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the world. The journals like

the Ambedkar Times are play-

ing a vital role in creating

world wide an awareness of

the precious intellectual

legacy of Dr Ambedkar. I do

not find that you have limited

your role only to the organisa-

tional work needed for the

publication of a journal. You

also make it a point to con-

tribute an editorial piece to

each issue. I find this de-

"Ambedkar Times" "Desh Doaba" pay its glowing tribute to Bharat Rattan Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar on his 58th Prinirvan Divas.

- Prem K. Chumber Editor-In-Chief: "Ambedkar Times" & "Desh Doaba"

#### Education, Social Transformation and Empowerment

Prem K. Chumber (Editor-in Chief)

Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar laid stress on 'Educate, Agitate, Organise' for the liberation of the Scheduled Castes (SCs) of India. He knew very well that education could not only stir the notion of selfrespect among the downtrodden but also encourage them to locate viable solutions to the age-old evil of caste system and Untouchability in India. Educated SCs would challenge their tormentors and refuse to accept oppressive social structures around them. In fact, it was education that imbibed the glaring spirit in him of getting rid of caste system (annihilating caste) from Indian society; the most sought after goal of his life time mission.

Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was confident that once the downtrodden get educated they would never sit idly. They would definitely agitate against the system of social injustice around them and eventually organise themselves to put an end to the same. He himself set the example through his lifelong struggle for the annihilation of caste. His philosophy was simple that an educated Dalit would agitate against the all round system of injustice around him and indulge in a struggle to overcome it. It is his self-agitation against the blind system Untouchability that would force him and his fellow-beings to get organise to commence a struggle. The central thesis of his philosophy was to know the system first so that it can empower the downtrodden to challenge social injustice rationally then to set the pace for a long struggle to put an end to age-old social evil of caste system and Untouchability.

After almost sixty eight years of India's independence, is there available a viable system of education to SCs in India? Government rural school system has come to standstill. They have turned dysfunctional long ago. Those who can afford costly private school education have abandoned them, thus rendering them just into 'Dalit schools'. This is an open fact that in Government rural schools majority of the students are from the SCs community. There are, of course, some other students belonging to OBC and upper caste communities but they too belonged to poor families. There is no denying a fact, however, that that majority of the SCs families belong to the poor and most poor strata of the society.

Given the dystunctional status of Government rural schools, the basic factor of education to change the system of Untouchability as advocated by Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar has been pushed to sideline. It is not only depriving SCs of genuine education but also blocking their way to social transformation. So there is an urgent need to revamp the Government rural schools so that proper and useful education could be imparted to SCs students along with others who want to join such schools. In addition an effort should be made to introduce an intensive multi language course work to enable the students to understand the available material in different languages. Along with the existing subjects provisions should also be made prepare them for job oriented courses in higher education.

## **MY GRATITUDE TO AMBEDKAR**

Dear Prem Kumar Chumber,

Your visit to Pune on 29 October was really a very pleasant surprise to me. For some time in the past, I have been writing articles on Dr Ambedkar

and am very happy that thanks to the Ambedkar Times, these are reaching the followers of Dr Ambedkar in US and elsewhere. This is very largely due to your efforts that are not limited to the Dalit community and include within their scope everyone who holds Dr Ambedkar and his work in deep reverence.

I find the Ambedkar **to Dr Hemant Devasthal** Times itself a very laudable project. Even a cursory glance through the paper gives one an idea of a v ariety of topics that it covers with regard to India's Dalit Movement and the hard work it must have required for its publication in an alien culture and environment.

I feel in this age of globalisation and privatisation, the marginalised communities are likely to be further marginalised unless they organise themselves and safegurad their own interests without being an impediment to the social progress at large. That was exactly what Dr Ambedkar did throughout his life. While organising and uplifting the standard of his



to Dr Hemant Devasthali during his visit to Pune.

serves appreciation since many editors often get so much bogged down in the organisational work for their paper that they have hardly time or energy to write themselves. I am happy however that you are able to manage on both fronts. I wish your efforts all the best and wish that Ambedkar Times reaches more countries of the world contributing to the education and awareness of all the poor and disadvantaged everywhere. Thanks.

