



2009 Special Election

MEDIA REPORT on California Federation of Teachers Political and Policy Action

Why the California Federation of Teachers opposes Prop. 1A

Prop. 1A is a Power Grab

Proposition 1A gives the governor unilateral power to make midyear cuts in important programs that serve the people of California, including public education, without legislative or any other oversight.

Prop. 1A Hurts Students

Prop. 1A will harm California’s most vulnerable students by capping funding at levels that will require deep cuts in programs that support children and families in poverty. Teachers know that children who come to school sick or hungry can’t learn.

Do the Math

The California Budget Project estimates the budget cap will be \$16 billion lower than the baseline-spending estimate for 2010-2011. Prop. 1A could cut education by more than \$6 billion in that year, and by billions more in following years. That under funding would worsen over time and education would never recover those funds. The cuts would be permanently locked into our state constitution.

Prop. 1A is Bad for Higher Education

Prop. 1A would deeply harm the University of California and California State Universities, and set back teacher preparation at a time of critical need. CSU, which prepares nearly 60% of California teachers, would suffer deep cuts. California faces a shortage of 100,000 teachers in the next decade. This is no time to harm the university preparing those teachers. And students, who have suffered more than 110% fee increases since 2002, will face still higher tuition, closing off access to working families.

Prop. 1A is a stick linked to a Prop. 1B carrot. But the carrot is already owed to public education. If Prop. 1A fails, schools and community colleges will still be due the funds specified by Prop. 1B. If the legislature fails to allocate it, defenders of public education will go to court to enforce the Proposition 98 guarantees.



April 30–Sacramento No on 1A rally, community college instructor Dean Murakami at mic.

CFT files suit to protect school funding

The California Federation of Teachers filed suit May 7 in San Francisco Superior Court to force the state to repay nearly \$12 billion slashed from the K-14 public education budget over the past two years. The CFT was joined by Service Employees International Union Local 99 in the lawsuit, which seeks to enforce voter-approved Proposition 98 minimum funding guarantees.

The CFT filed the suit following a threat by Governor Schwarzenegger to cut another \$3.6 billion from the education budget.

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CFT's positions 1B – 1F

YES on 1B

1B would guarantee schools and community colleges the \$9.3 billion they are owed under Prop 98 without a lawsuit. Passage is tied to passage of 1A; if 1A fails, so does 1B.

NO on 1C

1C would borrow billions of dollars against future lottery revenues, place the money in the state general fund instead of inside Prop 98, and take years to repay.

NO on 1D

Would take money away from early childhood programs supported by a tobacco tax from the voter-approved Prop 10 a decade ago, hurt low-income children, and make it even harder to close the achievement gap.

NO on 1E

1E would divert money from already under-funded mental health programs, including those for young children, robbing the voter-approved Prop 63, passed in 2004.

NO on 1F

Faux populist measure would punish all legislators by denying them pay raises if a small minority of them block the adoption of a state budget that requires a two-thirds vote.



No 1A
Yes 1B
No 1C
No 1D
No 1E
No 1F

Talk to an educator about the propositions

Educators are available to comment on the May 19 Special Election propositions.

To arrange an interview, contact:

Fred Glass, CFT Communications Director
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or
Steve Hopcraft, CFT Media Consultant
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You may also go to **www.cft.org** for more information.

What educators are saying...

“Prop. 1A would harm our schools by deeply limiting future funding. Prop. 1A would lock us into permanent shortages of school support personnel. Teachers can’t teach and students can’t learn without adequate support from classroom aides, secretaries, bus drivers, cooks and custodians.”

–Robert Chacanaca, President, Santa Cruz Council of Classified Employees

“We’re already 47th in the nation in per pupil spending. Prop 1A is not the answer to California’s budget woes. It would limit educational spending into the future. My students need to come into the classroom ready to learn; 1A would prevent that from happening.”

–Melinda Dart, teacher, Woodrow Wilson Elementary in Daly City, and President, Jefferson Elementary Federation of Teachers

Progressive tax policy: solution to California's budget woes

Proponents of Proposition 1A have been predicting the sky will fall if voters don't pass 1A. They challenge opponents to come up with an alternative. CFT has one: send the legislators and governor back to square one to do their job in public, not in secrecy, and balance the budget with fair taxes on the wealthy and the corporations, not on the backs of the students, poor, elderly and disabled of this state.

