

COMMITTEE TO REFORM VOTING PRACTICES  
IN  
THE ASSEMBLY OF CALIFORNIA  
(SHORT TITLE: OPERATION VOTE-SWITCH)

28

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August 29, 1980

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(PARTIAL LIST)

The Honorable City Council  
City of Sacramento  
Sacramento, California 95814

Honorable Council Members:

This is to request a place on the agenda of the next meeting of the Council for a period not to exceed 15 minutes.

I wish to address the subject of "vote-switching" in the Assembly of California and the resulting erosion of government.


The purpose of this address will be to solicit a resolution of the Council, condemning the practice, and supporting the goals of "Operation Vote-Switch", which are solely reform of these morally bankrupt practices.

In addition to those citizens and institutions listed herein, we have gained the support and endorsement of the Honorable William E. Dannemeyer, Congressman, U. S. Congress, Bob Whitten and Associates, Newcastle, Senatorial Candidate Mr. Paul Gann, and others.

As may be noted in the enclosure, we have gained the unanimous endorsement of the City of Vallejo. More recently the City of Vacaville voted a similar resolution, expected to be presented next week.

The language of our petition is attached hereto, together with the letter of transmittal of the Legislative Counsel of California. This language is now in the office of the Attorney General, pending a title and summary.

Sincerely,

  
Ralph D. Morrell, Chairman  
"Operation Vote-Switch"

FILED 43  
By the City Council  
Office of the City Clerk  
referred to  
Law & Legis Comm.  
SEP 1 0 1980

Attachments:

1. Vallejo Resolution
2. Petition "language"
3. Miscellaneous newsclips

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(213) 620-2550

# Legislative Counsel of California

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CHRISTOPHER ZIRKLE  
DEPUTIES

Sacramento, California

July 31, 1980

Mr. Ralph D. Morrell  
825 Newgate Way  
Dixon, CA 95620

Legislative Procedure: Initiative  
Measure: \_\_\_\_\_ - #14445

Dear Mr. Morrell:

Pursuant to your request, we have prepared, in the appropriate form, the enclosed initiative measure to be submitted to the electors.

We remind you that a title and summary prepared by the Attorney General are also necessary (see subd. (d), Sec. 10, Art. II, Cal. Const.).

Very truly yours,

Bion M. Gregory  
Legislative Counsel

*David D. Alves leg JB*  
By  
David D. Alves  
Deputy Legislative Counsel

DDA:ns

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**CITY OF VALLEJO**

OFFICE OF THE CITY CLERK

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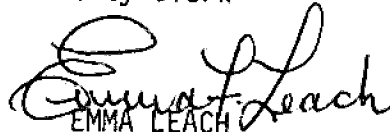
August 8, 1980

Mr. Ralph Morrell, Chairman  
Operation Vote-Switch  
825 Newgate Way  
Dixon, CA 95620

Dear Mr. Morrell:

Enclosed is a copy of Resolution No. 80-611 N.C. as adopted by the Vallejo City Council on August 4, 1980 indicating their support of the initiative drive regarding "Operation Vote-Switch."

MILDRED R. WATSON  
City Clerk

  
EMMA LEACH  
Assistant City Clerk

ed

Enc.

SEP 2 12 24 PM '80

RESOLUTION NO. 80-611 N.C.

BE IT RESOLVED, by the Council of the City of Vallejo, as follows:

WHEREAS, Ralph Morrell, Chairman of the Committee to Reform Voting Practices in the Assembly of California, (Operation Vote-Switch), has made application for a title and summary for a ballot initiative to end vote switching in the State Assembly; now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the City of Vallejo hereby supports the initiative drive to place the matter on the ballot and supports the goals of "Operation Vote-Switch"; and, further

BE IT RESOLVED that copies of this resolution be sent to Assemblymen Mike Gage and Tom Hannigan, the Solano County Board of Supervisors and the League of California Cities.

