

Proposition 1F won't work. Worse, it's petty, vindictive and childish.

Proposition 1F naively hopes to prevent budget deficits by withholding raises for legislators and elected state officers if the state budget does not balance.

This is just plain silly. Everyone wants our state government to be fiscally healthy. But this measure will never do the trick. For Proposition 1F to work, our legislators would have to be so selfish and immature that the possibility of a modest salary increase could induce them to betray their core values.

Of course they're not that selfish. Regardless of party, members of the Legislature are deeply caring, diligent, patriotic people who truly love the communities they represent and serve. Our state's structural deficit, if anything, has been caused by their over-eagerness to serve too many constituencies, rather than the kind of selfish greed that would make Proposition 1F effective.

Freezing salaries will not loosen politicians' commitment to their ideologies. You cannot get conservative legislators to support tax increases just by threatening to cancel their raises. Similarly, liberal legislators will never agree to cuts in social programs just to increase their pay.

It's ludicrous to think that the mere threat of a salary freeze will somehow cause our polarized elected officials to rush into each others' arms and magically overcome their political differences. Proposition 1F will never do what it promises.

You may be thinking, "Okay, maybe Proposition 1F won't do any good. But it will make me feel better, and it can't do any harm!"

Not so. Proposition 1F freezes the salaries of not just the Legislature and Governor, who are responsible for passing and signing the budget, but also innocent bystanders such

as the Insurance Commissioner and the Superintendent of Public Instruction. This collateral damage will hurt some fine public servants and help no one.

And how good will you feel about freezing legislators' salaries when you know that their votes wouldn't change whether their salaries were frozen, reduced, or entirely eliminated? After all, they're clearly not in this for the money.

The current salary for nearly all legislators is \$116,208. In most of California, this is solidly middle-class compensation. Many small business owners, doctors, lawyers, engineers, and managers make far more. You may earn more or you may earn less, but you've got to admit that our elected leaders aren't getting rich on their salaries.

Now consider that we ask these officials to run an enterprise with annual revenues exceeding \$100 billion. That's roughly the income level of large corporations such as AT&T, Ford, and Hewlett-Packard, whose executives are paid millions of dollars. When you think about it in those terms, paying salaries such as \$169,743 for a Treasurer and \$133,639 for a Speaker of the Assembly is a terrific bargain.

Let's not make that discrepancy even worse just for an empty, childish, feel-good moment. Vote no on Proposition 1F.

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