own community and others, he did not lose the sight

of the larger interests of his own country. This has

made his life and thought all the more relevant today

for the disadvantaged communities in every part of

Yours sincerely, Dr Hemant Devasthali Formerly Principal,

Ness Wadia College of Commerce, University of Pune, Pune

### Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Economic Development

It is a known and well documented fact that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar was a great authority on constitutional law, a staunch social reformer, an acclaimed scholar and an original thinker and writer. But is not well known that he was also an economist of high caliber, not only by intellect,

but also by training. Dr. Ambedkar was, inter alia, an alumnus of the London School of Economics. In the early years of his life, before dedicating himself fully to the cause of untouchables and social reform beginning in the mid 20s, he wrote three scholarly books on economics viz.:

i) The Administration and Finance of East India Company.

ii) The Evolution of Provincial Finance in British India.iii) The Problem of the Rupee: Its origin and Solution.

That is why, a renowned historian, RamchandraGuha has recognized Dr. Ambedkar as "as a great scholar, institution builder and economic theorist."

Dr. Ambedkar contributed immensely to the labour welfare policy and legislation as Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council (1942-46) before independence in 1947. The prevailing socio-political scenario confined him to other important tasks and challenges namely the making of the Indian constitution and reform of the Indian society through the Hindu Code Bill etc. and as such he could not engage himself in the issues of economic development, much against his desire and plan. On Dr. Ambedkar's suggestion, PM Jawaharlal Nehru had agreed to give him the portfolio of Economic Planning after the task of the constitution making was completed. But PM Nehru did not do so, as alleged by Dr. Ambedkar. It was one of the reasons of Dr. Ambedkar's resigna-

Ramesh Chander Ambassador, IFS (Retired)

tion from the Cabinet of PM Nehru in 1951. Dr. Ambedkar stood for democratic socialism as a considered policy for India's economic development. The basic tenants of his economic policy were– eradication of poverty, elimination of inequalities, ending of exploitation, equitable distribution of national wealth and income. He was a proponent of land reforms and also supported a prominent role of the State in economic development of the country. With a view to achieve these economic goals, he, inter alia, proposed:

I) All basic industries should be owned and run by the State.

II) Insurance and Land should be nationalized and managed by the State.

- III) Introduction of collective farming.
- IV) Propagation of family planning.
- V) Empowerment of Women.
- VI) Abolition of caste system.

A prominent economist Dr. NarenderJadhav has written in one of his essays, "Dr. Ambedkar's attack on caste system was not merely aimed at challenging the hegemony of upper castes but had a broader connotation of economic growth and development." Dr. Ambedkar was of the view that political democracy, as stipulated in the constitution, has no meaning if it is not converted into social and economic democracy in a reasonable span of time.

He has a definite and potent economic agenda to take on but his failing health in the last days of his life and political and social engagements at hand did not permit him to do so.

One may grasp this sense when Nobel Laureate and renowned economist Amartya Sen says, "Ambedkar is my father in economics. His contribution in the field of economics is marvelous and will be remembered for ever."

#### Sikh Americans of Central Valley California, Celebrated 545th Guru Nanak Prakash Utsav dedicated to Education & Awareness

The Sikh Council of Central California, which represents 13 Gurdwaras (Sikh temples) in the Central Valley, presented a seminar Sunday November 9, 2014 at the Sikh Institute Fresno re:Education and Sikhism. Last year, the event focusing on the bullying of Sikh students was held at the Kerman Unified School District Auditorium, in Kerman-California.

Sikhs in Fresno and around the world celebrate the birthday of Guru Nanak, the founder of what has become the world's fifth largest religion in the month of November.

It was a very academic program rarely organized in a Gurduara setting. There were learned representatives, scholars and educationists and was primarily attended by school going youth and their parents and grandparents, who filled the main congregation hall of 500 people jam packed. The program started after the Akhandpatth Bhog and Kirtan Gurbani and finished in a pin drop silence from 11.00-AM to 1.30PM with Ardas. days, the revolutionary aspect of his message does not often get emphasized strong enough, when it is needed most!

Another very important occasion that Sikhs celebrate in November is Bandi Chhodh Divas that also happened in November, 1619. In keeping with human dignity, and highlighting the plight of political prisoners in particular, Sikhs celebrate the actions of Guru HarGobind Sahab that enabled of Sikh philosophy are not too far away from the American ideals like Life, Liberty and justice for all. It's especially important to remember Nanak's message of peace among people of all faiths and cultures in the aftermath of the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in America. Five hundred years later, those teachings continue to be relevant.

