

The Bill Files series reflects Margolin’s long-standing interest in health care reform. Margolin consistently authored legislation to implement universal health coverage for all Californians and to guarantee access to quality affordable health care. AB328 (1989-1990), AB14 (1991-1992), and AB16 (1993-1994) proposed plans to phase in comprehensive health coverage for the uninsured throughout the state. These legislative efforts met with significant opposition, and were ultimately unsuccessful. In addition to advocating for universal health insurance, Margolin devoted himself to expanding medical coverage to the indigent and disadvantaged. AB1172 (1985-1986), for example, would have expanded Medi-Cal coverage to disabled individuals requiring long-term medical care while residing at home. Margolin was also a strong opponent of “patient dumping,” the practice of transferring an uninsured patient to different medical facilities based on their inability to pay for medical care.
Margolin also had great interest in ensuring food safety and protecting consumer health and safety. Of particular concern were groups sensitive to additives and preservatives like sulfites. Margolin succeeded in passing a measure that required warning labels for foods containing sulfites (AB1367 of 1984). He also attempted to ban the use of sulfite preservatives in foods like potatoes (AB418, 1987).

Environmental protection was another legislative area of importance to Margolin. He authored legislation to protect local land conservancies, to tax heavy-duty and diesel-powered motor vehicles to fund air pollution control, to control radioactive waste, and to create programs for recycling batteries. Most significantly, Margolin created California's recycling program. AB2020 (1986), known as the California Beverage Container Recycling and Litter Reduction Act, or the "Bottle Bill," established redemption values for beverage containers in order to increase revenue and fund public recycling programs. Unfortunately, the file for AB2020 is not present within the Margolin Papers. Other legislative measures relating to the Bottle Bill, however, are present in the files. These include AB3160 (1988), which authorized increases in redemption values, and AB401 (1994), an act to add wine and distilled spirit beverage containers to the list of containers authorized for redemption values.

Also of interest are legislative materials pertaining to worker's rights and worker safety. Margolin authored several legislative measures related to alternate workweeks, protecting workers from asbestos, and preventing worker's compensation insurance fraud. Margolin was deeply concerned with worker's compensation reform, which he actively promoted. In 1989, he authored the Worker's Compensation Improvement Act (AB2032), a measure that sought to restructure the state's worker's compensation insurance system. Margolin pushed for greater cost efficiency within the system, and increased benefits for workers injured on the job.

The Hearing Files series relates to Margolin's work as part of the Assembly Finance and Insurance Committee and the Special Assembly Committee on Medi-Cal Oversight. As part of the Assembly Finance and Insurance Committee, Margolin participated in hearings regarding Proposition 103. Proposition 103, which California voters passed in 1988, created bureaus and divisions within the Department of Insurance in order to regulate insurance rates throughout the state. The Assembly Finance and Insurance Committee held multiple hearings to discuss the implementation of the new regulatory measure.

The Special Assembly Committee on Medi-Cal Oversight was created in 1983 as a result of comprehensive Medi-Cal reforms that occurred the previous year. The purpose of the committee was to review the impact of the reforms implemented in 1982 and to address whether or not the reforms improved the quality of medical care. The Hearing Files series contains audiotapes and textual materials relating to the numerous hearings held by the Special Assembly Committee on Medi-Cal Oversight in which Margolin actively participated from 1985-1992. Topics addressed in the hearings include "Expanded Choice" Medi-Cal programs, poor women's access to prenatal care, "patient dumping," county trauma centers, and AIDS patient care.

**Related Material at the California State Archives**

- Assembly Criminal Law and Public Safety Records
- Assembly Ways and Means Committee Records
- Assembly Elections, Reapportionment and Constitutional Amendments Committee Records
- Assembly Finance and Insurance Committee Records
- Assembly Finance, Insurance and Public Investment Committee Records
- Assembly Health Committee Records
- Assembly Human Services Committee Records
- Assembly Labor and Employment Committee Records
- Assembly Natural Resources Committee Records
- Assembly Public Safety 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.
- Margolin, Burt
- Health care reform
- Environmental protection
Series 1

Bill Files 1983-1994

Physical Description: 181 file folders

Arrangement

Bill files are arranged chronologically by legislative session and 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. Margolin's legislative interests included health care, environmental protection, recycling, and food safety. Margolin authored multiple bills related to universal health insurance and expanding Medi-Cal to benefit disadvantaged groups. Most notable among these bills is AB3595 (1988), the Healthy Children Act, or "Baby-Cal," which would have given all poor and uninsured women access to prenatal and delivery care. Margolin was also interested in reforming California's worker's compensation insurance system, and endeavored to increase benefits for injured workers through the Worker's Compensation Improvement Act of 1989 (AB2032). Materials related to this bill include 58 audiotapes of informational hearings, committee and subcommittee hearings, assembly floor sessions, and press conferences regarding worker's compensation insurance reform. Audiotapes have been removed to cold storage and separation sheets are included in the files to alert researchers to their presence.


Series 2

Hearing Files 1985-1990

Physical Description: 14 file folders

Arrangement

Hearing Files are arranged chronologically by date of hearing.

Scope and Content Note

Hearing Files consist of material related to hearings held by the Assembly Finance and Insurance Committee and the Special Assembly Committee on Medi-Cal Oversight. Margolin was actively involved in each of these committees. As a member of the Assembly Finance and Insurance Committee, Margolin participated in hearings that addressed issues like the implementation of Proposition 103 (1988), commodity fraud scams, and assigned risk insurance plans. As first a member and later the Chair of the Special Assembly Committee on Medi-Cal Oversight, Margolin administered hearings relating to Medi-Cal reforms. These hearings covered topics like poor women's access to prenatal care, AIDS patients, funding for county trauma centers, and "patient dumping." Audiotapes have been removed to cold storage and separation sheets are included in the files to alert researchers to their presence. For a complete list of hearings, see Appendix A in master finding aid at the California State Archives.