

CaliforniaTeacher

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CALIFORNIA FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, AFT, AFL-CIO



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Speak out
to win!

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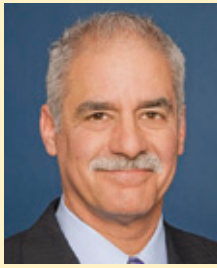
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Up Front Josh Pechthalt, CFT President



Chicago proves that ordinary folks who are organized and committed can overcome the influence of the wealthy and powerful. Now is the time for us to be

Chicago strike models winning political strategy for California election victory

The Chicago Teachers Union strike gave a shot in the arm to education unions and all of labor. CTU reawoke a labor movement lacking confidence that it could take a militant stand and win.

The CTU strike faced huge obstacles, constrained by state law and a national narrative that scapegoats teachers and education unions as the causes of the crisis in public education. Nevertheless, the Chicago teachers won key victories at the bargaining table, mobilized their entire membership and built on their parent-community alliances.

If Chicago rekindled the fire of mass action, we can't forget the importance of electoral work. The reelection of President Obama in the face of the most reactionary Republican Party in living memory is essential to continue push-back against threats to government as the collective voice of the American people.

In California, a flood of money from the Koch brothers into the Prop-

osition 32 campaign will bring media buys designed to deceive voters. In the guise of cleaning up elections and keeping out "special interests," Prop. 32 really aims to cripple the political power of California unions.

Prop. 32 plays on a deepening cynicism toward politicians and political institutions. Even union members may be questioning labor's reliance on elections when we see less money for education and vital services, and friendly politicians who seem to support reforms that demonize educators.

Despite the justified cynicism many of us feel toward our electoral system, we must be clear that Prop. 32 will decimate our ability to elect board members and end our ability to promote initiatives like the Majority Budget Act and the Millionaires Tax. If Prop. 32 passes, it will change the California and national political landscapes and devastate the progressive movement for years to come. We can't let that happen.

Proposition 32 is a defensive battle, but Proposition 30 offers a way forward and much-needed funding for education. So far the governor has been able to keep business interests

neutralized. But that could change if outside players, such as the Koch brothers or Karl Rove, decide Prop. 30 represents a national trend toward progressive tax reform.

We are working with the Prop. 30 campaign and our labor-community alliance, Reclaim California's Future, to turn out voters across the state in support of the initiative. CFT members can be proud of the role our union has played in forging an impressive labor-community alliance and laying the foundation for long-term change in California.

In the final weeks of the campaign, we can expect massive amounts of money to be spent against us. While labor has built a campaign war chest, we cannot compete against the billionaires who have unlimited money.

Chicago proves that ordinary folks who are organized and committed can overcome the influence of the wealthy and powerful. Now is the time for us to be active. Let's push hard to the very end and enjoy election victories that will benefit our members, our students and help reclaim California's future!

Josh Pechthalt



ON THE COVER

Julio Huerta, a computer technician at Pasadena City College, is working on campus to get out the word about the importance of voting Yes on Prop. 30 and No on Prop. 32.

PHOTO BY BOB RIHA, JR

The California Federation of Teachers is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO. The CFT represents faculty and classified workers in public and private schools and colleges, from early childhood through higher education. The CFT is committed to raising the standards of the profession and to securing the conditions essential to provide the best service to California's students.

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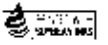


PHOTO ABOVE: PRISCILLA LUVIANO

All-Union News

YES on Prop. 30

Tax the wealthy to raise money for schools and colleges

In the last four years, our schools and colleges have been hit with \$20 billion in cuts, have lost 30,000 faculty members, and now have class sizes that are among the largest in the country.

Prop. 30 is the only measure on the November ballot that prevents another \$6 billion in “trigger cuts” to schools and colleges scheduled to kick in January 1. Prop. 30 invests billions in new funding in our schools by taxing those who can most afford it, asking only people who make more than \$250,000 per year to pay more income taxes.

Prop. 30 is a progressive tax measure, with 90 percent of the revenues coming from wealthy taxpayers, and the other 10 percent from the small increase in the sales tax. The ¼-cent sales tax is half the size of the governor’s former proposal, and will represent just one in nine dollars raised by the new measure to provide desperately needed revenues to rebuild our schools and services.

In March, CFT and its coalition allies sponsoring the Millionaires Tax reached agreement with Gov. Jerry Brown and top legislative leaders to set aside their dueling ballot initiatives and together support one state revenue measure that became Proposition 30.

Prop. 30 will raise \$9 billion in the first year, and \$6 billion a year for six



Members of the Poway Federation of Teachers in San Diego County say Yes on 30, No on 32!



Tax Millionaires and Stop Their Power Grab

years after that, for public education and other services. It will also provide constitutional approval for the governor’s realignment of funding for local public safety services while protecting Proposition 98 school funding.

Money raised by Prop 30. will be

put in a dedicated account that the Legislature cannot touch, subject to an independent yearly audit to ensure it is being spent only for schools and community colleges. The audit will

**Get union endorsements fast!
Access the Voter eGuide on your phone or computer**

YOU CAN NOW GET the union’s endorsements online using your mobile phone, tablet, or computer. In your personalized **Voter eGuide**, you will find positions on candidates and ballot measures based on where you live and are registered to vote.

To get the union endorsements, go to cft.yourvoterguide.com and type in your home address. This will load a web page tailored to your local ballot, containing candidates from U.S. president to school and college board members, as well as local and state ballot measures. You will also see a map showing your polling location. The online endorsements are environmentally friendly and helpful for

be open to the public so voters and parents know the funds are being spent properly.

Prop. 30 also establishes a guarantee for public safety funding in our state constitution, so the money can’t be touched without voter approval. It will keep cops on the street and save the state billions in prison costs over the long term.

