



e.Forum Posit

To date there have been more than 220 replies and 40 comments on this posit. Posits are strongly stated, intended only to promote discussion among members. They do not necessarily reflect the views of SSVMedicine, its editors, the SSVMedical Society, the Executive Director, officers, or Board Of Directors of SSVMS. Published comments are restricted to SSVMS members. The Editorial Committee welcomes suggestions for future posits.

John Loofbourow, M.D., Editor

" In March, the CMA House of Delegates will consider a mandatory \$50 dues increase that would go to the CMA's Political Action Committee (CALPAC) or the CMA political education fund. This is the wrong idea at the wrong time."

This is a "loaded" statement: I think it should be separated into its component issues: (1) Does CALPAC need more resources? (2) If CALPAC needs more resources, should there be a mandatory increase in CMA dues to provide the needed resources? (3) If there is a mandatory increase in CMA dues, how much should it be? (4) If there is a mandatory increase in CMA dues, is it a one time-only increase, or does it continue forever? (5) What are the legal ramifications of such a mandatory dues increase (i.e., what will happen if someone refuses)? Also, what about the deductibility of this money-- I don't think that political contributions are tax-deductible, as are medical society dues....

While I agree with the ends, I am not sure that I agree with means by which this issue is being addressed. — *George W. Chiu, MD*

There may be those who feel that CALPAC always speaks and acts on their behalf, and for them, a voluntary contribution makes sense. Others may be offended by a mandatory political lobbyist contribution. (I wonder if SSVMS might even be surprised by a membership decline if this policy were implemented.) I prefer to self-direct my charitable and political contributions. — *JaNahn Scalapino, MD*

I agree. This is the wrong effort at this time. If this is to be an actual DUES INCREASE, then the tax status of the CMA would change. It is a bad idea. — *Byron Demorest, MD*

The \$50 increase for the PAC or education fund is Improper. Those should be voluntary contributions. — *David Kissinger, MD*

Good idea but denies choice, a prime issue of our Republic. We dumped the tea in Boston Harbor, remember? The question should be posed in that spirit. — *Henry Go, MD*

I DISAGREE - (watch out for the double negative that this question sets up!)
— *B. Joshua Rubin MD*

The answer to this question isn't clear cut. It depends entirely on CALPAC's agenda. If it is primarily physician-focused (maintaining income, etc.) the answer is "I agree". If, on the other hand, the agenda is patient-focused (access, quality of care, excessive meddling in clinical decisions by HMOs, etc.) the answer is "I disagree" - it is the right idea at the right time. Patients are as fed-up with the healthcare bureaucracy as we physicians are. Neil Flynn, M.D., M.P.H., University of California Davis. — *Neil Flynn, MD, MPH*

The interests of CMA, and California physicians as a group, are best served by having an organization that is as large and as broadly representative of California physicians as it can possibly be. This proposal would reduce CMA's membership by increasing the cost of membership and by making it impossible for many employers (especially public sector and corporate employers) to pay CMA membership dues on behalf of their physician employees. Our voice will be weaker, not stronger, if fewer of us are speaking together.
—*Patrick S. Romano, MD MPH*

I belong for a number of reasons but choose what political donations I will make. I am astounded that someone would attempt to make this decision for me. — *Sandra Hand, MD*

I agree, inappropriate use of dues. —*Clifford Marr, MD*

I don't think mandatory CMA dues should be used to buy access to corrupt and ineffectual politicians. They would like nothing more than to get CMA in a bidding war with the trial lawyers, chiropractors, insurance companies, etc.— *Robert Meagher, MD*

I contribute to CALPAC but feel that the contributions should be voluntary and not part of dues. — *David Kosh, MD*

I strongly oppose mandatory political contributions. I would resign the CMA before making a mandatory political contribution. — *William C. Pevec, MD*

An increasing smaller segment of California's physicians will be asked to add to their dues. — *Charles Maas, MD*

This is a poorly worded question. One agrees with the statement to disagree with the dues increase and vice versa. Regardless of the vote, I have to wonder how many voters could be confused. Let's not be like Florida! — *Earl Washburn, MD*

