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**ASSEMBLYMEMBER SWANSON RESPONDS
TO THE GOVERNOR'S STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS**

Assemblymember Sandré Swanson (D-Alameda) gathered with the California State Legislature today to watch Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger deliver his final State of the State Address.

"I am encouraged by the broad themes the Governor emphasized in his address, including making education a larger budget priority than prisons. This is the third state of the state address I have attended since taking office in 2006, and it is probably one of the most important, considering the fact that California is at a crossroads where the next year can define the character and determine the future of the entire State for decades to come.

"The Governor acknowledged that there is a severe financial crisis in California, and I agree with the Governor's statement that the State needs to make education a priority. We are spending 11 percent of our budget on prisons and only 7 percent on higher education. We need to find a real, long-term solution to this systemic problem by determining our priorities and realizing that we increase the prison population by not instituting an aggressive rehabilitation strategy, failing to reduce prison overcrowding, and failing to respect education and the intellectual potential of our children.

"Privatization of prisons, however, is not the solution. Instead, we need to thoughtfully and critically evaluate the prison system, with a focus toward restructuring the parole system and reducing the recidivism rate, thereby realizing a savings of billions of dollars a year and freeing up funding for education.

"Although I don't agree with some of the Governor's solutions, I do agree with his proposals for job training, job development, and tax credits for housing and green technology. Those proposals are worth considering and I look forward to reviewing the details," concluded Assemblymember Swanson.

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