More than 30,000 Sikhs live in the central San Joaquin Valley,



dience: "The ultimate weapon you can carry with you is knowledge. How many of us are carrying that weapon?" Singh said. What people believe in isn't important; it's how they use their knowledge to better the world he added. He flowed easily between two languages, sometimes mid-sentence, explaining the values Nanak promoted in English, then directly quoting the guru in Punjabi. Addressing the educators at schools and parents at home alike, Singh said when educating the next generation "Let's not teach them what to think. Let's teach them how to think."

Read more about the report in Fresno Bee at: http:// www.fresnobee.com/ 2014/ 11/09/ 4226799\_fresno- sikhs-celebratefounders.html?rh = 1#storylink = cpy During World War II, Japanese were thought of as, "the enemy". In a most unpatriotic move, almost 120,000 Americans of Japanese descent were rounded up and placed in internment camps for several years. Thankfully, this travesty and suspen-



Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh Religion is also regarded by many others as an enlightened teacher, a champion of human rights, a world traveler who, promoted peace among other faiths through love, understanding, and respect. The essence of Guru's message for his Sikh meaning disciple is learning and to acquire wisdom through knowledge and then using it to help build a just society for all mankind. And it is in this spirit, that the Sikh Council had dedicated this occasion to promoting Education and Sikh Awareness, as they have been doing for the past 4 years.

The month of November is an auspicious month for Indians, including Hindus and Jain brethren. For Sikhs it is even more important because, not only it is rooted in theology, but also in history. Guru Nanak was born in November. Guru Nanak was the first original spiritual thinker who dared to defy the status quo in the society in those times by speaking out against everything that was not just or was not right. He dared to defy the caste system and meaningless rituals and all kinds of social evils, through beautiful poetic verses that make up much of the Guru Granth Sahib, the holy Sikh scripture. Remembering him in Gurpurabs these

52 other political prisoners, wrongfully imprisoned by Emperor Jehangir, to be freed with him. This action of Guru Hargobind Sahab taken in November 1619 ought to be considered, the pre-runner of human rights laws that we take for granted today.

Every year on the first Sunday of November, Sikh Americans also celebrate the coronation of their Sikh scripture, Guru Granth Sahib. Among the celebrations are Sikh parades, the largest of which is held in Yuba City, which is now famous worldwide.

November is also significant to Sikhs in California because since 2010, the Assembly has declared it Sikh Awareness and Appreciation Month. State Superintendent Public Instruction, Fresno County Office of Education, Fresno Unified School District, Fresno State and many cities including Fresno, Selma and Fowler, passed similar proclamations.

Guru Nanak compared education and wisdom with light and life; ignorance with darkness and death. Given the circumstances today, especially in the aftermath of 9/11, the Sikh Council considered no other befitting or relevant tribute than to celebrate and dedicate Guru's Prakash Utsavs to education and spreading awareness about his Sikhi in the modern and appropriate ways. The ideals where followers have worked to create a better understanding of their religion. But the popular image of the terrorist as made out by the media after 9/11 is the turbaned man with a beard, which most resembles the outer markings of a Sikh and it is Sikhs who continue to bear the brunt of these hate crimes.

According to a national survey released in March by the Sikh Coalition, showed Sikh students living in Fresno County are regularly bullied at school, and many of them said educators do nothing when such aggression is reported. Among the four cities surveyed in 2012 and 2013, including Boston, Indianapolis and Seattle, Fresno with 54.5% had the second-highest percentage of students saying they had been bullied. Addressing the congregation Dr. Kitty Catania, Deputy Superintendent Fresno County Office of Education highlighted and presented a couple of Resolutions recently passed by the FCOE:

1. Observance of Sikh American Awareness and Appreciation Month November 2014.

2. Observance of Anti-Bullying Toward Sikh Americans.

Harinder Singh of the Sikh Research Institute directed his message to the younger Sikhs in the ausion of human rights has not repeated itself on a systematic level, but in the aftermath of 9/11 in America, our unity in diversity that makes up the rich tapestry of our country did receive a jolt. Spreading awareness, and learning about other cultures and religions, is vitally important to promote harmony and understanding in the diverse society such as ours in this great country.

