

# Opinion

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## OUR VOICE

# California should do more to save business

The loss of CareFusion Corp. should be a wake-up call for local and state leaders. California must become more business friendly.

The company has manufactured ventilators in Palm Springs for more than 50 years. It has decided to consolidate operations in Minnesota, which means that during the next 18 months, the city will lose 270 workers, many of them highly paid professionals.

"This is the kind of company you don't want to lose," said economist John Husing.

Esmael Adibi of Chapman University said the situation reflects the "sad state of affairs for our state that businesses are leaving California."

According to a 2011 Tax Foundation report, California ranks 49th in business climate. Minnesota is not much better, ranking 43rd. But to CareFusion officials, consolidating operations in Plymouth, Minn., makes sense.

The town of 70,000, a suburb of Minneapolis-St. Paul, was ranked atop Money magazine's "America's Best Places to Live" in 2008.

However, we agree with Husing's observation that California does little to prevent companies from leaving.

"When companies consolidate, they generally consolidate elsewhere," he said.

John Raymond, Palm Springs' director of community and economic development, sees a bright spot in the fact that the consolidation will be phased out over the next year and a half.

"That gives us a chance to see what we can do to keep a presence here," he said.



OMAR ORNELAS THE DESERT SUN

CareFusion Corp. has decided to shut down its Palm Springs operations in the next 18 months.

It wouldn't be unprecedented. In 1998, Palm Springs waived expansion fees to prevent the company — then known as Bird Medical Technologies — from relocating.

Thomas Flavin, chief executive of the Coachella Valley Economic Partnership, is meeting with CareFusion to see if anything can be done to keep them in town. And he is wisely planning a business visitation program with top employers to forestall departures.

This also serves as an argument for an enterprise zone in the west valley. Being able to offer tax credits for new employees could have made a difference in this case.

It may be too late to save CareFusion, but there is plenty of time for legislative leaders to consider changes to make California a magnet for business. These days, it's just the opposite.

more ludicrous decision right in the middle of the worst recession in more than a half-century.

If Palm Springs wants to reduce sales and revenue, increase the flow of people leaving for lower-tax states and give the city even more of a reputation as being unfriendly to business, increasing the sales tax ought to achieve all those aims. I know I'll have to seriously reconsider my residency in Palm Springs if this passes.

The average resident of Palm Springs isn't a well-connected wealthy midcentury homeowner like the small group that wants to raise taxes on the rest of us who are struggling to make ends meet. We're desperately overtaxed as it is. Now is not the time for more taxes. I'm counting on people like me to go vote no in November.

Robert Hansen Palm Springs

Debt crisis

## Wrong time for new taxes

The 1 percent statewide temporary sales tax recently expired. Purchases and revenue are up. People are now considering previously postponed large purchases because the sales tax is lower. So what does Palm Springs want to do? Shoots itself in the civic foot by advocating that the sales tax go right back up! I can't imagine a

Republicans have been screaming for a reduction in the national debt and the size of government since Obama took office but they continue to be unwilling to put everything on the table to do so. Can there be any reason except

politics for absolute refusal to increase taxes on the wealthy or closing tax loopholes?

Putting everything on the table should mean everything — entitlements, military spending, reducing the size of government and, yes, increasing revenue. Focusing on changes in Social Security and Medicare, which impact those that can least afford it, while steadfastly refusing to increase revenue from those that can best afford it is tantamount to "shooting one's self in the foot" as the next presidential election approaches.

Rod Pitre Palm Desert

## Congress holds the purse

Sonja Marchand's recent tirade is lacking in three areas: common sense, knowledge of the Constitution and the fundamentals of economics.

The Congress has the "power of the purse" not the president.

We had essentially a dictatorship under Obama and the Democrat Congress until the last election, an election in which the Democrat tax-and-spenders lost in a landslide.

This dictatorship only provided us with depression, soaring unemployment, soaring wel-

fare costs, more government employees and the highest deficits in history.

Obama's presidency has returned us to the malaise of his mentor, the disgraced Jimmy Carter. Marchand seems to refuse to shrink government waste and bureaucracy while the left-wing loonies spend like a drunken Kennedy.

She may deem it fair to place 40 percent of our spending on the shoulders of our grandchildren, however, the rational disagree.

Meanwhile Obama saddles us with more government employees doing ever more to stifle small business and tax us all into oblivion.