ADOPTED by the Council of the City of Vallejo at a regular meeting held August 4, 1980, by the following vote:

AYES: Councilmembers Berry, Cunningham, Curtola, Intintoli, Keith, Kondylis and Sibley

NOES: None

ABSENT: None

\_\_\_\_\_  
TERRY A. CURTOLA, JR., MAYOR

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
EMMA F. LEACH, ASSISTANT CITY CLERK

THE WITHIN INSTRUMENT IS A  
CORRECT COPY OF THE  
ORIGINAL ON FILE IN THIS OFFICE

DATE:

August 5, 1980

ATTEST:

EMMA F. LEACH

CITY CLERK & OFFICIAL DEPUTY OF THE  
COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF VALLEJO

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RECORD #

10 BF:

JUL 31 1980

80213 10:29

RN 80 014445 PAGE NO. 1

12-point  
Boldface  
type

**INITIATIVE MEASURE TO BE SUBMITTED DIRECTLY TO THE VOTERS**

The Attorney General of California has prepared the following title and summary of the chief purpose and points of the proposed measure:

Type: Roman  
Boldface not  
smaller than  
12-point

(Here set forth the title and summary prepared by the Attorney General. This title and summary must also be printed across the top of each page of the petition whereon signatures are to appear.)

**TO THE HONORABLE SECRETARY OF STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

We, the undersigned, registered, qualified voters of California, residents of \_\_\_\_\_ County (or City and County), hereby propose amendments to the Constitution of California, relating to legislative procedure, and petition the Secretary of State to submit the same to the voters of California for their adoption or rejection at the next succeeding general election or at any special statewide election prior to that general election or otherwise provided by law. The proposed constitutional amendments (full title and text of measure) read as

follows:

Section 7.5 is added to Article IV thereof, to read:

SEC. 7.5. (a) No bill may be passed out by a committee unless the chairman, or, in the absence of the chairman, the acting chairman, determines, by rollcall, that a majority of the membership of the committee is present at the time the vote on the bill is announced.

(b) No member voting on a bill in a committee or in either house may change his or her vote, or have his or her vote recorded, after the vote on the bill is announced.

(c) If an electrical voting system is used to record the voting on the passage of bills, no member may operate the voting switch of any other member.

"OPERATION VOTE SWITCH"

DIXON, CA. 95820

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# San Jose Mercury

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Editorials

Monday, July 28, 1980

6B

## Ban vote-switching in Assembly

**Y**OU say your assemblyman fought to the wire for nematode licensing, only to be overwhelmed on the final vote by the craven, the corrupt and the ignorant.

You say you know this because your man sent you a copy of the Assembly's recorded vote, and there he was, one of four lonely foes of the unlicensed nematode on the final roll call. (The other 76 assemblymen voted "no" on the bill for reasons of their own, one of them being that the governor wanted it killed.)

Well, don't believe all your hear— or see — in politics. Your assemblyman may, for reasons of *his* own, have gone along with the governor on nematode licensing. You just *think* he voted for the nematode bill.

The California Assembly is given to a minor, but galling, hypocrisy known as vote-switching, a vice in which the Senate, to its credit, refuses to indulge. Vote-switching works like this:

After the results of a roll call are announced, but before the Assembly Daily Journal for that legislative day is printed, a member who wishes to switch tells the recording clerk he wants to change his vote — from no to aye, or aye to no or from either to "not-voting." If the switch will not alter the outcome of the roll call, the Journal will report the next day that the switcher applied for and got the unanimous consent of his colleagues to change his vote.

His colleagues, of course, never heard of the request and probably wouldn't give a fig if they had. The whole charade is a cozy plot to enable assemblymen to have

the best of both worlds: the ability to vote expediency in Sacramento while conning their constituents back home into believing they bled for principle.

