Inventory of the Nicholas C. Petris Papers

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Inventory of the Nicholas C. Petris Papers

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California State Archives
Office of the Secretary of State
Sacramento, California

Processed by:
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Descriptive Summary

Title: Inventory of the Nicholas C. Petris Papers
Dates: 1959-1996
Collection numbers: LP318
Creator: Petris, Nicholas
Collection Size: 51 cubic feet
Repository: California State Archives
Sacramento, California


Physical location: California State Archives
Languages: Languages represented in the collection: English

Access
While the majority of the records are open for research, any access restrictions are noted in the record series descriptions.

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[Identification of item], Nicholas C. Petris Papers, LP318:[folder number], California State Archives, Office of the Secretary of State, Sacramento, California.

Acquisition History
The Nicholas Petris papers were donated to the California State Archives following his term in the State Legislature.

Biography
Nicholas (Nick) C. Petris, Democrat, was a State Assembly Member, 1959-1966, and a State Senator, 1967-1996. He represented Alameda County's Assembly District 15 until 1966, when he was elected Senator. During his first ten years in the Senate, Petris represented Senate District 11, which covered Alameda County at large. Following redistricting in 1976, he represented Senate District 9, which now included parts of Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, including the cities of Oakland, Berkeley, Richmond, and Emeryville. He held that post until 1996, when term limits forced him to retire.

Nicholas Petris was born on February 25, 1923 in Oakland, California, the son of Greek immigrants. Petris’ family spoke Greek in the home, and he did not learn English until he started school. After graduating from McClymonds High School in Oakland he attended the University of California at Berkeley. He graduated in 1943 with a degree in Journalism, and served three years in the U.S. Army Anti Aircraft Artillery during World War II. Petris then went on to attend Stanford Law School.
He was admitted to the State Bar in 1949 and opened his own law office in Oakland. During this time he also served on the Redevelopment Agency of Oakland, the Social Service Bureau, the Oakland Council of Churches, and the Alameda County Council on Social Planning. It was also during this time that he became involved in Democratic Party politics.

As a legislator, he was Vice Chairman of the California Democratic Council, a member of the Governor's Advisory Committee on the Chile-California Program, and the San Francisco Bay Conservation Study Commission. In addition, he was Director of the YMCA Youth Legislature, member of the Native Sons of the Golden West, on the board of the Anatolia College in Thesolanika, Greece, President of the Greek Orthodox Church of Oakland, President of Modern Greek Studies Foundation in San Francisco, President of the Greek Orthodox Church of Oakland, Ecumenical Patriarchate, Order of St. Andrew, Commander, Order of the Phoenix, Republic of Greece.

Petris’ legislative career reflected his strong dedication to health care, the environment, labor issues, and public safety. He co-authored the Lanterman-Petris-Short Act (1969) that mandated civil rights for the mentally ill, as well as introducing bills that would have banned DDT and limited cars to one per family. Other legislation he championed mandated car seats for children, banned smoking on airplanes, and limited filling of San Francisco Bay. One of his proudest achievements was sponsoring a bill that created kidney dialysis centers, which have saved thousands of lives.

Petris was proud of his Greek heritage, and remained a prominent member of the Greek community throughout his career. He was also known for being a staunch liberal and an eloquent, compelling public speaker.

During his term in the legislature, Nicholas Petris was a member of the following committees:

**California State Assembly, 1959-1966**

**Standing Committees**
- Constitutional Amendments, 1965-1966
- Criminal Procedure, 1959-1962
- Vice chair, 1959-1960
- Elections and Reapportionment, 1959-1966
- Chair, 1961-1962
- Government Organization, 1961-1962
- Vice Chair
- Judiciary, 1963-1964
- Revenue and Taxation, 1959-1966
- Chair, 1963-1966
- Transportation and Commerce, 1959-1960
- Ways and Means, 1961-1966

**Subcommittees**
- Assessment Practices, 1965-1966
- Campaign Practices, 1965-1966
- Correctional Facilities, 1961-1962
- Economic Development, 1963-1964
- Electronic Data Processing, 1963-1964
- General Studies, 1965-1966
- Chair
- Income Taxation, 1961-1962
- Chair
- Institutions, 1963-1964
- Chair
- Long Range Budgeting, 1963-1964
- Mental Health, 1963-1966
- Revenue Sources, 1961-1962
- State Purchasing, 1961-1962
- Tax Administration, 1961-1962
Tax Exemptions, 1961-1962
Tourist Trade, 1961-1962