In the years since 9/11, anyone who is perceived to look like the other, which includes South Asians, Indians, Arabs, and Muslims of all nationalities are targeted for hate crimes. The popular image of the terrorist as made out by the media after 9/11 is the turbaned man with a beard, which most resembles the outer markings of a Sikh. And it is Sikhs who continue to bear the brunt of these hate crimes. Even in a supposedly safer environment of schools, the Sikh boys are routinely called Osama and disproportionate bullying goes on unabated. Out in the street, and in several documented cases. Sikhs have been beaten, shot at, and killed because of their outward appearance.

The Sikh Council Education Committee members with local support have been working along with other likeminded organizations and

#### Sikh Americans of Central Valley California, Celebrated 545th Guru Nanak Prakash Utsav dedicated to Education & Awareness

activists in Sacramento, Bay Area, and Yuba City in lobbying law makers to address this issue head on. Locally, we have been liaising with Fresno, Fowler, Selma, Sanger and Kerman School Districts with presentations and seminars on Sikh Awareness. Sikh Council members have been attending meetings and sharing events with Multifaith Society and Interfaith Alliance in Fresno. SCCC members have been responsible for establishing a Punjabi library at Kerman, perhaps with largest collection of Punjabi books in the country. Rubi Dhaliwal, Mayor of San-Joaquin has been helpful as a link between the Sikh Council and the Fresno Council of Governments. We need more members of our community elected for such positions to carry the message forward. Nationally, the Sikh Council is in alliance with the Sikh Coalition, United Sikhs, JAKARA and the Sikh Research Institute or SIKHRI for short. We had the pleasure working with Simran Kaur of the Sikh Coalition, in facilitating some local presentations. Representatives of these organizations attending the event made presentations to the congregation last Sunday. Consequently, in a combined effort, the month of November as "Sikh Awareness and Appreciation month" has been signed into law by California Legislature and Governor Jerry Brown Since 2010. Curriculum changes to include Sikhi in the textbooks are on the way thanks to the tireless efforts of Dr. Onkar Singh Bindra of Sacramento.

For the benefit of readers unfamiliar with these Resolutions, a quick rundown of some of the important laws which have been passed during the past few years are as follows: ACR 181 (Dan Logue) Sikh Awareness & Appreciation Month November was passed in 2010. Dan Logue, Assembly member from Butte County area and the Yuba City community took the lead role in this.

Resolution No. 2011-30, CA Sikh Awareness and Appreciation Month November was passed by the Fresno County Office of Education in 2011

ACR 97 (Henry Perea) Sikh Awareness & Appreciation Month November was passed in 2012

ACR 25 (Bob Wieckowski) Sikh Awareness & Appreciation Month November was passed in 2013

ACR 20 (Logue). Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 20-Relative to Post Secondary Education was also passed. This would recognize the need for inclusion of Sikhism in world religions courses at all post secondary educational institutions and advise the concerned academic governing bodies, deans and department chairs to include Sikhism in their institution's world religions courses. Sikhism is now amongst the 5 largest religions of the world. Over 250,000 residents follow Sikhism comprising 1/3 of the estimated 750,000 Sikh population of our country lives in California)

This year in 2014, the Sikh

American community couldn't be happier than to share the good news that ACR 147(Dickinson) Education and Sikh Awareness Month November 2014 has also been passed. In short this measure like its predecessors would acknowledge the significant contributions Californians of Sikh heritage have made to the state and would also seek to afford all Californians the opportunity to understand, recognize and appreciate the rich history and shared principles of Sikh Americans.

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passed Also last month was the ACR 154 (Adam Gray & Olson) Modesto Model, of which a framed copy was presented to the Sikh Council members in a Modesto Schools Board Meeting personally by legislators Adam Gray and Olson. There is a long way to go before all these important laws now in Sacramento books can be translated in to the class room and the effort needs to go on till it is done

Also drawn to the congregation's attention was another equally important aspect concerning the Indian community in general and Sikh American community in particular. It is an aspect we often wonder about, but don't really understand it. And that is to know our place in American history. While many people view the

arrival of Sikhs or Indians as relatively new immigrants, perhaps some place us, as coming to this country as early as the 1960s or 1970s, the fact is we have been here for almost a century and a quarter, since 1890. This surprises many people because this history is not part of history books here in America yet.