Key to the success of Prop. 30 is that the measure gets most of the money from the people who have it and can easily afford to pay their fair share. The top 1 percent of income earners has doubled its share of California’s income, but those super wealthy individuals pay lower taxes than they did 20 years ago. If passed, Proposition 30 will be the single largest progressive tax ever passed in California history.

Vote YES on Prop. 30 to stop the cuts and start investing in our children again.



members who work and live in different districts or need information in overlapping districts. The positions on the **Voter eGuide** represent the endorsements of your local union and the CFT.

Why vote YES on Prop. 30

Save education and public safety Prop. 30 is the only measure that can save our schools and community colleges from \$6 billion in devastating “trigger cuts” this year. Prop. 30 raises \$6-9 billion annually with the money guaranteed for public safety and education.

Wealthiest pay the most Prop. 30 taxes those who can most afford it. Only the highest earners — couples making more than \$500,000 — will pay more income tax, and only for seven years. Ninety percent of Prop. 30 revenue will come from the wealthiest Californians, although all Californians will pay a modest quarter-cent increase in sales tax.

New revenue is protected Prop. 30 places new money for schools and colleges into a special fund the Legislature can’t touch. Prop. 30 will restore funding for essential student services and for hiring teachers and staff.

>>Learn more at www.cft2012.org



Ballot Measures

30 YES **Saves our schools and colleges**
Protects our schools and community colleges from devastating “trigger cuts” this year and promises new funding in future years from an increased temporary tax on wealthy Californians earning more than \$250,000 annually and a ¼-cent sales tax increase.

31 NO **Locks in underfunding of public education**
Locks in underfunding of public education and vital services, and gives the governor new power to cut spending without legislative approval during fiscal emergencies.

32 NO **Silences union members in political process**
Targets unions by prohibiting payroll deduction for political purposes, and despite its claims of “campaign reform,” gives billionaires and corporations even more political power.

33 NO **Raises insurance rates for low-income drivers**
Allows car insurance companies to raise rates on good drivers, even if their gap in coverage was because they didn’t own a car.

34 YES **Ends death penalty**
Ends the death penalty in California, replacing it with life without parole.

35 YES **Increases penalties for human trafficking**
Expands the definition of human trafficking and increases penalties.

36 YES **Reforms “three strikes” law**
Mandates a life sentence only if the third felony offense is “serious or violent,” and reviews current life sentences.

37 YES **Calls for labeling genetically engineered foods**
Requires that some genetically engineered foods be identified.

38 NO POSITION **Alternative K-12 school funding proposal**
Raises income taxes on nearly all Californians for 11 years, and distributes revenue to K-12 schools, preschools and state debt repayment. Passage could nullify more progressive revenue measure Prop. 30.

39 YES **Closes \$1 billion tax loophole**
Ends the unfair tax advantage enjoyed by out-of-state corporations, closing a \$1 billion tax loophole, funds that can be used to develop alternative energy sources.

40 YES **Upholds fair Senate boundaries**
Keeps in place the state Senate boundaries certified by the Citizens Redistricting Commission.

NO on Prop. 32

Don’t let billionaires take away our voice

California voters appear poised to reject a November ballot measure that would ban political contributions by payroll deduction, according to a new USC Dornsife/*Los Angeles Times* poll. Forty-four percent of those surveyed said they opposed Proposition 32, which would eliminate the main fundraising tool of unions. Just 36 percent said they supported the measure.

Prop. 32 is not campaign finance reform, as its backers claim. Although it appears to rein in campaign contributions by both unions and corporations, the deceptive measure specifically limits the voice of union members while giving special exemptions to Wall Street hedge funds, real estate investors, insurance companies and other well-heeled special interests.

All of the primary funders of the measure would benefit personally from the exemptions in Proposition 32. The leading financial backers are associated with the ultraconservative Lincoln Club of Orange County, a driving force behind the *Citizens United* Supreme Court decision that led to the recent explosion of Super PACs onto the national political scene.

In recent weeks, the American Future Fund, a group known for spending millions of dollars on mis-



Health Sciences and Athletics instructor Allison Merzon talks to students at Cuesta College in San Luis Obispo. Merzon, leader of the faculty union, enlisted faculty and staff for tabling.

leading TV ads, and linked to billionaire oil tycoons Charles and David Koch, has contributed \$4 million to the campaign. Shadowy out-of-state front groups like the AFF don’t swoop into California unless they have a specific agenda, in this case to reverse the public perception of Prop. 32.

Corporations already outspend unions 15-to-1 in politics. Prop. 32 would effectively clear the playing field of any opposition to big corporations’ agenda and open the way for future measures to strip away fair pay, secure retirement, and the right to

belong to a union.

The League of Women Voters, Common Cause, and other non-partisan groups are urging voters to reject Prop. 32. Dozens of newspapers in California have strongly opposed Prop. 32.

Proposition 32 does nothing to limit special interest influence on politics while severely curtailing working people’s ability to stand up to powerful corporate interests. The result would be a devastating tilt in power to banks, CEOs and billionaires that would further undermine California’s middle class.



Elementary teachers Aaron Hall and Sunny Dawn get out the vote in San Francisco.

Why vote NO on Prop. 32

Deceptive measure financed by corporations Proponents of Prop. 32 claim they want “campaign finance reform,” but the measure is really a deception. Prop. 32 limits the amount of money corporations and unions can collect from employees for political action, but corporations don’t rely upon money from their employees for political expenditures.

Takes your voice out of politics Prop. 32 contains special exemptions for companies engaged in hedge funds, real estate, and insurance, so the real target is unions. Prop. 32 aims to take away the ability of working people to have a say in politics. It will give corporations and superPACS even more power to buy elections at a time when corporations already outspend unions 15-1 on politics.

Really about eliminating workers’ rights Anti-union backers of Prop. 32 are trying to fool voters into passing this measure now so they can return later with measures that strip away the vital rights of working people such as fair pay, secure retirement, and even the right to belong to a union.

Retired teacher David McSpadden leaflets parents in Daly City.



