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Bill Simon flexes his muscles

It's not very often that a former politician finds a second act that draws rave reviews from the entertainment industry, not to mention a host of former Olympians.

But **Bill Simon**, a Republican who ran for California governor against incumbent **Gray Davis** in 2002, has found himself in such a coveted spot.

Since exiting the political scene after he lost to Davis, he has established one of Los Angeles County's most successful physical education initiatives. Over the last few years, Simon has workout centers in nearly 50 L.A. Unified high schools.

He's raised the money through his family foundation, with a little boost from government grants, because he believes that today's youth should have the benefits of a health club without the expense.

On Friday, his effort -- called "Sound Body Sound Mind" -- was feted at the Beverly Hilton Hotel. Among the guests were numerous Olympic champions (**John Naber, Peter Vidmar, Bruce Furniss, Paul Gonzales, Kent Steffes** and **Inger Miller**), "Dancing With the Stars" diva **Laila Ali** and even Simon's old opponent, Davis.

By the end of the evening, more than \$3 million had been raised. Simon hopes the program can be expanded into the middle schools.