



MEDIA REPORT on California Federation of Teachers Political and Policy Action

Election Coverage Needs Complete Picture

If this election proves one thing, it's that Arnold Schwarzenegger doesn't do his homework. Not only should we not be having this special election; measures as ill-considered as those the Governor gave as his rationale for the election should not have been put out for signature.

Look at them.

Arnold claims that he had to go to the ballot because the Legislature failed to act. Yet no bill mirroring Proposition 74 was ever introduced by initiative sponsor Bonnie Garcia, or any other legislator. So we have a measure for which there is little rationale, on a subject, teacher "tenure," that few people understand beyond the stereotypical misinformation put out in the governor's campaign propaganda. It is clear, as evidenced by his wrong-headed demand that the No on 74 ads be pulled because they were "wrong," that he and his spokespeople have no working knowledge of the law they are seeking to amend.

Then there's 76, which most people turn against as soon as they read the title and summary. Supposedly written to control the growth in state government spending, it actually would lead to a net reduction in spending in a state that continues to grow, as do the needs of its citizens.

Proposition 77 calls for reapportionment under a new system for next year's elections, which no one thinks can happen that quickly. Civil rights groups and candidates would surely be in court to stop implementation the morning of November 9. That it was not taken off the ballot because its proponents didn't follow the rules blemishes the State Supreme Court's credibility.

If Arnold turned these in to my English teacher self, they would all get F's for content.

For these ill-conceived proposals, we are subjected to the costs and frustrations of a special election for which a low turnout is predicted due to lack of interest, and confusion over a ballot that has grown to include five other propositions. California voters deserve better.

In campaign literature to the party faithful, Arnold has added Proposition 75 to his "reform" package. Cleverly drafted to mask the real intentions of its proponents, it would make it more difficult for unions to fight future ballot propositions that hurt our members, or our students, or our institutions. Democracy is alive and well in the AFT and other unions, and we don't need more laws to dictate procedures in conflict with the ones voted in by our representative bodies.

When the media report on these and the other propositions, I ask that they give a complete picture. I recognize there are limitations of time and space, but when there are so many significant items on the ballot that voters throw up their hands and say "I can't do this," it's important that they hear more than shorthand descriptions that tell just a part of the stories.

I count on the press to do their homework.

Mary Bergan, President

Campaign Web Resources

California Federation of Teachers
www.cft.org

Alliance for a Better California
www.betterca.com

No on 75
www.millionairesfor75.com

California Labor Federation
www.calaborfed.org

Info on governor's funding sources
www.arnoldwatch.org



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Prop. 74 is useless attempt at playing the blame game

Contra Costa Times, August 27, 2005

By Sheila Jordan, Alameda County Supt. of Schools

We all know that good teachers are crucial for a child's success in school. Proposition 74 in November's special election is designed to appeal to nearly all parents who, at one time or another in their child's education, come across a teacher who seems inadequate or unprepared.

Trying to fix the problem of low test scores, poorly educated children and failing schools with Prop. 74 is false advertising.

The problems are complex and difficult. The solution starts with good teachers and sufficient resources.

Prop. 74 targets under-performing teachers by extending a new teacher's probationary period to five years from the current two years. The idea is that a longer probation period gives a school district more time to spot a poor teacher.

The impulse to improve teacher performance is laudable. The problem is, this approach won't work and, in fact, may have the opposite effect.

Worse, it shifts the focus away from the real problem: inadequate resources for our schools, and blames teachers for our education woes. Here's why Prop. 74 is a bad idea:

It identifies teachers as the "problem" when, in fact, they are the solution, the ones we entrust with the education of our children.

Teachers are not born, they are trained. We should be seeking ways to improve their training rather than blaming them for our failing schools. While this punitive measure appears on November's ballot, we actually are cutting back on the days given over to train teachers.

We should support and reward teachers when they do well and give them the resources they need to do the job right.

Prop. 74 is a smokescreen. It scapegoats teachers for failing schools when, in fact, the real cause is under-funding and lack of resources for education in California.

It sends a bad message by implying the state doesn't value or trust teachers. This lack of trust is making it more and more difficult for individuals to decide to enter the teaching profession in California.

Does the state have nothing better to offer teachers than punishment? Extending probation by three years gives poorly performing teachers three more years to stay in the system, three more years to fail our children.