How can you ask for a yes/no vote without including more information? What is the reason for the increase? What are the pros/cons on each side? This is worse than a California Ballot Proposition . . . —*Sean M. Cooke, MD*

We are powerless without political action and it costs money. I think the few who contribute are getting tired of subsidizing the masses who do not contribute.
— *Joanne Berkowitz, MD*

I am in favor of spending more of our money for political action and increasing dues. Without money to increase the effectiveness of our lobbying, then CMA policy cannot be legislatively enacted. —*Richard Jones MD*

Think it's a good idea. — *David Wisner, MD*

CALPAC needs support of the medical community. While I think this would be a good idea, you would run the risk of alienating and losing some members. I think we need a voice in the legislature, and many physicians ignore that some good comes out of the lobbying process. Giving \$150.00 each year can get a bit annoying, but I would be glad to contribute \$50.00 each year. If we then had everyone contributing, we would probably surpass the amount given each year now. I do think it might even be worth considering a \$25.00 mandatory add on to the annual dues and letting those who are more involved contribute \$150.00 or more. After a few years, once everyone is comfortable with the \$25.00 increase, then propose another \$25.00 increase. This could be more palatable. — *Edward Mansour MD*

This is one of the worst ideas in the history of the CMA. If this passes the House of Delegates, I will not be a CMA member any more. I am tempted to leave CMA just as a reaction to their floating this idea.

One way to know that an idea is good one is when many thoughtful people voluntarily back the idea, join the cause, and lend support.

A sure fire way to recognize a bad idea is that a small group of people attempts to make their agenda or idea mandatory, because thoughtful people would not voluntarily support it. That is a bad joke, and I am not interested in organizations that take away my choice.
— *Alfredo Czerwinski, MD*

I agree--- Though I contribute to CALPAC, I do not think it should be mandatory.
— *D.M. Hopkins, MD*

Utterly preposterous. Bad idea now. — *Spencer Silverbach MD*

I agree, wrong time and wrong response. — *Lionel Lee, MD*

I would quit CMA and SSVM if that happened. — *Daniel Egerter, MD*

Why do we keep hiring the enemy???? — *Del Meyer, MD*

I don't think CALPAC donations should be mandatory for CMA members. Thanks.
— *Richard Sun, MD*

Wrong idea at any time--I do not support PACs--my primary political opinions have nothing to do with my self interest as a physician, and everything to do with my status as a father and a member of the community. If mandatory political contribution is voted in I will resign from the CMA. — *Jack Kashtan, MD*

I agree with the statement that "this is the wrong idea at the wrong time." Contributions to CMA's PAC should be voluntary. & mash; *Craig Yamada, MD*

It is very important that we have a voice in politics at this time and in the future as our practice depends upon it. — *Charles W. Perry, MD*

I STRONGLY disagree-I feel there needs to be a separation between our statewide medical organization and a PAC-I feel there is a basic difference and have never been convinced that any PAC has been helpful.— *James Alan Margolis, MD*

I think that \$50 is a small price for an individual to pay that in the aggregate could make a big difference. Most doctors don't have a clue and we need to fund those who will advocate for us. — *Eric Schwartz, MD*

We as physicians need to get on board for change as all other professional societies (i.e. lawyers) & other groups (i.e. unions) are way ahead of us and changing the political landscape. — *Karen Mo, MD*

CMA ought to function as our political support team! When you look at how much lawyers and chiropractors put into pushing their agendas, \$50 doesn't seem like a lot.

Like CMA, AMA, AAFP-- seem to spend an awful lot of our money . I would like to see a move in house(s) from them to get frugal, and stringent with what that money goes for. Our yearly dues keep climbing and I wonder if they are worth it for what they do.
— *Nancy Gilbert, MD*

People would feel better about this if given specific information about what CALPAC has accomplished. — *David A. Evans, MD*

Would NOT give more money to CALPAC. Thank you. — *John Williams, MD*

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