**California State Senate, 1967-1996**

*Standing Committees*
- Budget and Fiscal Review, 1985-1996
- Constitutional Amendments, 1995-1996
- Elections and Reapportionment, 1971-1974
- Finance, 1975-1984
- Health and Welfare, 1970
- Housing and Urban Affairs, 1983-1989
- Industrial Relations, 1984-1996
- Vice Chair, 1970-1976
- Labor, 1967-1968
- Chair
  - Labor and Social Welfare, 1969
  - Natural Resources, 1967-1969
  - Vice Chair, 1969
  - Natural Resources and Wildlife, 1970
  - Public Health and Safety, 1967
  - Public Utilities and Corporations, 1969
  - Vice Chair, 1977-1978
  - Rules, 1975-1996
  - Social Welfare, 1968
  - Toxics and Public Safety Management, 1995-1996

*Subcommittees*
- Administration of Justice, 1983-1994
- Education, 1987-1996
- Chair
  - Education and General Government, 1985-1986
  - Labor, 1967
- Chair
  - Local Government, 1968
  - Natural Resources, 1967-1968
  - Postsecondary Education, State Administration and Fiscal Control, 1981-1984
  - Revenue and Taxation, 1967-1968
  - Salinity Intrusion in Agricultural Soils, 1970
  - Social Welfare, 1968
  - State Deferred Compensation Plan, 1989-1990
  - Victim's Rights, 1985-1990
  - Water Resources, 1967

*Select Committees*
- Auburn Dam Project, 1984
Border Issues, Drug Trafficking and Contraband, 1987-1990
California Exposition and State Fair Oversight, 1984
Children and Youth, 1974
Drug and Alcohol Abuse, 1985-1986
Handicapped Children, 1970
Vice Chair
Health Hazards of the Workplace, 1989-1990
Chair
Housing and Urban Affairs, 1971-1982
Chair, 1971-1976
Investment Priorities and Objectives, 1977-1978
Substance Abuse, 1987-1990
Joint Committees
1992 Quincentennial of the Voyages of Christopher Columbus, 1987-1992
Bay Area Regional Organization, 1969
Community Development and Housing Needs, 1973-1974
Educational Goals and Evaluation, 1971-1974
Legislative Budget, 1975-1996
Legislative Organization, 1967-1968
Mental Health Research, 1989-1992
National Tax Policy, 1969
Vice Chair
Rules, 1975-1996
Sir Francis Drake Celebration, 1973
Tort Liability, 1989-1992
Worker's Compensation, 1993-1996

Scope and Content
The Nicholas C. Petris Papers consist of 51 cubic feet of records covering 1959-1996. The collection is organized into four series: Bill Files, Subject Files, Press Releases, and Videotapes and Audiotapes.

The bill files document Petris' legislative activity during his term as a member of the California State Legislature. The bills introduced by Nicholas Petris include a wide variety of subjects, including such topics as the environment, education, health care, tax reform, and children and senior citizens' issues. Bills Senator Petris introduced included attempts to ban the internal combustion engine, stop the filling of San Francisco Bay, and regulate pesticide usage. He was an advocate for improving care of the mentally challenged, providing health care and adequate housing to farm workers, promoting an equitable tax structure; improving the social conditions and safety of children, senior citizens, and rights of recipients on public assistance.

The Subject Files provide additional information on the various topics of the Petris' legislation, as well as subjects of personal interest to the Senator. Topics of particular interest include budget issues, child safety belts, and reapportionment. Press Releases were created by Petris and his staff to publicize legislation he authored and activities he participated in during his tenure in the legislature. Finally, there is an assortment of audiotapes and videotapes relating to topics of interest to the Senator and his legislation, such as health care and education.

Accruals
No further accruals are expected.

Indexing Terms
The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the library's online public access catalog.
Inventory of the Nicholas C. Petris Papers

Related Collections at the California State Archives

Assembly Elections and Reapportionment Committee Records

Oral History


Series 1 Bill Files 1956-1996

Physical Description: 811 file folders

Arrangement

Arranged chronologically by legislative session, then numerically by bill number.

