



Written by [Bruce Walker](#) on January 5, 2011

Gov. Jerry Brown: Last Straw for California

California is blessed with one of the best climates on earth, enough to cause millions to flock to the state simply for the ocean and coastlines, the mountains, and the amenable weather.

The Golden State also possesses some of the most bountiful farmlands anywhere, producing an amazing one-half of the fruit, nut, and vegetable crops of America, including nearly all the nations [delicacies](#) such as almonds, artichokes, olives, pistachios, dates and figs. Harbors such as San Francisco Bay are as perfect as one can find. The Gold Rush brought huge numbers to the state, and the black gold of today oil is available in large quantities either inland or on the coast.



There was only one way to make this paradise into a purgatory: Californians would have to commit that crime themselves. They have they have just re-elected Jerry Brown as Governor.

Eight years ago, disgusted Californians recalled Governor Gray Davis (the man Jerry Brown had selected as his own [Chief of Staff](#)) and replaced him with muscle-man actor Arnold Schwarzenegger. The term-limited Governor could not run in 2010, so Californians had a choice: Meg Whitman, an American entrepreneurial genius who ran as a fiscally conservative Republican or Jerry Brown, a lifelong liberal Democrat, a man whose entire adult life has been spent in politics or in law, a candidate who has not only run and won the governorship, but who has held a dizzying number of elective offices in California: Secretary of State, Attorney General, Mayor of Oakland. Even during the periods of life in which Brown did not hold political office, he was running for the Senate or the Presidency or heading the Democrat Party in California.

Brown comes from a political dynasty. His father was [Governor of California](#). His sister, Kathleen, was State Treasurer and she too ran for Governor. Since 1958, a Brown has been the Democrat Candidate for Governor of California seven times (1958, 1962, 1966, 1974, 1978, 1994 and 2010) in 15 elections. Jerry Brown also comes from a family of lawyers: Pat Brown, [Kathleen Brown](#), and Jerry himself were all lawyers. Brown's spiritual life is also politically-correct: he trained first to be a Jesuit (that did not last long) and then practiced Buddhism in Japan. In short, Governor Jerry Brown is as blandly conventional a lifelong politician as California has ever produced.

The problems California faces are profound. The [state debt](#) stands at a staggering \$365 billion, an amount greater than state revenues and, unlike the Federal Reserve, California cannot just print money to pay this debt. Tax revenues have dropped \$15 billion in the last three years, reflecting not only the national economic downturn but the rush of people and businesses out of the state for more business-friendly climates. Add to that the state pension systems which have an unfunded liability of \$500 billion or more, and the debt swamp of municipal and county governments and California seems headed for a



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meltdown similar to that of Greece.

So in its hour of greatest need, Californians picked a career politician-lawyer from a dynasty of politician-lawyers. What has Governor Brown promised? “Blood, toil, sweat, and tears” would be a reasonable approximation. One might think that getting state government out of the way of Californians might be high among his priorities: dramatically reducing environmental regulations, slashing corporate taxes (among the nations highest), adopting Right-to-Work, and enacting serious tort reform. These and similar measures would immediately help business in California and, pointedly, would signal business that the state is going to get out of the way of commerce.

But what has Governor Brown done so far? He has attacked [Proposition 13](#), which limits increases in property taxes in California a vote viewed by many as the beginning of the Taxpayers Revolt nationally calling it part of the problem which brought the state into crisis (though he rather quickly backtracked on that remark.) Brown has also declared, This year will demand courage and sacrifice, the sort of blank, pseudo-leadership remark which sounds good to untrained ears but means nothing at all.

The governor could accomplish a great deal very quickly if he wished. Deregulation and tax-cut proposals would garner Republican support, and he could dragoon many Democrats with the issue as well. Or he could come up with a series of genuinely pro-growth proposals and end-run the legislation. He wont, however, any more than when he was governor previously did he rein in the burgeoning government, the swelling welfare state, or the environmentalism run amuck.

Jerry Brown may fiddle a fine tune, but he will surely not act while California “burns.”



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