It happens regularly. Two Assembly Daily Journals selected at random serve to illustrate. On May 22, six assemblymen switched their votes on four pieces of legislation; on June 26, eight assemblymen, including Richard Hayden, R-Sunnyvale, switched votes on five separate bills.

On both those days, and indeed every day, more assemblymen requested and were given permission to have their votes "recorded." This means they were listed in the Journal as having voted for or against bills when, in fact, they were not on the floor and didn't vote. In fairness, however, this practice is designed to accommodate legislators who are attending committee hearings during regular sessions of the Assembly. Most of the time the practice isn't abused.

That can't be said of vote-switching. It is, in and of itself, an abuse of the public. The Assembly should live up to its own rules and allow no changes in recorded votes after they have been announced. The senators manages to enforce this rule and survive politically.

Vote-switching provides one more reason for the public to hold lawmakers in low esteem. One member of the public, Ralph Morell, of Dixon, is so incensed about vote-switching that he's started the wheels turning to place an initiative banning it on the ballot. We'd rather the Assembly clean up its own act, but it doesn't we're all for Ralph Morell's initiative.

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"OPERATION VOTE SWITCH"

DIXON, CA. 95620

DIXON DISTRICT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

# NEWSLETTER

201 S. First Street, Dixon, California 95620

Phone (916) 678-2650

AUGUST 1980

Heike Arnold, Editor

YOU CAN FOOL ALL OF THE PEOPLE: Dixon's Ralph Morrell is taking his fight to end vote switching to the people. According to Ralph, any California Assemblyman can vote two ways.. yes and no.. on any bill before the house. Then he can make his choice on which vote is officially recorded opposite his name for "the folks back home." This political duplicity has been common practice for decades because no lawmaker has shown courage enough to condemn it. Here is how the "vote switch" works: The final vote to make or break a bill is taken and it lost by 33 to 44. A member who abstained, or voted "no" can go to the front desk later and change his vote to "yes." His switch won't save the bill he helped to kill, but it will make him and his voting record look better. If you are interested in helping to support Ralph's initiative, he can be reached at 678-2543. Go get 'em Ralph!!

"OPERATION VOTE SWITCH"  
DIXON, CA. 95620

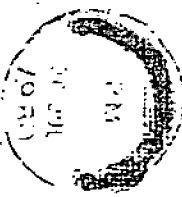




Webster's New World Dictionary:  
Treason - betrayal of trust or faith.

OPERATION VOTE-SWITCH  
DIXON, CA 95620

MRS. W. H. FISCHER  
2005 CACTUS CT APT 3



Operation Vote-switch

Dixon

\$10.00 cash

95620

Example

More power to you!

Stop this treason!!!

I have not been employed since 1933.  
Laurie E. Fischer

8/4/80 From Bill  
Over Calif!

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Ralph D. Morrill  
205 Newgate Way

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# Los ANGELES HERALD EXAMINER

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## Ghostly voting

**S**ometimes it's nearly impossible to end a tradition — even when the tradition is of questionable value. Two practices of the California Assembly — vote-switching and ghost-voting — are good examples of this. Vote-switching permits legislators to vote one way on a proposal, and then, after the final decision is in, to change the official record to register the opposite vote, as long as the change does not affect the decision of the Assembly. Ghost-voting occurs when votes are cast on behalf of absent representatives.

These practices have been around in various forms ever since policy makers first got together, and the chances of their ever being abolished are downright minuscule. That hasn't stopped a group of angry citizens from trying to change the situation. The Committee to Reform Voting Practices, led by Ralph Morrell of Dixon, is collecting signatures to put an initiative on the ballot which would outlaw the two practices.

The problem with vote-switching is that it's dishonest. An assemblyman, for example, can vote for higher taxes and then quietly change his vote to make his constituents think he did the opposite. We can't think of any argument in defense of vote-switching.