However slowly, but this is now changing. Interestingly this change is being brought about by the memory of those people, whose sacrifices we have either forgotten, or simply pay a lip service. And that is the story of our pioneers, affectionately known as the Ghadrites, who began arriving in this country in 1890 and built the first ever Gurduara in Stockton, California in1912, and Ghadar Party in 1913.

Unknown to most people, Johanna Ogden and Prof. La Barack in Portland working with the City Council, and the Mayor of Astoria-Oregon, put the record straight last year, when the Mayor of Astoria issued a proclamation commemorating the 100th Celebration of the Founding of the Ghadar party in Astoria in April 1913. According to the city records, the Hammond Mill in Alder brook, Oregon listed 100 Punjabi Sikh Indians as they were called Hindoos meaning Indians, working alongside Finnish immigrants from 1910-1922. They have been working jobs ranging from manual labor in lumber mills, railroads and agriculture in America since 1890. Dalip Singh Saund, was the first ever Asian American elected to be a member of the United States House of Representatives from 1957 to 1963, but that was a lot later. It took him almost 30 years to become a naturalized citizen after immigrating in 1920.

> In a fascinating slice of American history, the Ghadar Movement, which is credited with beginning the Indian independence movement, did not begin in India, but in Astoria on U.S. soil. Speaking in Yugantar Ashram, San Francisco last year at the 100th Commemoration Day of the founding of the Ghadar Party Prof. Mark Juergensmeyer, an acclaimed historian said that he was proud of being Californian knowing that the first flag of Indian Independence was flown here.

> According to Astoria City records, Punjabi Sikh Indian pioneers in the early 20th century, along with their fellow countrymen from an undivided India which included Hindus and Muslims working in the Columbia River Basin, met at the Finnish Socialist Hall in April 1913. They formed the

Ghadar party which moved its headquarters to Yugantar Ashram in San Francisco soon after, where it still stands. The Astoria Proclamation partly reads:

"The Hammond Lumber Mill in Alderbrook listed 100 Punjabi Sikh Indians, working alongside Finnish immigrants from 1910-22. And the Punjabi Sikhs were inspired by the success of the American Revolution against Great Britain and by Finland's struggle for independence from Russian occupation. And whereas, Punjabi Sikhs met at the Finnish Socialist Hall in April 1913 and formed the Ghadar Party in Astoria. Supporters of Ghadar thousands of whom, living in America and Canada returned to India and inspired the countrymen to fight for the independence from Britain which was achieved in 1947. The Astoria proclamation recognizes the Ghadrites, who fought and died not only for the freedom of their home country India, but also for the innate rights of the immigrant worker to lead a dignified and discrimination free life here in America. Whereas, 2013 is the 100th anniversary of this historic meeting that recognizes the universal right of sovereign nations, to independence and self-rule".

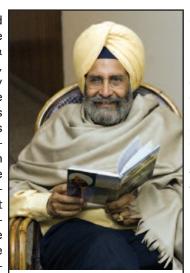
But it didn't stop here and

went further as the Astoria City Council and Mayor Willis Van Dusen organized an International Seminar for two days on October 4-5, 2013. On behalf of the Sikh Council of Central California, Charanjit Singh Batth and I had attended the seminar that included panel discussion, film screening and walking tours. The seminar concluded with the dedication of a plaque installed in the name of the Ghadrites at the most popular Columbia Riverside walk in a park situated right in front of the historic Finnish Socialist Hall site, where the Ghadar party was born a century ago in April, 1913.

Having attended Astoria Seminar and armed with the Astoria Proclamation, when we approached here, more than half a dozen California City Councils and Mayors gladly followed suit and passed similar proclamations which includes, Fresno, Manteca, Modesto, Turlock, Ciris and Stockton. Last but not least, Berkeley City Council most recently also passed a similar proclamation designating November 1, as Ghadar Day, last week. I was invited to speak as they celebrated the event by hosting a rare public conversation with 3 generations of activists continuing the Ghadar tradition. The event was well organized and well attended mostly by University students of all nationalities. Having attended both these events in Astoria last year and in Berkeley last week, I feel it takes a century but the Ghadrite's spirit of solidarity for equality and dignified, discrimination free life and justice for all citizens is back at least in Astoria and Berkeley, where it all began 100 years ago!