Scope and Content Note

Bill Files may include correspondence, author's statements, analyses, research reports; press releases and newspaper clippings. Bills of particular interest include SB1493 (1979-1980), which addressed the Attorney General's authority over California churches and religious groups, SB537 (1981-1982), which required child car seat restraints, and SB778 (1969), which attempted to ban internal combustion engines. There are also extensive records available on the Tax Justice Act of 1977 (SB154), which provided property tax relief for homeowners and renters.

1959: AB1810-AB2824 (3ff) LP318:1-3
1961: AB200-AB2029, ACA, ACR, AJR (11ff) LP318:4-14
1962: AB33X, HR 21X (2ff) LP318:15-16
1963: AB63-AB3068, ACAs, ACRs, HRs (20ff) LP318:17-36
1964: AB19X-AB201X, ACAxs, ACRxs, HRxs (1ff) LP318:37-42
1965: AB15-AB3064, ACAs, ACRs, HRs, AB1X-AB12X (14ff) LP318:43-56
1966: AB10X-AB150X, AB5XX-AB10XX (10ff) LP318:57-66
1967: SB66-SB1319, SCAs, SRs (3ff) LP318:67-79
1968: SB268-SB1118, SRs, SB7X - SB8X, SCA1X (14ff) LP318:80-92A
1969: SB333-SB1321, SCAs, SCRs, SRs (11ff) LP318:93-103
1970: SB66-SB1422 (34ff) LP318:104-137
1971: SB30-SB1523, SCAs, SCRs (23ff) LP318:138-160
1972: SB7-SB2475, SCAs, SCRs (28ff) LP318:161-188
1973-1974: SB15-SB2470, SCAs, SCRs, SJRs (41ff) LP318:189-229
1975-1976: SB33-SB2082, SCRs, SJRs (23ff) LP318:230-252
1979-1980: SB30-SB1981, SCAs, SCRs, SJRs (49ff) LP318:300-348; SB1493 (16ff) LP318:993-1008
1981-1982: SB317-SB2074, SCRs, SJRs, SRs (72ff) LP318:349-420
1985-1986: SB199-SB2580, SJR3 (64ff) LP318:506-569
1987-1988: SB22-SB2796 (70ff) LP318:570-639
1991-1992: PREPRINT SB7-SB11, SB36-SB1854, SCAs, SCRs, SJRs (41ff) LP318:690-730
Series 2 Subject Files 1964-1996

Physical Description: 188 file folders
Arrangement
Arranged alphabetically by subject heading.
Scope and Content Note
Subject files may include correspondence, reports, newspaper articles, and memoranda relating to Senator Petris' legislation, personal interests, and Senate district. Of particular note are those files related to budget issues, health care and mental health, and various ballot propositions.
For a list of subject files, see Appendix A at the State Archives.


Physical Description: 9 file folders
Arrangement
Arranged chronologically by date of press release.
Scope and Content Note
The press releases were created and released by the staff of Senator Petris to advertise legislation he sponsored and activities in which he participated.
Series 4 Videotapes and Audiotapes 1983-1994

Physical Description: 14 videotapes and 7 audiotapes

Access Information
Access to audiovisual material requires the production of use copies.

Arrangement
Arranged by format.

Scope and Content Note
The video and audiotapes cover topics related to Petris' legislation such as health care, education, and child safety legislation. They have been separated to a cold-storage vault for preservation purposes.

Video Tapes
The Right to Health Care Act. 19 minutes
Transforming Our Schools for the 21st Century - Beyond the Box. Alameda Unified School District, August 19-20, 1991
Tobacco Education Media Campaign. - Advertising Sampler - California Dept of Health Services, 1994
"Day One". ABC TV February 28, 1994
Cigarette Company - Nicotine Level Manipulation
Senator Nick Petris Dinner August 29, 1996. 2 hours 25 minutes
Borderline Medicine
Farm Workers. KRON Mike O'Connor. 10 minutes - 2 "5" minute segments
Berkeley Owners In support of SB1257. 9 minutes
Student Fees. - Senator Petris VNR, February 27, 1995
Canada's National Health Program - A Model for the United States. 27 Minutes
ABS Pipes. KTVU Ch. 2, September 18, 1983, 8 minutes 35 seconds

Audio Tapes
SB537 California Passenger Safety Association Workshop, Child Safety Legislation. Includes list of Speakers, August 1983, 6 tapes
Senator Petris / Tom Vacar. KTVU News, November 4, 1994, 60 minutes or 60 Seconds