Defenders of ghost-voting say it speeds up action on bills, making the legislative process more efficient. But the purpose of the legislative process is to deliberate proposed laws carefully, taking whatever time is needed to examine ramifications carefully. With ghost-voting, mistakes can occur, and bills can be shunted through without the minimum number of representatives present to hear debate.

We agree that vote-switching and ghost-voting should be ended. We also realize that members of the Assembly will fight to protect what have become comfortable — albeit unsavory — habits. These elected officials will never change the two rules; it's up to the voters to make the change for them. ■

### Guest opinion

By Ralph D. Morrell

Chairman Operation Vote-Switch

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## Operation vote-switch

To paraphrase John Dean's story of "Watergate" as quoted in his book "Blind Ambition," "We have a cancer within — close to the institution of government in California — that's growing. It grows geometrically now, because it compounds itself."

The practice of fund-raising for worthy causes has reached a peak of perfection with the advent of computers and automatic typewriters. We are inundated with personally addressed appeals in support of this or that "vital" crusade.

And so it was with this writer, when, several months past, an appeal from "Laws at Work" was received.

"Laws at Work" according to the brochure, is "A citizens organizations for crime control." "L-A-W has made a long standing commitment to crime control and to the protection of the communities in which we live. We ask your support to assist our efforts on your behalf." So said the document appealing for funds.

"Laws at Work" has a prestigious Wilshire Boulevard, Los Angeles address, and this writer sent a check in donation for enrollment with an "active" membership.

The following at least in my view, is shocking beyond belief.

About one month subsequent to my application, a "Laws at Work" newspaper was received. It contained an article by Mr. Herbert E. Ellingwood, a prominent Sacramento attorney, captioned "1979. Voting Records Revealed Heat Produces Results."

Mr. Ellingwood devoted his effort to describing how the efforts of "Laws at Work" on recent years, had brought pressure on a recalcitrant Assembly Criminal Justice Committee, forcing them to pass improved criminal justice legislation.

In support of his dissertation, Mr. Ellingwood provided a chart, in which the numbers of 14 legislative bills were listed across the top, and the names of our eighty Assemblymen were listed at the side.

In the associated checker-board, was an indication as to how each Assemblyman voted on each of the 14 bills.

Having been aware for some time, of the perfidious practice of "vote-switching" by our Assembly members, my first reaction was, "Has Mr. Ellingwood been taken in, by reporting false voting records?"

Alas, it is true. Included in the chart were fourteen false reports, displaying Assembly members had voted in a manner not in consonance with the facts.

This writer pondered momentarily, and questioned where Mr. Ellingwood received the data for this false report. In fine print at the top of the chart, it was recorded "1979 Voting Records" provided by — "California Peace Officers Association." Incredible, you say?

I returned to my file, searching for some document which would refresh my recollection as to why I had subscribed to "Laws at Work". The answer was readily available: Chairman and President of "Laws at Work" is William Craig Stubblebine, Professor of Economics, Director of Center for Study of Law Structures, Claremont Colleges, California. Ellingwood; author of the article described above as Vice President. Other prominent Californians listed are Willard S. Voit of Balboa, Vice President, George R. Hearst, Jr, and Mrs. Judson Swearingen, Board of Advisors, and Duane H. Baker, President, California Peace Officers Association, California Advisory Panel.

The "cancer" alluded to at the beginning of this article has spread.

The respectable and responsible Herbert E. Ellingwood was duped; the California Peace Officers Association was duped, "Laws at Work" was duped, and all of the individuals mentioned in this article have been duped — duped by the "honorable" members of the Assembly of the State of California, our elected representatives.

I will not burden the reader with details of the fourteen "vote-switches." However, at least one must be reported, and that dubious honor is bestowed upon Assemblyman Art Agnos, D-San Francisco, who "switched" from "aye" to "no" on SB-583, a bill appropriating \$1 million for local law enforcement agencies. Agnos was chosen, because he is the champion "vote-switcher" during the 1979 legislative year, with a record, according to the Assembly Daily Journals of 139 (repeat 139) "switches."