Recommends

Compare the candidates on education



Mitt Romney

Barack Obama

Workplace Rights

Supported the attacks in Ohio and Wisconsin on the rights of union members. As governor, he tried to eliminate collective bargaining rights for thousands of state employees. He has pledged to use the U.S. Department of Education to assail unions formed by educators and school staff.

Opposed the anti-union attacks in Ohio and Wisconsin.



Taxes

His tax plan would increase taxes on the middle class by \$1,300 per family but provide millionaires with an average tax break of more than \$200,000.

Wants to end tax breaks for companies who send jobs overseas, and supports making large corporations and the richest 2 percent of Americans pay their fair share of taxes.

Jobs and the Economy

Co-founded Bain Capital, an equity company that specialized in relocating American jobs to lower-wage countries. When a steel mill run by Bain went bankrupt, the firm laid off hundreds of workers without their promised health benefits and severance packages — yet awarded top executives \$10 million.

Signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, protecting critical public services and stabilizing communities. The ARRA saved or created approximately 300,000 education and public service jobs.

Class Size

Dismisses the importance of smaller class sizes, claiming the fight to maintain teacher-student ratios is a ploy by teachers trying to add more members to their unions.

Provided funding to keep educators on the job to help prevent class sizes from growing.

Higher Education Affordability

Supports reversing the federal direct student loan program and returning to bank-based student lending, with subsidies to banks paid for by U.S. taxpayers. Would loosen regulations on for-profit colleges and supports a budget plan that would take away Pell Grants from 1 million college students over the next 10 years.

In his fiscal 2013 budget plan, calls for maintaining the maximum Pell Grant award, increasing the Perkins loan program, providing support to help community colleges meet the needs of local and regional job markets, and boosting teacher education programs at institutions that serve minorities.

Early Childhood Education

As governor of Massachusetts, cut funding for early childhood education and opposed universal pre-K.

Expanded funding for early learning programs to serve an additional 61,000 children and families.

Affordable Care Act

Vowed to "repeal and replace" the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, thereby leaving 30 million Americans uninsured and allowing insurance companies to deny healthcare coverage due to pre-existing conditions.

Signed the landmark Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act to reduce the number of uninsured Americans by 30 million, guarantee insurance coverage for people with pre-existing conditions, and allow parents to keep their children on their insurance plans until age 26.

"I believe that this country succeeds when everyone gets a fair shot."

— President Obama in his weekly address, June 9, 2012

Progressive candidates the CFT endorses

TO GOVERN THE UNITED STATES

President Barack Obama*	15 Pete Stark*	35 Joe Baca*
U.S. Senate Diane Feinstein*	16 Jim Costa*	36 Paul Ruiz
U.S. House	17 Mike Honda*	37 Karen Bass*
(By district number)	18 Anna Eshoo*	38 Linda Sanchez*
1 Jim Reed	19 Zoe Lofgren*	39 Jay Chen
2 Jared Huffman	20 Sam Farr*	40 Lucille Roybal-Allard*
3 John Garamendi*	21 John Hernandez	41 Mark Takano
4 Jack Uppal	22 Otto Lee	42 No endorsement
5 Mike Thompson*	23 No endorsement	43 Maxine Waters*
6 Doris Matsui*	24 Lois Capps*	44 Janice Hahn*
7 Ami Bera	25 Lee Rogers	45 Sukhee Kang
8 No endorsement	26 Julia Brownley	46 Loretta Sanchez*
9 Jerry McNerney*	27 Judy Chu*	47 Alan Lowenthal
10 Jose Hernandez	28 Adam Schiff*	48 No endorsement
11 George Miller	29 Tony Cardenas	49 Jerry Tetelman
12 Nancy Pelosi*	30 Howard Berman*	50 No endorsement
13 Barbara Lee*	31 No endorsement	51 Juan Vargas
14 Jackie Speier*	32 Grace Napolitano*	52 Scott Peters
	33 Henry Waxman*	53 Susan Davis*
	34 Xavier Becerra*	

TO GOVERN CALIFORNIA

California Senate		
(By district number)		
1 No endorsement	15 Jim Beall	29 Greg Diamond
3 Lois Wolk*	17 Bill Monning	31 Richard Roth
5 Cathleen Galgiani	19 Hannah-Beth Jackson	33 Ricardo Lara
7 Mark DeSaulnier*	21 Star Moffatt	35 No endorsement
9 Loni Hancock*	23 Melissa Ruth O'Donnell	37 Steve Young
11 Mark Leno*	25 Carol Liu*	39 Marty Block
13 Jerry Hill	27 Fran Pavley*	
California Assembly		
(By district number)		
1 No endorsement	28 Paul Fong*	55 No endorsement
2 Wes Chesbro*	29 Mark Stone	56 Manuel Perez*
3 Charles Rouse	30 Luis Alejo*	57 No endorsement
4 Mariko Yamada*	31 Henry Perea*	58 Cristina Garcia
5 No endorsement	32 Rudy Salas	59 Reggie Jones-Sawyer
6 No endorsement	33 John Coffey	60 Jose Luis Perez
7 Roger Dickinson*	34 Mari Goodman	61 Jose Medina
8 Ken Cooley	35 No endorsement	62 Steven Bradford*
9 Richard Pan*	36 Steve Fox	63 Anthony Rendon
10 Mike Allen*	37 Das Williams*	64 Isadore Hall, III*
11 Jim Frazier	38 Edward Headington	65 Sharon Quirk-Silva
12 No endorsement	39 Richard Alarcon	66 Al Muratsuchi
13 No endorsement	40 Russ Warner	67 No endorsement
14 Susan Bonilla*	41 Chris Holden	68 No endorsement
15 Nancy Skinner*	42 Mark Orozco	69 No action taken
16 Joan Buchanan*	43 Mike Gatto*	70 Bonnie Lowenthal*
17 Tom Ammiano*	44 No endorsement	71 Patrick Hurley
18 Abel Guillen	45 Bob Blumenfield*	72 No endorsement
19 Phil Ting	46 Adrin Nazarian	73 No endorsement
20 Bill Quirk	47 Joe Baca, Jr.	74 No endorsement
21 Adam Gray	48 Roger Hernandez*	75 Matthew Herold
22 Kevin Mullin	49 Edwin Chau	76 No endorsement
23 No endorsement	50 Betsy Butler*	77 No endorsement
24 Richard Gordon	51 Jimmy Gomez	78 Toni Atkins*
25 Bob Wiecekowski*	52 Norma Torres*	79 Shirley Weber
26 No endorsement	53 John A. Perez*	80 Ben Hueso*
27 Nora Campos*	54 Holly Mitchell*	