Plus, it gives good teachers a reason to avoid or leave California to find greener and more appreciative pastures elsewhere.

Prop. 74 targets teachers by imposing unfair work requirements on them. No private industry job has a five-year probationary period. For that matter, no other public employee faces a five-year probation.

A fair system already exists to get rid of ineffective new teachers and to fire established teachers who are not performing in the classroom, regardless of how long they've been on the job.

Anyway, it doesn't take five years to figure out if a teacher should stay or go. Two years is enough. And if a teacher's poor performance becomes evident after two years, it's possible to let them go. There just has to be due process.

Let's challenge the governor to develop a ballot measure to provide schools with the resources they need to attract good teachers and give them ongoing training.

That would be a far, far better and more effective approach than the punitive blame game of Prop. 74.

CFT Special Election Recommendations

<i>Proposition 73</i>	NO	Puts Teens in Danger
<i>Proposition 74</i>	NO	Punish New Teachers
<i>Proposition 75</i>	NO	Paycheck Deception
<i>Proposition 76</i>	NO	Cuts School Funding
<i>Proposition 77</i>	NO	Redistricting Power Grab
<i>Proposition 78</i>	NO	Corporate Drug Plan
<i>Proposition 79</i>	YES	Consumer Drug Plan
<i>Proposition 80</i>	YES	Affordable Electricity and Blackout Prevention



PROPOSITION 74

The Governor's Anti-teacher Initiative

Frequently Asked Questions

What does Proposition 74—the governor's “tenure” initiative—really do?

It makes it even harder to recruit and retain quality teachers in our public schools by extending the current two-year probation period to five years. It also allows current permanent or “tenured” teachers to be dismissed for two consecutive unsatisfactory evaluations without the right to challenge the reports. At the same time, this measure does nothing to address the most urgent needs in our schools, such as smaller class sizes, adequate textbooks and a highly qualified teacher in every classroom.

Do we need Proposition 74?

No. This initiative is unnecessary. Existing law allows teachers to be fired for unsatisfactory performance, unprofessional conduct, criminal acts, dishonesty and conduct unfit for associating with children no matter how long they have been on the job.

Don't California teachers have tenure that guarantees them a job forever?

No, California teachers don't have tenure at all. What they have after two years of probation is due process rights. Simply put, teachers have the right to a fair hearing before being fired.

Will Proposition 74 bring quality teachers to California's classrooms?

No. Over the next 10 years, we will need 100,000 new teachers. Proposition 74 hurts our ability to recruit and retain quality teachers while doing absolutely nothing to improve either teacher performance or student achievement. Proposition 74 hurts young teachers the most. It will discourage young people from entering the teaching profession at this critical time.

Independent Voices See Problems in Prop. 74

California's problem is getting teachers INTO the classroom, not out of it

“California is going to need to replace around 100,000 teachers, or one-third of the workforce, in the next 10 years. The message [of Prop. 74] seems to be that we need to get rid of more teachers. The fact is that we need more well prepared teachers.”

Margaret Gaston, Executive Director, Center for the Future of Teaching and Learning

School boards find Prop. 74 fatally flawed

“[Prop. 74] is poorly crafted and contains fatal flaws relative to teacher dismissals and collective bargaining. [Prop. 74] gives districts less discretion than they currently have to define the unsatisfactory performance of teachers. Under [Prop. 74] dismissal proceedings could not go forward for at least two (and likely three) years, and the unsatisfactory evaluations would have to be made in consecutive years. [Prop. 74] would mandate additional teacher evaluations during the first five years, thereby imposing significant new costs on districts that would not be reimbursable.

“Prop 74 will impose new unreimbursable costs, add to and complicate collective bargaining, create an environment for more grievances and take away districts' ability to define unsatisfactory performance for themselves.”

Scott Plotkin, Executive Director, California School Boards Association

No research or data behind Prop. 74

“[T]he research base that would provide a foundation for the major provisions of Proposition 74 does not exist:

- There is no research determining the optimal length to tenure;
- There is no research or data available on the effectiveness or quality of evaluation systems in California school districts; and
- There is little-to-no data available regarding the number of California teachers dismissed for unsatisfactory performance, the number who voluntarily leave as a result of unsatisfactory performance prior to formal dismissal, or the number of probationary teacher denied permanency due to unsatisfactory performance.”