Having been unsuccessful over a period of two years, in efforts to cause our Assembly to reform its morally bankrupt practices which erode the very foundation of representative government, I have formed a "Committee to Reform Voting Practices in the Assembly of California," otherwise known as "Operation Vote-Switch." This "cancer" on our Assembly must be expunged!

The first donation of funds was a check for \$2.00 from Mr. Leon Grabowski, of Contra Costa County, who was outraged upon learning that Assemblyman Dan Boatwright, his representative, had "vote-switched" at least twenty-five times in the 1979 legislative year, and in a letter to his constituent, Boatwright denied the conduct, asserting, "I have never vote switched and I never will. I think the practice is basically dishonest and shows a lack of character."

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8 — Times-Herald, Vallejo, Tuesday, July 15, 1980

## viewpoint

### Time to be honest

There is a practice among some California Assemblymen to engage in what is known as "vote switching." The Assemblyman votes one way on a piece of legislation and then changes his recorded vote after the fact so he can go home and tell his constituents how he fought valiantly for a measure that he actually helped kill.

Ralph D. Morrell of Dixon, an outspoken advocate for honesty in government, has made it his crusade to end the practice of "vote switching" in California. He has made application to Attorney General George Deukmejian for a title and summary for a ballot initiative to end the deceptive practice once and for all.

We want to go on record supporting the Morrell initiative and indicate our disgust that the Assembly itself will not end this practice instead of voters having to go to the considerable trouble of getting an initiative on the ballot and passed.

The time has come for elected representatives to be candid and honest about their voting records. In this post-Watergate era, voters are taking a hard and usually unfriendly look at elected representatives who do one thing and then pretend they did another.

We hope the ballot initiative gets publicized statewide and enough voters tired of dishonesty in government will sign it to qualify it for the ballot.

**"OPERATION VOTE SWITCH"  
DIXON, CA. 95620**

# "OPERATION VOTE SWITCH" DIXON, CA. 95620

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July 30, 1980

## readers' opinions

### Vote switching

The Times-Herald article by Alan Jarlson on July 23 clearly describes the misguided action of the Solano County Board of Supervisors in their "efforts to pry HR25 (the vote-switching resolution) out of committee for full consideration by the Assembly" of California.

Assembly Rule No. 106 now provides: "No Member shall be al-

lowed to change his vote ... after the vote is announced." Insertion of ad-

ditional language in the Assembly

Rules would have no efficacy, as it

could well be ignored, just as the

existing language. Additionally, de-

feat of HR25 in Assembly Rules is a

concrete signal the members do not

accept this reform. I have been told

as much by several legislators, in-

cluding the recently defeated As-

semblyman Bob Cline, R-North-

ridge.

Most distressing was the silence

of Supervisor Larry Asera, who

aspires to an Assembly seat repre-

senting your readers. One would

have thought Asera might recognize

the potential for continuation of this

morally bankrupt practice.

RALPH D. MORRELL

Chairman

"Operation Vote-Switch"

Dixon

## Times-Herald

Vallejo-Solano and Napa Counties' Morning Newspaper

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COMMITTEE TO REFORM VOTING PRACTICES  
IN  
THE ASSEMBLY OF CALIFORNIA  
(SHORT TITLE: OPERATION VOTE-SWITCH)

RALPH D. MORRELL  
CHAIRMAN

JOHN V. DAWSON  
DIRECTOR

VERNON E. SCHMEISER  
DIRECTOR

SEP 7 1980

## The Daily Republic

(USPS) 145-4800

First with news for the Fairfield-Suisun-Vacaville-Travis area

Published in the Daily Republic Building, 1250 Texas Street  
Fairfield, California 94533

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Telephone (707) 425-4646

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\$45.00.



'Winking  
at whom?'