*Incumbents

>> When you compare the candidates on the issues, the choice is clear. For more information, visit www.aft.org/election2012.



FIRST PERSON | David Rapkin

Reflection from the frontlines of the Chicago Teachers Union strike

Unions need strong vision and understanding of all tools available



PHOTOS COURTESY CTU

Chicago teachers and paraprofessionals walked off the job for the first time in 25 years over issues that included pay raises, classroom conditions, job security and teacher evaluation.

I THOUGHT I KNEW what I was going to see and do in Chicago. I ended up being amazed and awed, and sometimes moved to tears, by the tremendous strides educators just like us were taking all around me.

As we all know, there is a momentous internal tussle going on in teacher unions everywhere. Facing withering attacks, do we A) try to negotiate and endorse our way out of the crisis, or B) resist, using the methods bequeathed to us by generations of working class fighters combined with a new recognition of broad community-based unionism?

CTU leaders and most leading activists in Chicago stand firmly in the “resist” camp. Of course we negotiate and endorse potential allies, but if this approach remains dominant, we are likely to be consigned to oblivion in short order.

First, the Chicago strike teaches us that we can fight back, and that “fightback” can win. The strike option, along with the organizing to

undergird it, has been put back on the table by the CTU.

Second, on organizing to undergird the strike: After the current CTU leadership was elected two-and-a-half years ago, they set about prioritizing internal and external organizing to a degree that made this strike viable. They built a degree of unanimity that is hard to imagine, yet is clearly achievable.

At rallies and on the picket line, I talked to lots of teachers, paraprofes-

leaders and parents, especially in the black and Latino communities, participated, along with CTU, in fighting school closures and rallying behind struggles for educational justice such that many of them were strike participants, not just “supporters.” And that translated into broad popular support for the teachers, who were perceived to be fighting for educational justice for children and communities.

Third, was CTU “ready” for this confrontation? Not completely. A progressive, organizing-minded activist core is just developing in many unions, and CTU is no exception. Union leaders had to scramble to continue negotiating while strategizing and messaging during the height of the strike. AFT sent some of its most seasoned organizers to Chicago.

But CTU’s measure of unreadiness teaches two critical lessons: If we wait to fight until we’re totally “ready,” we will never stand up for ourselves; and that nothing organizes people like struggle itself. Negotiating and “organizing sites” has a limited effect, unless coupled with a clear vision and well-understood steps toward something more. Like a strike for educational justice. — By David Rapkin



Weingarten and Lewis: Lessons learned from the strike

IN AN ARTICLE published in the *Wall Street Journal*, CTU President Karen Lewis and AFT President Randi Weingarten said educators in Chicago “changed the conversation, moving past the random acts of ‘reform’ that have failed and toward actual systemic school improvement.” The tentative agreement focuses on improving quality, summed up in these four points.

Use time wisely. The proposed contract lengthens the school day and year, [but] additional seat time doesn’t constitute a good education. A rich curriculum, opportunities for teachers to plan and confer with colleagues, and time to engage students — these should be priorities.

Get evaluation right and don’t fixate on testing. If implemented correctly, evaluations can promote teachers’ skills and students’ intellectual abilities, and not just their test-taking skills.

Fix, don’t close, struggling schools. Closing schools creates turmoil but doesn’t improve achievement. In schools that provide wraparound services — medical and mental health services, mentoring, enrichment programs and social services — kids are better able to learn. Chicago, with an 87 percent child poverty rate, should make these cost-effective approaches broadly available.

Morale matters. Teachers who work in difficult environments deserve support and respect, not denigration for not single-handedly overcoming society’s shortcomings. These indignities and lack of trust risk making a great profession an impossible one.



sionals, and human and health service workers, even plenty of conservative and not particularly “union” teachers who nonetheless were in full support of the strike. As far as I know, there was not one report of scabbing or destructive internal dissent. Almost everyone was actively on strike.

This level of organization extended far beyond the schools. Community



DAVID RAPKIN teaches English at Youth Opportunities Unlimited Alternative High School in Los Angeles and is a member of United Teachers Los Angeles. He traveled to Chicago as a representative of CFT and UTLA, spending four days on the picket lines and helping in the CTU offices.

TOP LEFT: AP PHOTO/SITHKAY DITTHAVONG

Skyrocketing student debt clouds lives and futures

Documentary reveals human impact of trillion dollar student loan crisis

Watching *Default: The Student Loan Documentary*, movie viewers feel the emotion when a borrower chokes up talking about how he can't ask the woman he loves to marry him because he wouldn't want her to share the burden of his debt.

"The human consequences, the amount of debt that never goes away, that destroys people's credit, and makes it impossible sometimes to have a family," said one of the filmmakers, Aurora Meneghello. "That resonates with a lot with people — basic human rights are taken away from you."

Default is a 27-minute documentary that has been shown on PBS, Link TV and at screenings around the country. The majority of the stories come from students-turned-activists who talk about how their debt ballooned.



Many went into "forebearance," meaning they were charged for suspending payment on their loans. Student loans differ from other loans — they aren't forgiven when one declares bankruptcy, borrowers have no legal recourse, and there is no cap on fees.

