

## **Unions to rally against governor**

Commuters can expect some delays Tuesday

By Alison Soltau, San Francisco Chronicle

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Financial District commuters should prepare for potential delays Tuesday, when a fund-raiser at a Nob Hill hotel for Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger is expected to draw a large protest by nurses, teachers and firefighters angry at his administration's policies, police said.

The rally outside the Ritz Carlton Hotel is one in a series of statewide protests being organized by unions. They say that policies the governor claims will rein in the state's fiscal deficit will instead erode health care and education and are favors to big business interests who fork out up to \$89,999 to attend Schwarzenegger soirées.

Emotional rallies in Orange County and San Jose in the past month have attracted between 1,000 and 4,000 protesters, and while crowd estimates were not known Sunday, event organizer Chuck Iverson of the California Nurses Association said San Francisco's liberal leanings could inspire a particularly large protest of the Republican governor.

Protesters are expected to arrive by private bus, from the Montgomery BART station and the California Street cable car, while overhead, an airplane will fly an anti-Arnold banner, Iverson said.

Police and the California Highway Patrol plan to maintain a large presence outside the hotel at 600 Stockton St. as demonstrators gather between 5 and 6 p.m. for the 6.30 p.m. dinner, said Central District police Sgt. Eddie Cheung.

Pine Street will be reduced from five to four lanes of traffic between 4 and 6 p.m. to allow media vans to park, and regular cars will not be permitted to park on the street after 6 p.m., contrary to the usual rules, Cheung said.

"Bear in mind there will be some congestion and anticipate some delay," Cheung said, adding that the effects of the protest might not be widely felt across The City because the hotel is situated on a quiet part of Stockton Street.

Nurses are protesting Schwarzenegger's push to lower minimum hospital staffing numbers and veto of legislation to lower prescription drug costs. There is also opposition to pension reform.

Hundreds of teachers could rally against plans to alter Proposition 98 to potentially decrease school funding, change the retirement scheme and institute a merit-based pay system for teachers, said United Educators of San Francisco President Dennis Kelly.

A spokeswoman for Schwarzenegger could not be reached Sunday, but the governor said recently that such demonstrators were "bankrupting California" with special interests and that he was successful at raising money because so many Californians were supportive of his efforts to improve the quality of education and reform the pension system.