In conclusion, it is not an exaggeration to say, if the Sikh history begins in India with the advent of the Sikh Gurus and the sacrifices made by them dating back to 1469, history of Sikh Americans in the adopted country-America, begins with the arrival of Indian workers of undivided India Hindus, Muslims and majority of whom were Sikhs from Punjab. They began arriving in North America in 1890. Under the circumstance, they banded together and formed the Party Ghadar in Astoria century ago.

As recognized in the Astoria proclamation the Ghadrites, who fought and died not only for the freedom of their home country India, but also for the innate rights of the immigrant worker to lead a dignified and discrimination free life here in Ame ica. The Ghadrites, whose motto and vision went beyond all kinds of borders dividing humanity and was no different than what Harinder Singh of SIKHRI had described in his above presentation, " what people believe in isn't important; it's how they use their knowledge to better the world." It is generally believed, had the Ghadrites had their way, there would be no need for the formation of Bangla Desh, Pakistan or cries for more of the same. It would still be undivided India perhaps with the name " United States of India."



Pashaura Singh Dhillon is a founder member and the Former General Secretary of the Sikh Council of Central California (SCCC). As a Coordinator for the Education and Sikh Awareness Committee of the SCCC, he helped organize the 545th Guru Nanak Prakash Utsav dedicated to a conversational seminar on Education, Sikh Awareness & Appreciation and sends this report.

> Prem K. Chumber Editor-In-Chief

December, 04 2014



My final words of advice to you are "Educate, Agitate and Organize"; have faith in yourself. With justice on our side I do not see how we can lose our battle. The battle to me is a matter of joy. The battle is in the fullest sense spiritual. There is nothing material or social in it. For ours is a battle not for wealth or for power. It is battle for freedom. It is the battle of reclamation of human personality.

- Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

# We pay our glowing tribute to

Bharat Rattan Baba Sahib Dr. Ambedkar on his 58th Prinirvan Divas



Jack Ram with his mother, wife, daughter, sister & Brother Paul Ram

Commissioner late Mr. Lahori Ram Ji

#### H.E. Mr. Venkatesan Ashok, Consul General of India - San Francisco

Ambassador Venkatesan Ashok was born on 8 October 1958 in Orissa, India. He graduated in Civil Engineering from the Indian Institute of Technology, New Delhi and joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1982.



Ambassador Ashok has held diplomatic assignments in Hong Kong, Malaysia, China, Austria and Sri Lanka, apart from postings in the Ministry of External Affairs in different capacities. He was Director of External Relations in the Department of Atomic Energy between 1995-1998 following which he was appointed as India's Alternate Governor and Alternate Permanent Representative in the International Atomic Energy Agency, Vienna. He was the Division Chief of Central Europe in the Ministry of External Affairs prior to his assignment as Ambassador of India to the Republic of Zimbabwe between March 2008-June 2011. Ambassador Ashok served as Ambassador of India to the Czech Republic from August 2011 - September 2014. He took charge as Consul General of India in San Francisco w.e.f. 21 November 2014.

Ambassador Ashok speaks Chinese, English and several Indian languages. He has authored a book, apart from several technical articles. His interests include reading and music. (With thanks Mr. Anand Jha Consul)

www.ambedkartimes.com November 24, 2014

#### Senate Certificate of Recognition Presented to Dr. Onkar S. Bindra:

Senate Certificate of Recognition presented to Dr. Onkar S. Bindra with special Thanks for his Advocacy in Support of SB 1266 Relating to Epinephrine in Schools, given by Senate Republican Leader Bob Huff, Dated 6th Day of November, 2014 (Signed Senator Bob Huff, 29th Senate District).

Introduced by Sen. Bob Huff on 2/21/2014, Senate Bill 1266 went through 35 legislative steps. Governor Jerry Brown signed it into law on 9/15/2014. It will require schools to stock Epinephrine auto injectors on school campuses, effective January 1, 2015. The school nurse or a well-trained volunteer teacher or staff