"We're constantly fed this story of 'Do what you love and the money will follow,'" Meneghello says. "But this is really an economic issue. People's sense of self-esteem just crumbles sometimes and there's this idea that 'I failed myself and I failed in my life.'"

Student loan debt is now more than a trillion dollars and has surpassed credit card debt. To address this climb-

On the Web

> Learn more and watch the 27-minute film *Default: the Student Loan Documentary* made by filmmakers Aurora Meneghello and Serge Bakalian at defaultmovie.com.



ing debt, delegates to this summer's AFT Convention in Detroit, passed resolutions to work with students on college affordability and to support reform of private student loans. "The student debt crisis is not just an issue of a few students borrowing too much," says AFT Higher Education Director Craig Smith about the AFT's commitment to the issue. "It is a systemic result of a lack of commitment to fund higher education."

Bob Samuels, a lecturer in Writing at UCLA, and leader of the CFT University Council, agrees. He just finished a book, *Why Public Higher Education Should Be Free*, and he's made a presentation at the White House on students' costs.

Default looks at how students often don't go into the fields that most



interest them. Samuels sees this with his students.

"It really does affect people's choices," he said. "The only way to pay off debts is to generate a lot of income quickly. That's why we have so few stu-



Occupy Wall Street demonstrators wear signs around their necks representing their student debt during a protest against the rising national student debt.

dents taking humanities classes and so many in business."

Austin Smith, a graduate student in creative writing at Stanford, wonders how he will ever pay back the \$30,000 he owes for undergraduate studies. At a rally in San Francisco marking the first anniversary of the Occupy movement, Smith said he was ashamed of his debt and feels paralyzed. Like many of the people interviewed in *Default*, he didn't know what he was getting into. "I was 18 years old," he said. "I literally

thought I was getting financial aid."

Smith agrees with Robert Applebaum, the founder of Forgive Student Loan Debt, who appears in *Default*. Applebaum wrote a widely circulated essay suggesting student loan debt be forgiven to stimulate the economy.

"We need that spark to get the economy back on track," Smith said. "This generation has a lot of ideas and energy, but we feel like we can't do anything because of this burden of debt."

— By Emily Wilson, CFT Reporter

Occupy one year later Can debt spark revolution?

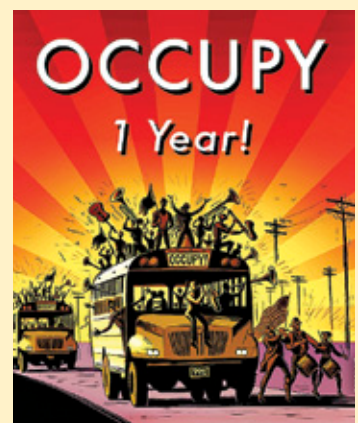
>> The following is excerpted from an article written by anthropologist David Graeber, author of *Debt: The First 5000 Years*, and published in *The Nation* on September 24.

Occupy Wall Street allowed us to see the system for what it is: an enormous engine of debt extraction. Three out of four Americans are in debt and one in seven is being pursued by debt collectors. Between 15 and 20 percent of the average household's income is now directly expropriated by the financial services industry in the form of interest payments,

fees and penalties.

The overwhelming majority of Occupiers are refugees of the American debt system, saying "I worked hard and played by the rules, and now I can't find a job to pay my student loans — while the financial criminals who trashed the economy got themselves bailed out."

If Occupy was to frame a demand today, it would be for as broad a cancellation of debt as possible. It is only by breaking the power of the engines of extraction that we can think on a scale and grandeur appropriate to the times.



COURTESY SF LABOR COUNCIL



New employees to face

A new law passed in the final hours of the legislative session makes sweeping changes to public employee pensions that impose most of the changes on workers not yet hired, creating a two-tier system in the workplace where two groups of workers doing the same work receive different retirement benefits.

These new public employees — faculty and classified employees among them — will work longer for a reduced retirement benefit. Some will make increased contributions

to their pensions. Assembly Bill 340 penalizes newly hired public employees because legal analysts agree that benefit and contribution levels cannot be easily changed for current and retired members. AB 340 passed without input or support from public employee unions.

CFT, along with the 1.5 million public employees and retirees represented by the Californians for Retirement Security coalition, was critical of the hastily passed measure. “Punishing hardworking public employees for the Wall Street-driven financial

crisis that led to pension fund shortfalls is not acceptable,” said CFT President Josh Pechthalt.

Even conservative anti-tax ideologues and critics of public employee pensions were not supportive of the new law, charging that it was just a stratagem of Gov. Brown to help win public support for passage of Prop. 30 in November.

The new law incorporates many of the proposals Gov. Brown had advanced 10 months earlier. (See table at right). CFT supported proposals such as stricter anti-spiking regulations, which mainly affect administrator pensions, and ending pension holidays, in which employers stop making contributions.

A proposal to increase contributions will have minimal affect on CalSTRS members because teachers already contribute 44 percent of their pension cost through an 8 percent salary deduction. Like previous law, the new law specifies that contribution rates for the coming second-tier members of CalSTRS must be approved by the Legislature.

Members of CalPERS, however, may pay increased contributions. The new law specifies that unions representing CalPERS members must negotiate the changes through collective bargaining, with the caveat that this bargaining must increase employee contributions to 50 percent of pension cost within five years.

The new pension law omitted two of the governor’s initial 12 proposals; both of them were opposed by CFT. One would have created a new “hybrid” plan by combining the present defined benefit plan with a defined contribution plan much like a 401k or 403b plan. Another would have added new seats to the CalPERS board for appointees with financial expertise. CFT has worked over the

past decade to seat educators on the boards of their retirement systems.

Lawmakers did not tackle massive shortfalls in the portfolios of CalSTRS and CalPERS. Both systems say they cannot invest their way out of the unfunded liability predicament.

