



## CALIFORNIA SENIOR LEGISLATURE

### Historical Background

In 1979 State Assembly Member Henry Mello introduced legislation to create a non-partisan, volunteer grassroots body of seniors 60 years of age and older to be elected by their peers – the California Senior Legislature (CSL).

- The first session was convened in July of 1981, and was deemed such a success that the Honorable Mello introduced SCR 44 (1982) providing for annual CSL sessions beginning in October 1982.
- The CSL has flourished for the past 20 years. Every year, through its week-long senior legislative session process, it has formulated and sponsored ten top priority proposals, shepherding them into bill form and subsequent enacted legislation.

CSL's successes have not gone unnoticed.

- Former Governor Jerry Brown observed, "The California Senior Legislature offers our older citizens a special opportunity to assist me and the Legislature in developing priorities.
- More than a decade ago, in celebration of CSL's 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Session, former president Ronald Reagan sent a greeting that stated, "I commend all members of the CSL, past and present, for accepting the challenge of the state legislature to prioritize the needs of California's elderly, and for being an inspiration to us all, proving that individuals can indeed have a voice in our legislative system."

In 2004, we were heartbroken and dismayed over the passing of our founder, the Honorable Henry Mello, State Senator (ret.). He had remained steadfast in his strong association and support for the CSL throughout our entire history.

On July 1, 2006, the CSL became an independent state entity and reconvenes every year to continue its mission "To Improve the Quality of Life for Aging Californians."