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Pavley for state Senate

Valley needs leadership focused on results, not headlines

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BECAUSE of the nature of California's rigged districting system, the race for the state's 23rd Senate District will begin and end with the Democratic primary June 3 - and one of two Democrats running will win the office.

Of the two Democratic candidates vying to succeed Sen. Sheila Kuehl in representing West Los Angeles, the west San Fernando Valley and Oxnard, the clear choice is former Assemblywoman Fran Pavley.

Politically, neither Pavley nor her rival, Van Nuys Assemblyman Lloyd Levine, differs much from the district's liberal base. Both are environmentally focused Democrats who have authored and helped pass legislation to make California cleaner and its future more sustainable.

But there is a key difference that sets Pavley and Levine far apart: While Pavley has always been focused on results, Levine usually seems more concerned with claiming the limelight.

A California State University, Northridge, graduate, Pavley is a hardworking, no-frills kind of politician who views her role as that of a public servant. During her two terms as state assemblywoman serving the West Valley, she set

key environmental policies, such as an important emissions regulation that has been adopted by at least 17 other states.

Pavley was also instrumental in helping to stop the massive Ahmanson Ranch development that would have greatly harmed the quality of life for many Angelenos. Most recently, she co-authored a landmark climate-change bill, AB32, that may very well change the environmental policy of the country, and thus the world.

Pavley is unassuming, content to work behind the scenes and across party lines to get things done.

Levine's time in Sacramento, on the other hand, has been more notorious, but less distinguished.

A classic example of his tenure is Levine's bill that would force private companies doing business with the state to provide health-club membership to their workers. The measure is not only overly intrusive, but would do precious little to improve public health, while raising the price taxpayers pay for state contracts.

Then there are Levine's most famous political crusades, from mandatory pet sterilization to gay marriage to euthanasia - hot-button gambits that stirred up great controversy, but never went anywhere legislatively, even in the Democratic-controlled Legislature.

But the story that best illustrates the differences between Pavley and Levine is the one about how the state almost lost \$130 million in federal

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funds to fix L.A. freeway traffic.

In 2005, Rep. Howard Berman secured federal funds to build a car-pool lane on the 405 Freeway. But there was a hitch - if work didn't begin by 2009, the state could lose the funds.

So a bipartisan group of legislators backed a bill that would have allowed the state to use a fast-track construction method known as "design-build" to speed up construction. That way work would be significantly under way by 2009 instead of 2015.

But the state engineers union fought the bill because "design-build" relies on private contractors to do design work. And the measure would have failed, were it not for numerous Democratic legislators who stood up to their usual allies in labor to bring traffic relief to our badly congested area.

When it came time to choose between a special interest and the public good, Assemblywoman Pavley made the right choice, and voted for the measure. Assemblyman Levine did not.

Sacramento already has enough politicians who put their own interests or special interests ahead of the needs of the public. Pavley is not one of those politicians, which is why she is the best choice in this race.