The CalSTRS portfolio suffered a shortfall of \$64.5 billion during the financial meltdown. In a preliminary estimate, CalSTRS predicted the new law would save its system \$12 billion over 30 years, representing only a fraction of the shortfall.

The much larger CalPERS, which serves classified employees in 1500 school and college districts, state employees and nearly 1600 local governments, reported an unfunded liability of \$106.7 billion in 2010. It predicts the shortfall will still be \$85 or \$90 billion for 2011. CalPERS estimated the new law would save \$42 to \$55 billion over the next 30 years.

Legislators acknowledged that the new law did not fully address the deficit. As a result, the Senate passed a resolution that requires CalSTRS to develop three options within the next six months to guide legislation. CalSTRS CEO Jack Ehnes welcomed this resolution and said he hoped the Legislature would pass legislation to support long-term funding by the 2013-14 session.

“The real solution is to ensure decent pensions for all workers,” said President Pechthalt, “public and private.”

— By Malcolm Terence, CFT Reporter

Brown signs bill to improve reporting for adjuncts

THE GOVERNOR SIGNED CFT-SPONSORED SB 114. Authored by Sen. Leland Yee (D-San Francisco), this bill helps correct misreporting of part-time faculty work to ensure the right amount of retirement service credit.

SB 114 requires community college districts to submit collective bargaining agreements to CalSTRS every year beginning July 1, 2013. These contracts contain full-time equivalents for each class of affected employees and will allow CalSTRS, by referencing them, to better understand how to help employers report accurate full-time equivalencies.

The governor vetoed AB 1011, a bill carried by Assemblyman Mike Eng (D-Monterey Park), that calls for the retiree representative on the CalSTRS Board to be elected by retirees. At present, the governor appoints the retiree representative on the 11-member board.

In recent years, CFT has successfully sponsored legislation that converted three other seats on the CalSTRS Board — two representing K-12 teachers and one for community college faculty — from gubernatorial appointment to election by working educators. The remainder of the board consists of four statewide constitutional officers and three public representatives appointed by the governor. — MT

>>At press time, CalPERS had issued only a preliminary summary of the impact AB 340 will have on its members. Because of the large number of member groups within CalPERS, the impact is more complicated to determine than it is for CalSTRS members. Look for a summary in a coming issue.

reduced retirement benefits

Workers not yet hired will take biggest hit under law passed by legislators with no input from public employee unions



What the new law means to CalSTRS members

CHANGE	IMPACT ON CALSTRS MEMBERS	APPLIES TO
Age factor changes. Retirement age increases from 60 to 62 for 2% and from 63 to 65 for maximum of 2.4%. Early retirement at age 55 drops from 1.4% to 1.16%.	Significant for large number of members. Eliminates option to retire as early as age 50 with 30 years of service.	New members
Require three-year final compensation instead of single highest year for members with 25 years of service.	Moderate impact for many. Over 50% of recent retirees have qualified for 12-month calculation.	New members
Equal sharing of pension costs. Requires new members to pay at least 50% of the normal, ongoing cost of benefits.	Moderate. Current members pay 8% of pay in contributions, which is equal to 44% of pension cost. Other plan changes will probably keep the rate at 8% for new members as well.	New members
Prevents spiking. Calculates benefits based only on regular, recurring pay. Excludes allowances, bonuses and cash-in-lieu of benefits.	Significant for small number, mostly administrators.	New members
Prohibit buying "airtime" previously allowed for non-qualified service.	Moderate to small number. About 700 members have purchased this type of service every year. Interested members must submit paperwork to CalSTRS before December 31, 2012.	Current active and new members
Compensation cap would limit creditable earnings to \$132,120.	Significant for the recipients, mostly administrators, who earn that much.	New members
Prohibit retroactive benefit increases. Would ban pension improvements for prior service.	No immediate impact. Previously benefit enhancements applied to both past and future service.	Current active, retired, and new members
End pension holidays such as occurred during the boom years 1998 and 2000 when CalSTRS allowed reduced contributions from employers and the state.	Minimal. Contribution rates must be set by the Legislature. Since 2002, the contributions from employers and the state have been too little to keep CalSTRS fully funded.	Current active and new members
Limit employment after retirement. Requires a 180-day "sit-out" period for all members, regardless of age. Some exemptions apply.	Moderate impact to small numbers. "Sit-out" rule already applies to members under age 60. This year's limit is \$40,011. Only 1100 retirees exceeded limits in 2010-11.	Current active, retired, and new members
Felons forfeit pensions. Affects members convicted of a felony while carrying out official duties.	Minimal. Felony convictions are very rare. Applies only to benefits that would have accrued after the felony was committed.	Current active and new members
Ends replacement benefits program which CalSTRS currently pays for benefits above the federal limit under a separate program.	Significant impact for few. Future members will not receive any benefits in excess of federal limit, currently \$171,202. Only 317 members currently get benefits under this provision.	New members

Around CFT



MICHAEL CAMPBELL

California stands strong at AFT Convention

NEARLY 200 DELEGATES from AFT local unions in California traveled to Detroit for the biennial AFT Convention held in Detroit July 27-30. They joined the two CFT delegates — President Josh Pechthalt and Secretary Treasurer Jeff Freitas — and 2,300 delegates from throughout the nation.

Convention highlights included visits by U.S. Vice President Joe Biden, an address by scholar Diane Ravitch, debate on a resolution calling for

an end to the failed reliance on high-stakes testing in K-12 education.

Delegates elected CFT President Pechthalt an AFT vice president and Pechthalt now joins the 43-member executive board of the national union. Delegates re-elected Dennis Kelly an AFT vice president. Kelly is the president of United Educators of San Francisco, which represents 6,000 teachers and paraprofessionals in San Francisco schools.

