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## California Lawmakers Push to Pass Stack of Budget Bills

By [JENNIFER STEINHAUER](#)

LOS ANGELES — Amid threats of lawsuits, strikes and votes against a budget deal, California lawmakers moved feverishly Wednesday through a large stack of budget-related bills that they hope to pass Thursday.

The proposed California budget, which closes a \$26 billion gap, is so complex, however, that the bill writing may well go into the witching hours of Thursday night and perhaps stretch into Friday.

All told, the budget deal contains \$15.6 billion in cuts, roughly \$4 billion in borrowing or outright taking of money from localities, the sale of state assets and some accounting tricks.

"I do feel confident that we will have the votes to get this done," said Darrell Steinberg, a Democrat who is the Senate president pro tem. "It is a budget with enough in it for everyone to dislike."

The fate of the budget, which was agreed upon Monday by legislative leaders of the two parties and Gov. [Arnold Schwarzenegger](#), seemed slightly in question on Tuesday when the Republican leader in the State Assembly, Sam Blakeslee, balked at a provision to trim \$1.2 billion from the state's corrections department.

Apparently Mr. Blakeslee was caught unaware — largely because the Schwarzenegger administration had been mute about the details of how the cuts would be made — that the agreement allowed for some low-level offenders to finish their sentences on home detention and for the ending of parole supervision for offenders convicted of minor offenses.

Mr. Blakeslee said Republican legislators would not accept the cost-saving measures, though they were backed by the [California Police Chiefs Association](#).

As a compromise, lawmakers agreed Wednesday to include the \$1.2 billion in cuts to the budget, but to wait until next month to settle the matter of how they would be carried out, at a cost to the state of about \$100,000 for the delay.

"Now that the budget does not contain the early release of inmates," Mr. Blakeslee said in an e-mail message, "and we have the assurance of a policy debate on the issue in August, we are prepared to move forward."

State workers remained furious Wednesday that the deal continues their three unpaid furlough days a month — a roughly 14 percent pay cut — and the [Service Employees International Union Local 1000](#) mailed out strike authorization ballots to its 95,000 members. University students, facing tuition increases, larger class sizes and other measures, waged protests against the budget, too.

In remarks to reporters in Sacramento, Mr. Schwarzenegger voiced confidence Wednesday that the budget would pass the Legislature.

“Even though yesterday there was a little bit of a holdup,” he said, “it was not a breakdown.”

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