University of Southern California, California Policy Institute

Who's in charge here?

"Asked for supporting evidence that such reforms would improve teacher performance or respond to a specific classroom need, the governor's campaign office referred questions about Prop. 74 to a public relations firm and to Republican Assemblywoman Bonnie Garcia of Cathedral City (Riverside County), who wrote the measure.

"But Garcia's campaign office said she is no longer involved with the measure and will not answer questions about it. Her office referred inquiries back to the public relations firm. The public relations firm referred questions to Garcia's office."

San Francisco Chronicle, 9/30/05

No More Crocodile Tears: No on 75

Ostensibly to “protect the paychecks” of workers who might disagree with their unions’ political activities, Proposition 75 has a hidden agenda: to defund public schools, cut health care and roll back retirement security. If its extreme right-wing sponsors can succeed in silencing the political voice of public sector workers by wrapping their unions in vast quantities of red tape, the main defense for government programs serving the working class will be gone.

That’s why, when the advocates of Proposition 75 speak of their heartfelt concern for workers, an image appears before me.

It’s a drawing, in the style of an early 20th century cartoon. An expensively dressed crocodile sits at a table in a fancy restaurant. Tears stream

down his face. He’s protesting to his companion, “Why, I love workers,” as he delicately pats his lips with a linen napkin. Across the table, W.C. Fields leers, adding, “...with mustard.”

We’ve seen Proposition 75 before. It first appeared in the early 1900s, when, responding to a surge of union organizing, employers devised a strategy called “the Open Shop.” Proclaiming concern for workers’ interests against “union coercion,” bosses sought to ban the union shop, a workplace where all employees receive union representation and all belong to the union.

Is a union shop coercion? Only if you think democracy is “coercion” of the minority by the majority. A union shop comes into existence when a majority of workers votes for it. All workers in the unit gain from the higher wages and benefits and a voice on the job that a union brings. This was true then, and remains true today. The average difference in compensation between union and non-union jobs, according to the U.S. Department of Labor, is about 25%. This is the real reason some employers prefer non-union workplaces—not admiration for worker rights.

Following World War I, the open shop received a makeover. This time it was called “the American Plan,” implying that anyone who favored unions was unpatriotic. The new version of the open shop featured employer blacklists for union sympathizers, and spies and thugs on company payrolls. In extraction industries like mining and lumber, the American Plan also brought us the company town, with corporation controlled stores, police, housing, and money. Crocodiles flourished.

The greatest period of union organizing in

American history occurred during the 1930s and 40s. The response was not long in coming. Over Harry Truman’s veto, a conservative Congress passed the Taft-Hartley Act in 1947, which contained a provision allowing states to pass “right-to-work” laws. These laws gave no worker any right to any job. This was just the crocodiles’ deceptive way of expanding the open shop concept. Why bar union shops one at a time when it could be accomplished across an entire state? In California, voters faced the right-to-work Proposition 18 on the 1958 ballot. Its arch-conservative banner carrier was *Oakland Tribune* owner William Knowland. Running against Pat Brown for Governor, Knowland lost both the gubernatorial race and Prop 18. Many Republicans, disgusted by Knowland’s anti-union

position, voted for Brown or sat the race out.

By 1998 the anti-union concept morphed into Proposition 226’s “paycheck protection.” Rivers of crocodile tears flowed from wealthy right-wing ideologues who “loved” California’s workers’ rights — well, one right: to withhold union dues used by labor for politics. Despite a huge initial lead, the crocodiles lost as the electorate realized the real purpose of Proposition 226 was to silence workers’ political voice.

This year, the crocodiles hatched Prop 75, a refinement of Prop 226 singling out public employee unions. Says Arnold Schwarzenegger, summing up decades of open shop sloganeering, “I love teachers and nurses. I just hate their unions.” In the words of fifth grade Berkeley teacher Robert Murray, “That’s crazy. It’s like saying ‘I love children but hate families.’” What the governor doesn’t understand—or pretends not to—is that in attacking a union, he attacks its members.

The governor finally endorsed Prop 75 in September. It was a foregone conclusion. After all, his closest political advisers and donors crafted it. As with open shop and “right to work” advocates before them, Schwarzenegger and Proposition 75 author Uhler shed tears for just one worker right: the right of workers to be at the mercy of employers without unions to defend them.