CFT sweeps communications awards, *California Teacher* takes AFT's best of show

CFT WON 20 AWARDS in two annual competitions that recognize the work of union communications. Both contests honor reporting and messaging by union communicators, from crafting a fine editorial to shooting a series of photos that visually tell a compelling story, to creating effective designs that help deliver the message to members in the most effective way possible. Together, the awards of the AFT Communicators Network and the International Labor Communications Association are the Oscars and Emmys of union publishing.

Highlights are listed below:

> *California Teacher* won one of two top honors given to outstanding entries in the AFT competition.

> "Dear President Obama," written by teacher author Paul Karrer captured First Place Editorial in both competitions.

> "Defending the right to a union," about CFT's organizing travails at the Los Angeles Film School took home a top honor from the ILCA, The Saul Miller Award for Best Organizing.

> Top-notch design captured four awards, including two First Places.

> Campaign mailers and flyers that helped elect CFT member Sharon Hendricks to the community college seat on the CalSTRS Board took the top honor in Best Issues-Based Organizing Materials.

> In a special honor from the AFT Communications Association (a different organization than the AFT Communicators Network), CFT Communications Director Fred Glass was named this year's recipient of the Albert Shanker Distinguished Service Award.

The following is a complete list of winners.

AFT COMMUNICATORS NETWORK

CFT competes with AFT state federations and local unions with more than 10,000 members.

California Teacher AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Top honor awarded to two outstanding entries



FIRST Best Periodical Publication, Print

Edited by Jane Hundertmark, CFT Publications Director

FIRST Best Design or Layout (Publication) by Kajun Design

FIRST Best Editorial or Column

"Going Viral: Dear President Obama" by Paul Karrer, North Monterey County Federation of Teachers

SECOND Best Profile "Theresa Sage perceives her union as path to professionalism" by Mindy Pines, CFT Reporter

SECOND Best Feature Story "Parent trigger misfires" by David Bacon, CFT Reporter

SECOND Best Original Photo or Art "Big squeeze in the classroom" photograph by Bob Riha, Jr.

SECOND Best Design or Layout (Single piece)

"How to solve California's budget puzzle" by Kajun Design

Other communications

FIRST Best Issues-Based Organizing Materials "Sharon Hendricks for CalSTRS Board" by the Campaign Team

SECOND Best Non-Periodical Publication

CFT Pocket Calendar by Jane Hundertmark and Kajun Design

INTERNATIONAL LABOR COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION

CFT competes with national and international labor unions in all categories except General Excellence.

California Teacher

SAUL MILLER AWARD – FIRST Best Organizing Story "Defending the right to a union" by David Bacon, CFT Reporter



FIRST Best Editorial or Column "Going viral: Dear President Obama"

FIRST Best Cover or Front Page Graphic design by Kajun Design and photograph by Bob Riha, Jr.

SECOND General Excellence

SECOND Best Feature "Parent trigger misfires"

SECOND Best Design

SECOND Best Photo Essay "Occupy Oakland, Occupy Education" photographs by Jane Hundertmark

THIRD Best Photograph

"Big squeeze in the classroom"

Other communications

SECOND General Excellence, Non-periodicals CFT Pocket Calendar

New state law designates May as Labor History Month

THE CFT LABOR in the Schools Committee helped pass AB 1900 in 2001, a bill requiring California to designate the first week in April as "Labor History Week." But over time, committee members learned that the designated week often coincided with spring break, or with the testing required by the No Child Left Behind Act in K-12 districts, forcing teachers to push aside meaningful social studies curricula.

To address this problem, the Speaker's Commission on Labor Education worked with Assemblyman Sandré Swanson, D-Oakland, to change the designation to Labor History Month, and move it to May when there are fewer conflicts with breaks or testing schedules. Swanson carried the successful bill, AB 2269, and Gov. Brown signed it. California now joins New York as a state celebrating Labor History Month in the month of May.



Early educators in Los Angeles commit to the campaign.

Ulstad joins CFT staff as political organizer

JESSICA ULSTAD JOINS CFT staff as the State Affiliate Political Organizer, a position she previously held at AFT-Wisconsin where she mobilized members to fight Gov. Scott Walker's attack on collective bargaining.

Ulstad also worked to elect progressive candidates to federal, state, and local government, and helped local unions increase their capacity for political action. Her first job with AFT-Wisconsin was organizing educators in the University of Wisconsin system.



Jessica Ulstad

Prior to her work with the Wisconsin federation, Ulstad was a rank-and-file member as a graduate teaching assistant in English composition and co-president of the Milwaukee Graduate Assistant Association, AFT Local 2169.

CFT President wins "Courage for Justice" award

THE CALIFORNIA LABOR

Federation bestowed the "Courage for Justice" award on President Josh Pechthalt in recognition of CFT's firm stand in support of the Millionaires Tax earlier this year.

In presenting the award on July 24, CLF Executive Secretary Treasurer Art Pulaski praised Pechthalt's "ability to say 'No' when there was enormous pressure coming from all directions to drop the Millionaires Tax."

As a result of the perseverance displayed by Pechthalt and the CFT, said Pulaski, the compromise measure, now Proposition 30 on the November ballot, is much stronger and more progressive than it would have been otherwise. Prop. 30 raises taxes on the richest Californians to support public education and public safety.

In his acceptance remarks to delegates at the biennial convention, Pechthalt credited CFT members and the union's community partners



Labor Fed leader Art Pulaski presents Josh Pechthalt the "Courage for Justice" award.

for their courageous advocacy and solid support for the tax measure, and expressed the hope that in passing Prop. 30, California will lead the movement for fair and progressive taxation across the nation.

Mark your Calendar

Last day to register to vote online or to return your voter registration form to the Secretary of State is **October 22**. Register online at sos.ca.gov.

Council of Classified Employees Conference, the annual CFT event that examines issues of importance to classified and paraprofessional members, will be held **October 26-28** at the Hilton San Jose. Learn more at cft.org/classified.

