

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Basic notions of democracy and democratic processes fundamentally failed in Sacramento during consideration of the arena project. Through a combination of unsound judicial decisions and a city government bent on exploiting every possible loophole to avoid a public vote and public accountability, the voters of Sacramento are being denied their rights under the California constitution to vote on Sacramento's issuance of \$300 million of bonds to fund the arena project. City government leaders have turned their backs on its citizens and thumbed their noses at four decades of consistent voter opposition to a taxpayer-subsidized arena. Two councilmembers broke their campaign promises to oppose any public subsidy for an arena without voter approval.

Meanwhile, Senate Pro Tem Darryl Steinberg and the State Legislature, acting in concert with powerful unions and politically juiced crony capitalists, made a mockery of the legislative process and representative democracy, while undermining CEQA, eminent domain statutes and the rule of law by passing a special bill (SB 743) that will have as its most lasting legacy decades of traffic gridlock on I-5 and the imposition of a cost-spiking project labor agreement that is poised to rip off Sacramento and its taxpayers.

Our city government has abandoned all notions of long-range strategic planning, sober assessment of alternative public investment opportunities and all sense of fiscal prudence and caution by approving a general fund-draining, ultra expensive massive bond offering that is pre-programmed to impose its greatest burden on city finances just as the city goes off a fiscal cliff in 2019.

The media bears its share of the blame for this travesty for their failure to perform their vital role as a questioner and skeptic of the actions of government and powerful interests. Instead, too many in the media became cheerleaders of the arena project and left their critical faculties at home. An unbiased, independent media is an essential predicate to a functional democracy and far too many were AWOL this past year.

Sacramento is facing difficult times ahead as this report describes. Sacramento's triumph over nonresponsive and arrogant government will come not from government itself or media, but from Sacramento voters who must reclaim control of their own government. Our report outlines a number of actions that the average citizen can take to begin to important work of reclaiming Sacramento for its people, not its overseers.