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# Villar: 2010 polls to push...

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after her term ends on June 30, 2010.

Villar, who is leading in recent surveys on presidential aspirants, said Pres. Arroyo has no choice but to step down at the end of her term "unless (term extension) is served to her on a silver platter."

He said at least 15 senators are going to campaign in 2010, with four to five senators likely to run for president, one for a seat in the House of Representatives, and several others for re-election.

"It's going to be election season in the next few months," Villar said, noting that political mudslinging will intensify as election nears.

Villar took note of doubts on whether Pres. Arroyo would make good her statement in her State of the Nation Address (SONA), that she would just finish her term because of her low credibility.

Villar said it is up to the people to decide whether



Sen. Manuel Villar

er they will believe the President regarding the rosy statistics she gave about her nine-year performance.

"To be fair with her, since we did not go into recession, she has done something. The OFW remittances greatly helped in the resilience of the economy," Villar said.

He commended Pres. Arroyo for handling the economy fairly but it is not sufficient to address poverty.

Villar merely laughed off the President's swipes against her critics, who included former House speaker Jose de Venecia, ex-President Fidel Ramos, ex-President Joseph Estrada and presidential

aspirant Sen. Manuel Roxas. "That's part of human conduct, to get back if one is already piqued or fed up," Villar said, adding that it's her last attempt to hit back at them. ■

# Schwarzenegger signs \$85B budget...

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five months after lawmakers and the governor ended months of negotiations to close a previous \$42 billion deficit.

The governor and lawmakers hope the revised spending plan will end California's cash crisis and let the state stop issuing IOUs to vendors.

Schwarzenegger's finance director, Michael Genest, warned Tuesday that even with the revised budget deal, California likely will need to borrow \$8 billion to \$10 billion to cover its cash needs this year, and the state is likely to face another \$7 billion to \$8 billion deficit in the 2010-11 fiscal year.

Matt Fabian, a bond analyst at Municipal Market Advisors, based in Concord, Mass., said California's plan was filled with accounting tricks and will likely do little to improve the state's poor credit rating.

Fitch Ratings rates California's general obligation bond debt at "BBB," which is still investment-grade. Most states have a higher-quality "AAA" or "AA" rating.

The package lawmakers agreed to included about \$15 billion in spending cuts, as well

as reforms that include tougher sanctions on CalWORKS recipients who don't meet work requirements. Also, in-home support workers will have to undergo background checks and have their fingerprints taken.

In earlier rounds of cuts, California reduced Medi-Cal reimbursement rates for health care providers and eliminated optional benefits such as dental and eye care for adult recipients.

With the vetoes announced Tuesday, the cut to California's state parks totals about \$14 million, which Genest said will likely force as many as 100 of the state's 279 parks, beaches and attractions to close.

The additional cuts Schwarzenegger made Tuesday also include \$37.5 million from the



Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger signs the \$85 billion revised state budget during ceremonies at the Capitol in Sacramento, Calif., Tuesday, July 28. Schwarzenegger made an additional \$656 million in cuts to child welfare, health care for the poor and AIDS prevention to build a reserve fund of \$656 million for the state.

AP Photo by Rich Pedroncelli

In-Home Supportive Services program, \$50 million from the Early Start program for developmentally disabled children, and more than \$6 million in cuts from programs for the aging. ■

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