During the period from the end of World War II to about 1980, income in the United States was more evenly distributed than today. This was due to three things: the strength of unions, a more progressive tax structure, and a belief that the role of government was to make the entire society more secure through its tax-supported programs. These ideas were cemented through the legislation of the New Deal (like Social Security and the GI Bill) and reinforced by the Great Society (programs such as Medicare).

However, over the past three decades, the rich have gotten richer at the expense of the rest of us. The view from the top is once again about how it was in the 1920s, when income inequality was at an historic peak.

Today the top ten per cent of wealth holders in the United States owns more than 70% of the nation's wealth. The top one per cent owns more than one third of the country's wealth: 34%. The top 1%

makes on average \$1.4 million per year (\$1.6 million in California). Meanwhile, our infrastructure is collapsing and real wages for the majority of people stagnate.

This unfortunate state of affairs is due to the decline of the labor movement and the relentless attacks on government and taxes by conservative forces marshaled by the 1%. This long-term assault has succeeded in reducing taxes on the top income brackets and on corporations, resulting in systematic under-funding for social services.

The choice is clear. We can adequately fund government services by asking those who have benefited the most from our society to return to paying a fair share of taxes; or continue to slide toward a society divided sharply between a small percentage of very wealthy, and deteriorating conditions and prospects for the rest of us.

CFT is determined to help create a new consensus: government exists to help people, and sufficient revenues and educated lawmakers are necessary preconditions for that to happen. CFT is not alone. In his inaugural address, President Obama expressed similar sentiments:

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What educators are saying...

A strong vote for Proposition 1B—even if 1A fails, which would mean 1B would fail too—is symbolically important. It would show the legislators and the governor that the people of California support our schools and colleges.

—Marty Hittelman, math instructor, Valley College, LACCD, and President, CFT

Progressive tax policy *(From Page 3)*

“What the cynics fail to understand is that the ground has shifted beneath them—that the stale political arguments that have consumed us for so long no longer apply. The question we ask today is not whether our government is too big or too small, but whether it works—whether it helps families find jobs at a decent wage, care they can afford, a retirement that is dignified.”

We can bring Obama’s ideas alive by helping the public understand that the road to a society worth living in is through fair, progressive tax policies. Low rates of taxation on the wealthy and corporations cripple our ability to pay for schools, public safety, and all the services we require to run a safe, productive, and equitable society.

Despite decades of anti-tax propaganda, polls consistently indicate that when presented with clear ideas about progressive taxation, majorities would vote for them. Recent evidence confirms this: nearly three quarters of Californians in an April 2009 Field Poll agree that raising income taxes on the state’s wealthiest residents would be a good idea (see box, right).

The anti-tax/anti-government ideas of yesterday are done. The Wall Street meltdown and Depression have demonstrated conclusively what harm to society results through corporate loopholes and reducing sensible regulations and taxes on the rich. It’s time to go back to fairness, common sense, and the progressive policies that once allowed a vibrant society to flourish.



Poll reveals progressive tax sentiments; coverage reveals media frame

The Field poll on the state budget crisis (April 30, 2009) demonstrates that the public is open to solving the state's budget problem with fair, progressive tax increases, although you wouldn't know it from the media coverage. [<http://www.field.com/fieldpollonline/subscribers/RIs2306.pdf>] Barely mentioned in the articles and stories is that a solid majority (74%) think it's a good idea to increase taxes on the rich in order to help fund schools and necessary social services. A smaller majority (54%) agrees that an oil severance tax, closing a loophole for big oil companies, would be a good idea. Instead of noting these ideas, coverage focused on the confusing message that a majority of respondents wanted to solve the state's budget problems mostly with cuts, but couldn't specify what cuts to make.

CFT files suit *(From Page 1)*

CFT president Marty Hittelman said that going to court to restore school funding is a better option than Propositions 1A and 1B in the May 19 Special Election.

"Voters need to know that we don't have to lock flawed and dangerous formulas into the constitution in order to repay our schools. Proposition 1A will turn the Proposition 98 minimum funding guarantee for our schools into a cap instead of a floor, and Proposition 1B could mean that schools won't even get all the money they are owed if more cuts happen in the coming year," said Hittelman. "This lawsuit will fund schools at the level required by law to reflect the voice of the voters who made our children's education a clear constitutional priority through Proposition 98."

1B would only give schools the repayment Proposition 98 requires if voters also approve Proposition 1A. Unlike the CFT lawsuit, Proposition 1B would not guarantee that any additional education cuts made for the 2009-10 year would have to be repaid. [More, including the lawsuit, at www.cft.org.]