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Steinberg Sworn in as Senate President Pro Tempore Lays Out Ambitious Agenda in Address *Challenges Members to “Shake Things Up”*

(SACRAMENTO)- Senator Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento) was sworn in as the 46th Senate President pro Tempore today during the opening floor session of the 2009-2010 legislative session. In his address to the both new and returning members of the State Senate, Steinberg called on each of them to help make this the “decade of delivery.”

Steinberg vowed to tackle four key issues in 120 days. He hopes to work with his Republican colleagues, the Assembly, and the Governor to pass an economic stimulus package to get California back on track, to provide health care for all children, to agree on a water infrastructure bond and to put a renewable energy standard in place.

“People do not expect miracle fixes for these or other challenges, but they do expect us to get going,” Steinberg said. “They expect us to turn this place around. They expect us to inject a needed shot of adrenaline into state government. They expect us to not fight about the petty things. They expect us to get off to a fast and aggressive start. Let’s shake it up here in the state Legislature in California and let’s turn this around. Let’s give people the confidence that our Legislature can be the leading policy making body in the country.”

Steinberg announced his plan to move up the budget process and make the budget committee a “committee of the whole,” allowing each member to sit on the committee. “We can no longer afford to have any member representing a million people being on the outside looking in. We all own the problem. Let’s use the May Revise – not as the beginning point as budget negotiations – but as the appropriate refined revenue estimate.”

Steinberg also announced the formation of the Senate Office of Oversight and Outcomes, a bipartisan office under the purview of the Senate Rules Committee that will be charged with more aggressively evaluating the institutions and programs of state government to ensure taxpayer dollars are being spent wisely and productively.

Steinberg also proposed reforming education by linking it to the new economy. He explained how it is imperative that this be the filter through which the legislature should focus most of its work. Steinberg proposed an agenda that would make career pathways the rule rather than the exception. “Too many who graduate, don’t graduate with the requisite education and the skills to even think about qualifying for a job in the high wage economy.”

Steinberg asked each member what they want the legislative class of 2018 to say of their tenure a decade from now. “Let them say it was a decade of delivery in which state government delivered for its people; that we consistently delivered budgets on time; that we delivered an education system relevant to their lives and the economy and necessary for their success, that we delivered quality healthcare for all; that we delivered clean renewable necessary to heat and cool while also protecting our environments; and that we delivered high wage job opportunities by investing wisely in public education and in infrastructure.”

To watch Senator Steinberg’s complete remarks please visit his website at: www.sen.ca.gov/steinberg

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