



California Federation of Teachers
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO



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Educators Face Layoffs, Budget Crisis & War at Annual Convention

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – Hundreds of members of the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) convened in San Francisco today to address massive teacher layoffs, propose solutions to a State budget crisis and set union policies for the coming year. At a Friday news conference that kicked off the Convention, CFT President Mary Bergan and United Educators of San Francisco President Kent Mitchell, addressed looming teacher and school worker layoffs. Mitchell's San Francisco Unified School District has sent out 1,000 teacher layoff notices. "After years of recruiting and preparing teachers to instruct California students to meet world-class standards, the State and school districts across California are now laying off those educators," said Bergan.

"Hundreds of young, eager teachers will be laid off. Taxpayers have invested millions of dollars to motivate these young graduates to choose teaching," said United Educators of San Francisco President Kent Mitchell. "Now we are kicking them out the door. These teachers will be desperately needed as a large cohort of older teachers retires in the next few years. What makes us think the spurned young teachers will wait around to be invited back into the classroom? Based on experience during the last layoffs during the 1970s, the majority of these talented teachers will shift to more stable and financially rewarding careers."

The educators also offered solutions to the State's budget crisis. "While it's true that our state budget deficit is huge, it's also true that the tax loopholes written into our state tax code are massive," commented Bergan. "For example, mansion owners get to deduct all the interest they pay on their trophy homes. Many deduct more than \$50,000 in *interest* each year. The State also allows big corporations to abuse a tax benefit, called 'S' filings, designed for small businesses. If we just define a 'small' business as one with total annual receipts under \$20 million, we could recapture \$570 million. What a pity that policymakers would rather close classroom doors than close tax loopholes given to favored interests. Laying off teachers is a waste of the massive investment we've made in the last few years."

Other major Convention topics include: dealing with the State's burdensome educational testing program and proposals for the CFT to join with other unions in a labor anti-war coalition.

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The educators—from pre-school through higher education—will also hear from State Insurance Commissioner John Garamendi, San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, State Senator Sheila Kuehl and State Assemblyman Darrell Steinberg, who will receive the coveted “Legislator of the Year” award.

The California Federation of Teachers represents over one hundred twenty thousand educators and classified employees at all levels of California public and private education.

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