

Catharine Baker – Don't Be Deceived

Duplicity: saying one thing and doing another.

Our Assembly member Catharine Baker has fooled a lot of people. Don't be one of them.

On many issues she brags about her voting record, but in reality she's duplicitous. She consistently votes for Big Oil and Big Business while she simultaneously voices concerns about the environment and small businesses. She urges bipartisanship but almost always votes Republican. Look at what she does, not what she says she does.

GUNS. At the recent March for Our Lives, Baker bragged about carrying legislation sponsored by the Brady Campaign – very convenient in an election year. The majority of the time in non-election years she fought the Brady Campaign and other gun control legislation. She sometimes does this behind the scenes. In 2016, after the San Bernardino shooting, Baker joined other Assembly Republicans to block four gun control bills from even coming to a vote. Fortunately they did, and they all passed. These include SB 880, which bans the sale of assault weapons that allows users to quickly detach magazines; SB 894, which requires gun owners to report the theft of their guns within five days of realizing they were stolen; and SB 1235, which requires both background checks on ammunition purchases and for vendors to register with the state. She voted NO on SB 468, which requires a psychological examination for a security guard to have a firearm permit; and NO on SB 347 (as did other pro-gun Republicans), which prohibits people who commit certain gun-related offenses from purchasing any firearm for 10 years (a priority for gun safety organizations).

Last year, Baker did not support AB 424, which outlaws guns on school campuses and passed overwhelmingly. Joining Republicans, she was unable to stop SB 1446 from becoming law despite her NO vote. This law bans assault weapons with magazines of more than 10 rounds. These guns were used in mass killings in California and elsewhere. Even a Republican police chief called her vote "irresponsible."

Does she really believe these guns are protected by the Second Amendment? Or is she beholden to the gun lobby and its financial support? She's clearly comfortable voting with the Republican block most of the time despite claiming she prefers bipartisanship.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE. Baker's tough law-and- order, pro-gun values also have a punitive bent. She voted NO on SB 394, which eliminates life without parole sentences for minors. She voted NO on SB 395, which allows minors to consult their lawyers during all proceedings. She voted NO on AB 1308, which provides consideration for release of more young adults. She voted NO on SB 345, which mandates that police publicly publish their policies, and NO on SB 180, which reforms War on Drug-era sentence enhancements. She voted NO on SB 54, the "Family Values Act", which restricts local law enforcement from using state taxpayer funds to assist federal law enforcement with deportations. And, she voted NO on SB 620, which gives judges more sentencing options.

FAIRNESS. Baker voted against two Assembly bills requiring equal pay for equal work. She voted against raising the minimum wage and overtime pay (SB 3 and AB 1565, respectively.) She also voted against expanding consumer protections, SB 641. She has a lifetime score voting record score of 10 (out of 100) from the Courage Campaign because she is one of the legislators most closely aligned with the corporations and interest groups exploiting Californians. The additional votes that qualify her for the Courage Campaign's Hall of Shame include AB 42, AB 90, AB 127, AB 186, AB 687, AB 4423, AB 1008, AB 1578, SB 298, SB 306, and AB 859, which ensures justice for abused seniors.

VOTING RIGHTS. Baker voted against the California New Motor Voter Act, which now makes it easier for all to vote; against AB 1407, which permits pre-registering 16 and 17 year olds when they apply for their driver's license or state I.D.; and against a resolution encouraging all states to ratify the Agreement Among the States to Elect the President by National Popular Vote (instead of through the Electoral College).

AFFORDABLE HOUSING. Baker voted against AB 1505, which requires new housing to have more affordable units; against SB 2 (2017), which adds a small fee to some real estate transactions to finance low-income housing and provide jobs; and against SB 35, which streamlines the approval process for affordable housing.

Are you tired of reading all these numbers yet? It's the only way to accurately tell Baker's story.

THE ENVIRONMENT. Baker claims she cares about the environment. Her actual votes? Not so much. The Conservation League of Conservation Voters gives her a lifetime score of 43%, and the Sierra

Club gives her 42%. Many legislators are in the 90's. Baker knows very well how to work the system and can be cynically devious; she voted for SB 350 but only on the fifth round and only after it was clear the bill would pass without her vote. She's pulled this maneuver several times. She can say she supported environmentally friendly bills while she voted against them until passage became inevitable. SB 350 established new CA goals on renewable energy use and energy efficiency standards.

All of the following passed despite her No vote: SB 859, which reduces greenhouse gas emission rates, and AB 1550, AB 2722, and SB 197, which collectively invest cap-and-trade funds from polluters to monitor toxins and health in communities most impacted by air pollution and invest in renewable energy projects to create jobs there. She voted against SB 32, which established dramatically reduced carbon pollution goals, and even voted against extending the provisions of Schwarzenegger's landmark Clean Energy Bill SB 2 (2006). Baker voted against SB185 in 2015 when CA became the first state in the union to divest its pension funds from fossil fuels. Baker just doesn't have what it takes to stand up to Big Oil, all the while waxing poetic about preserving the environment for her kids.

Baker has not voted to protect our water, our air, or our health from polluters. She voted NO on AB 890, which mandates environmental review on new developments; NO on SB 378, which protects air quality from industrial polluters; NO on SB 774, which increases accountability for the Department of Toxic Substances; NO on AB 1328, which discloses oil chemicals in water; and NO on AB 1419, which increases fees from \$5K to \$25K for dumping toxic pesticides. Baker's votes are no better when it comes to water. She voted YES on AB 313 to reduce enforcement of water rights that protect the environment and NO on both SB 231 and SB 1263, which use permit fees to finance public water system improvements, and NO on AB 1668 which better prepares cities and towns for drought.

More recently she voted No on AB 127 which mandated closure of the Aliso Canyon gas facility, which was leaking huge amounts of the toxic methane. Maybe she's misunderstood the admonishment, "Just Say No."

By now you can see that Baker is not a moderate and usually votes with the right wing caucus in the Assembly to protect Big Business, Big Ag, and Big Oil. She simply isn't who she claims to be.

The best predictor of future performance (except maybe for the stock market) is actual past performance – true for all of us, including politicians.

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