This November, send the crocodiles back to the swamp without their dinner. Vote No on Prop. 75.

*Fred Glass, Communications Director
California Federation of Teachers*

A longer version of this article appeared on Labor Day in the Sacramento Bee.

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NO on 78, Yes on 79



In what promises to be the most confusing issue on the special election ballot, there are two competing initiatives that pledge to provide prescription drug discounts.

One—Prop 79—was placed on the ballot by Health Access California, with the support of the CFT, other unions, and consumer and senior groups. It would create a prescription drug discount program that would use the purchasing power of the state of California to leverage discounts from the drug companies. Its goal is to cut soaring prescription drug prices for consumers.

The other—Prop 78—was placed on the ballot by the big pharmaceutical corporations with the specific intent to confuse voters into opposing Prop 79. It would also create a drug discount program, but would allow the drug companies to voluntarily decide whether to participate, and what drugs, if any, for which they would provide discounts.

As of the middle of September, the drug companies have already raised more than \$80 million to defeat Prop 79 and pass Prop 78. If both measures get a majority, the proposition with the higher vote total will take effect.

Both measures would enable the Department of Health Services to contract with pharmaceutical corporations for a discount on drugs used by Medi-Cal patients. Under each initiative, the state would rebate retailers or pharmacists the amount of the discount. The difference is that under the drug companies' Prop 78, nothing requires the companies to enter into the contract with the DHS. Under Prop 79, if a company refuses to participate, Medi-Cal will steer patients to other equivalent drugs. This is a significant incentive, since Medi-Cal-reimbursed prescription drug sales topped \$4 billion last year.

Prop 79 would also provide deeper discounts to twice as many Californians than the drug companies' Prop 78. But the biggest difference is that Prop 79 would enforce those discounts, using the purchasing power of the Medi-Cal program.

The drug companies are trying to protect their ability to price-gouge Californians, who now pay a higher retail price for prescription drugs than residents of other wealthy nations. It is precisely this price-gouging and the super-profits by the drug corporations at our expense that allows them to commit \$80 million to try to confuse and defeat us.

Vote NO on Proposition 78. Vote Yes on Proposition 79.

Frequently Asked Questions

NO on PROPOSITION 76



Schools Lose Big in Governor's Budget Measure

What does Proposition 76—the “cut school funding” initiative—really do?

It immediately cuts public school funding by over \$4 billion per year – \$600 per student – leading to more overcrowded classrooms, teacher layoffs, and fewer textbooks and classroom materials. It also eliminates our democratic system of checks and balances by giving the governor unprecedented new powers without legislative oversight.

What kind of new authority would Proposition 76 give the governor?

Under this measure, the governor can declare a “fiscal emergency” virtually any time, granting himself the power to overturn voter approved initiatives, undo union contracts, and renege on promises to local governments. This governor and any future governor could do all of this without any approval from the legislature or voters.

Will Proposition 76 balance the budget without raising taxes?

No. This initiative has nothing to do with taxes. It is an attempt by the governor to bypass the legislature and the voters in order to implement his so-called “reform” agenda. If this measure passes, it will overturn Proposition 98, which ensures a guaranteed level of spending for public schools and community colleges, and allow the governor to drastically cut other vital public services. In fact, those cuts could ultimately lead to higher local taxes to cover the shortfall.

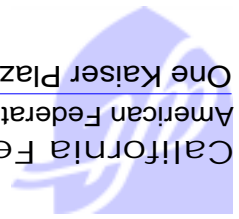
What kind of cuts could we expect from the governor if Proposition 76 passes?

The governor has proposed many cuts that have been opposed by the legislature and voters. With his new powers under Proposition 76, no one could stop his agenda of cutting billions from our schools, slashing funds for community colleges and universities, privatizing public employee pensions, and decreasing the state's share of employee health care costs.

Don't we need something like Proposition 76 to get a budget passed on time?

No. The answer is not to subvert our democratic process of checks and balances. No single person should ever have the power that the governor proposes to give himself. Further, there is no incentive for the governor to cooperate with the legislature on passing a budget if, in the end, he can declare a fiscal emergency and bypass the system.

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Mary Bergan, President, California Federation of Teachers



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www.cft.org

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**California Federation
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