

California governor backs Clinton in Democratic primary

Patrick Martin
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One week before the June 7 California primary, with the presidential campaign of Democratic frontrunner Hillary Clinton floundering, Governor Jerry Brown dropped his pretense of neutrality and publicly endorsed her.

Brown's endorsement adds to those of California's two senators, Barbara Boxer and Dianne Feinstein, both of whom have done what they can to bolster Clinton's declining poll numbers.

Brown posted online an "Open Letter to California Democrats and Independents" on Tuesday, in which he declared that Clinton had an insurmountable lead and should be ratified as the Democratic presidential nominee.

The statement from Brown praised Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders, saying, "He has driven home the message that the top one percent has unfairly captured way too much of America's wealth, leaving the majority of people far behind. In 1992, I attempted a similar campaign." He should now, Brown implies, bring to an end the basic purpose of his campaign, to channel opposition behind a Clinton nomination.

Brown was referring to his own unsuccessful presidential bid in 1992, which actually did little to raise the issue of social inequality. In the course of that campaign, however, Brown did point to the corrupt ties between Bill and Hillary Clinton and sections of big business, including the Arkansas-based Wal-mart, the largest private employer in the United States.

Brown himself is a thoroughly right-wing and anti-working-class political figure, closely identified with austerity policies that make balancing the budget and creating a good "business climate"—i.e., promoting profits at the expense of workers—the principal goal of state government.

He has reneged on all the promises made during the

2010 election campaign to reverse the policies of Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, despite top-heavy Democratic Party majorities in both houses of the state legislature.

The argument made by Brown for supporting Hillary Clinton now was almost entirely procedural: she has won the most delegates and votes. "Clinton's lead is insurmountable and Democrats have shown—by millions of votes—that they want her as their nominee."

Citing the threat of Republican nominee Donald Trump, and his extreme right-wing pronouncements denouncing immigrants and denying climate change, Brown concluded, "This is no time for Democrats to keep fighting each other. The general election has already begun."

This politically bankrupt and reactionary declaration is only a foretaste of the campaign that will be waged by the Democratic Party and its satellite organizations, above all the unions, over the next five months. Defeating Trump will become the all-purpose rationale for casting a vote for the reactionary war criminal whom the Democratic Party establishment has anointed as its consensus candidate.

An opinion poll published last week, showing Clinton's lead over Sanders in California dwindling to only two points, within the margin of error, has had the effect of electro-convulsive shock on the Democratic establishment.

Brown dropped his official pre-primary neutrality, while the Clinton campaign itself has scrapped plans for several candidate appearances in New Jersey, which also votes June 7, in favor of a hastily scheduled series of Hillary Clinton events in California beginning Thursday. New polls were commissioned, showing Clinton back in the lead by anywhere from eight points to 13 points.

Media pundits with the closest ties to the Clinton campaign, like eminently corruptible Paul Krugman of the *New York Times*, have weighed with another round of commentaries declaring the Democratic contest over and Clinton the unchallengeable winner, regardless of the potential loss of the most populous US state to Sanders.

Under the headline “Feel the Math,” Krugman gave his umpteenth assurance that delegate numbers were all that mattered, and from that standpoint, Clinton’s victory was assured. He dismissed what he called “hyperventilating” over the poll showing a tight race in California, asking, “[H]as her lead ‘evaporated,’ as some reports suggest? Probably not: Another poll, taken at the very same time, showed an 18-point lead.”

Krugman has utilized his column in the *Times* to serve as a political hack for Clinton. After receiving the cold shoulder during the first years of the Obama presidency, he has since been brought on board and now functions as a chief propagandist for the White House. He no doubt senses—or has received assurances—that he will have a position for himself in any future Clinton administration.

Other political chits are being called in. The National Resources Defense Council, a major environmental group which has never before endorsed a presidential candidate, publicly backed Hillary Clinton Tuesday in a statement issued by its political action fund. While the statement cited an energy speech by Donald Trump in North Dakota as the reason of its endorsement, its significance for the June 7 primary in California is obvious.

Sanders continues to hold huge rallies across the state, attended by thousands, many of them young people, while Clinton events have been much smaller, generally attended only by Democratic Party office holders and their staffs, union officials and representatives of other pro-Democratic Party organizations.

As the title of Brown’s open letter indicates, independent voters—those registered as having no party—will play a major role in the outcome of the Democratic presidential contest in California. Clinton has won all but one closed primary, those limited to registered Democrats only.

Independents can vote in the Democratic primary when they go to the polls, simply by requesting a

presidential ballot. However, if they vote by mail, as half of Californians are expected to do, they had to contact local election offices by Tuesday to request a ballot for the Democratic presidential primary. A pro-Sanders group filed a federal lawsuit last week to extend that deadline, but the court has not yet issued a response.



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