By DON. R. HANCOCK

Dixon's Ralph Morrell is  
creating some statewide  
excitement:

At a Los Angeles meeting  
last week, we listened to  
discussions on Ralph's  
'almost one-man'  
crusade. Later, the L.A.  
Times carried it as a major  
feature article.

Morrell, an officer in the  
California Republican  
Assembly (a conservative  
political organization), has  
been to our office to talk  
with this writer and his  
managing editor. We ran  
several articles on the mat-  
ter. Perhaps our editorial  
stand should have been  
even stronger?

Ralph is not only having  
trouble with Democrats but  
Republicans as well, trying  
to get them to do something  
about this age-old practice.

He and his wife are  
meticulous collectors of  
backup materials and facts  
and are up against one of  
our state Assembly's most  
cherished traditions —

### VOTE SWITCHING

The Assembly, until about  
three weeks ago, allowed  
members to change their  
votes by unanimous con-  
sent.

Although vote switching  
has been allowed only if it  
does not change the out-  
come of the Assembly floor  
vote, we think, if nothing  
else, it is a deceitful prac-  
tice.

The practice also has  
allowed members to leave  
the Assembly floor for any  
of their reasons and then  
add their names to roll call  
votes later so that there  
would be no charge that  
they were truant.

The state Senate prohibits  
vote switching

Morrell, a retired Navy of-  
ficer, has written a letter to  
each GOP member of the  
Assembly asking them to  
do something about vote  
switching; has received  
some newspaper editorial  
support and has gotten  
himself invited to appear  
on radio talk shows. One of  
the radio forums was in  
San Francisco —

— here he went after  
Assembly Rules Commit-  
tee Chairman Lou Papan,  
D-Millbrae.

### From Page One

On Aug. 19, Papan an-  
nounced to Assembly  
members that he personal-  
ly would no longer agree to  
making it unanimous so  
that one could vote switch.

Ralph says the matter to be  
permanently corrected  
needs an initiative cam-  
paign and he has the peti-  
tions.

Morrell feels that the mat-  
ter will die as soon as the  
publicity on it ceases and  
says, "We must amend the  
Constitution to stop it."

Oh yes, how were they get-  
ting the unanimous consent  
before — maybe by wink-  
ing at each other or was it

Winking at us voters?

# Editorials

## Daniel in the Lions' Den

Ralph Morrell's year-long battle to abolish vote switching in the state Assembly reminds us of Daniel in the lion's den.

There are too many lions and only one Daniel.

The Dixon resident, through the legislative process, has been unable to stop the deceitful voting practices simply because the Assembly members make the rules, and they aren't about to give up what they consider a constitutional right.

This is how it works. A state Assembly member actually has two votes — one affects the outcome of the bill, and the other goes on his voting record and is meant to mollify his constituents. For example, if the political powers direct an Assemblyman to vote "no" on a bill extending sentences for violent habitual criminals, and he does so, helping kill the bill, he can still save himself in the eyes of his constituents, by later changing his vote to "yes."

What it all boils down to is lying; this is an attempt to deceive the public, to corrupt the law-making function and to undermine the democratic process.

Through a Bay Area assemblyman, William Filante, R-Marin County, Morrell was able to get a measure before the Assembly that would have forbid holding the roll open on a bill to permit the later changing of votes. HR 25 failed.

That was the final straw for Morrell. Now he hopes that what the Assembly won't do, the people of California will. Last Wednesday he and members of his newly-formed Committee to Reform Voting Practices in the Assembly of California forked over \$200 to apply for a title and summary for a ballot initiative.

The measure would outlaw vote switching, ghost voting and the practice of passing legislation out of committee, absent a quorum.

We're glad to see that Morrell is fighting another battle to win the war against vote switching. Lawmaking is a serious business, and the 22 million citizens of California shouldn't allow this morally-outrageous practice to continue any longer.

Ralph D. Morrell  
825 Newgate Way  
Dixon, CA, 95620