Thank God for the tea party patriots and bye-bye to the peanut farmer junior in 2012!

Neal L. Sears Palm Springs

## send your letter

Submit letters at our website, [www.mydesert.com/letters](http://www.mydesert.com/letters)

- Letters must include the writer's name, address and telephone number for verification
- Letters should be fewer than 200 words
- Letters may be edited for length, clarity and taste.

See a complete list of rules online.

## VALLEY VOICE

# Don't threaten the benefits that older Americans earned

Congress is considering budget proposals that would make harmful cuts to Medicare and Social Security as part of a deal to raise the nation's debt ceiling. Also, there are other proposals that would place arbitrary limits on federal spending, requiring additional cuts that could dramatically increase health care costs for today's seniors (55 and older), threaten their access to doctors, hospitals and care facilities, and reduce the benefit checks they rely on to pay their bills.

These potential cuts would be felt heavily in Riverside County, where more than 306,000 residents rely on Social Security for retirement income, disability payments or survivor benefits. In addition, more than 274,000 county residents are enrolled in Medicare and depend on its benefits to maintain their health and well-being.

Despite what some have been saying recently, AARP adamantly opposes such arbitrary cuts and we will do everything in our power to prevent Congress from cutting Medicare and Social Security as part of any political deal to balance the federal budget.

AARP is asking all members of Congress to remember they're not just dealing with budget numbers. They're dealing with the lives of real people — with our families and loved ones, our friends and neighbors — real people, not just numbers on a spreadsheet.

Most older Americans hold the reasonable view that changing the rules in the middle of the game simply isn't fair. What's more, seniors have come to believe, with justification, that when Congress changes the rules of the game, it means they will soon be paying more and getting less. It has happened too many times.

That's why we're asking all members of Congress to start making the right decisions about our nation's future priorities. At the top of these priorities must be the health and financial security of all Americans. Of course, Congress must make tough choices to address our large and growing debt — but not by hurting today's seniors and future retirees.

We're asking all members of



Michael Morales

Congress to adopt a better way to begin reducing the deficit — beginning by cutting tax loopholes and special-interest tax breaks for companies that make billions of dollars in profits, but pay little or no taxes. Estimates are that all tax breaks and loopholes combined cost the federal government — and therefore the American people — roughly \$1 trillion each year.

We're asking all members of Congress why, for example, when oil companies are earning record profits, is it a priority to provide them special tax deductions, preferences, and credits totaling billions of dollars over the next decade? And what national priority are we addressing by doling out more than \$200 million in tobacco subsidies?

We're asking all members of Congress to remember that the promise of Social Security has endured since 1935 and the promise of Medicare has endured since 1965. They are promises that embody our deepest values as Americans — our obligations to one another, our obligations between generations, between parents and children and between grandparents and grandchildren.

AARP remains committed to working with both political parties to help ensure that Medicare and Social Security remain strong for today's seniors and for our children and grandchildren. We must find solutions to our nation's long-term debt problems, but those solutions must not threaten the benefits that have been earned by Americans who have spent a lifetime paying into the system. These Americans deserve the peace of mind of knowing those benefits will be there when they need them.

Michael Morales is AARP regional volunteer director for Riverside and San Bernardino counties. Email him at [michaelandevlynarp@msn.com](mailto:michaelandevlynarp@msn.com)

## MYDESERT POLL

### Today's question

Do you think Palm Springs should pay local businesses to open their bathrooms to the public?  
**To vote, go to [mydesert.com/opinion](http://mydesert.com/opinion).**

### Tuesday's poll results

185 votes cast as of 5 p.m.

What improvements would you most like to see Coachella organizers make?

**24.3%** ..... **Tickets for locals**    **17.9%** ..... **Earlier noise curfew**  
**24.3%** ... **Better traffic control**    **34.1%** ... **Contributions to local cities**

This is not a scientific poll.

## YOUR VOICE

Fashion Plaza sales tax

### Without a sunset, I vote no

The Palm Springs City Council is going to vote for a ballot measure to establish a 1 percent sales tax that would generate \$8 million per year for a \$43 million Desert Fashion Plaza plan.

The proposed sales tax has no "sunset" clause. Although the \$43 million would be raised in less than six years, the tax would go on forever and could be used for "any other city need." With a reasonable sunset clause, I would vote for the tax so the Downtown Revitalization Plan can get done. But without a sunset clause, I will be voting no.

Linda Holmes Palm Springs

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