Last day to request a vote-by-mail ballot for the November 6 election is **October 30**. Go to sos.ca.gov.

NAEYC Annual Conference & Expo, hosted by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and being held **November 7-10** in Atlanta, explores best practices in the field of early childhood education. Learn more at naeyc.org.

VOTE in the General Election on November 6. The CFT endorses Barack Obama for U.S. president and, in California, urges Yes on Prop. 30 and No on Prop. 32.

Division Councils of classified employees, community college, and EC/K-12 meet **December 1** at the Hilton Oakland Airport.

Application deadline for high school seniors to apply for a **CFT Raoul Teilhet Scholarship** is **January 10**.

Committees of the CFT meet **January 19** in Southern California.



Raoul Teilhet SCHOLARSHIPS

Continuing college students awarded CFT scholarships

THIS SUMMER, THE CFT awarded 10 scholarships to continuing college students through its Raoul Teilhet Scholarship Program.

Applications are now available for the 2013 Raoul Teilhet Scholarship Program. Students enrolled in four-year courses of study are eligible for \$3000; those enrolled in two-year courses of study are eligible for \$1000. The deadline for high school seniors to apply for a CFT scholarship is January 10, and the deadline for continuing college students is July 1.

Award selection is based on academic achievement, special talents and skills, participation in extracurricular activities, community service, financial need, and a 500-word essay on a social issue of

the applicant's choice.

Learn more and download an application at cft.org or phone the CFT Costa Mesa office at (714) 754-6638 to have an application mailed to you.

Continuing college students who received \$3000 scholarships (unless otherwise noted) are listed below with the names of their parents or guardians who are CFT members.

Sabrina Bedell, daughter of Janna Bedell, Greater Santa Cruz Federation of Teachers

Sven Beer, son of Barbara Bonander, United Professors of Marin

Jennifer Biancalana, daughter of Paula Biancalana, Petaluma Federation of Teachers (\$1000)

Tara Funk, daughter of Wendy Funk, Petaluma Federation of Teachers

Dustin Goerlitz, son of Laura Goerlitz, Gilroy Federation of Teachers and Paraprofessionals

Keith Goerlitz, son of Laura Goerlitz, Gilroy Federation of Teachers and Paraprofessionals

Belen Herrera, daughter of Beatriz Herrera, Ventura County Federation of College Teachers

Conner Lachenbruch, son of Cathy Carr, Poway Federation of Teachers

Daniel Rykert, son of Matthias Rykert, United Teachers Los Angeles

Chad Thompson, son of Wendy Thompson, Greater Santa Cruz Federation of Teachers

AFL-CIO Scholarships

TWO DEPENDENTS OF CFT members were awarded scholarships from the AFL-CIO.

Leia Alex, daughter of Rebecca Alex, San Mateo Community College Federation of Teachers (\$1000)

Chase Morrin, son of Cynthia Morrin, San Diego & Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community Colleges (\$4000)



Get your CFT Pocket Calendar!

IF YOU DID NOT receive a CFT Pocket Calendar from your local union, it's not too late to order the union's award-winning 16-month academic year calendar.

>To obtain a calendar, please mail \$1 for shipping and handling to the CFT Bay Area Office, 1330 Broadway, Suite 1601, Oakland CA 94612.

CFT members at Bayview Elementary in Santa Cruz support Chicago strikers.



Pre-K and K-12

Legislature fails to pass meaningful teacher evaluation bill Opponents don't care about validity of test scores, only scapegoating teachers

HOW COULD A BILL that would have improved the teacher evaluation process die in the California Legislature? Assembly Bill 5, “A Best Practices Teacher Evaluation System,” fell victim to faulty assumptions and reasoning that defies logic. And our schools are poorer for it.

When supporters of AB 5 marshaled research from a broad spectrum of organizations and individuals that challenged the accuracy and value of evaluating teachers based on test scores, AB 5 opponents shamelessly suggested that even invalid test measures should still be used.

Opponents stated in testimony to a state Senate hearing on August 29 that they were opposed to a provision that the tests used to measure academic growth be “valid and reliable” for the curriculum, the pupil being taught, and for the purpose of teacher evaluation.

Why would anyone support the use of non-valid and non-reliable test results in teacher evaluation? Because the opposition is not about ensuring quality teaching and learning; it is about destroying collective bargaining in public schools. Assembly Bill 5 died in the Legislature.

■ AB 5 established a true “best practices” evaluation system, based on the rigorous California Standards for the Teaching Profession, and required school boards to hold public hearings about implementation of the new evaluation systems.

■ AB 5 required the details of evaluation to be collectively bargained in recognition that one size does not fit all.

■ AB 5 included language on using student test data; however, it did not

mandate specific methods for using that data, or weighing the data, leaving that to local collective bargaining.

■ Most importantly, AB 5 required frequent evaluations as well as extensive training for evaluators on how



to conduct evaluations validly, fairly and constructively. Using “multiple measures,” the evaluations would examine real student work done over a year, rather than in one week of testing.

Who else, beside teachers, recognizes using standardized test scores in evaluations is inappropriate? Just about every expert who has examined the practice.

The most common way student test scores are used in teacher evaluations is Value-Added Measures. VAM purports to associate a given student’s academic progress over time directly to a teacher’s effectiveness by comparing the student’s test scores from year to year. Here’s what the experts say.

National Research Council of the Academy of Sciences, the highest scientific body in the nation:

“Too little research has been done on these methods’ validity to base high-

stakes decisions about teachers on them.”

Educational Testing Service, the state’s testing vendor: VAM cannot sort out students’ backgrounds and prior learning well enough to accurately attribute individual student learning gains to the teacher.

RAND Corporation, a nonpartisan organization: VAM and other methods of using student test data in teacher evaluations are not ready for prime time.

In short, there is no research base that indicates student test scores can be used in a fair and valid manner to evaluate teachers, or that such use would result in better teaching. Not

one cutting edge education system — including those in Singapore and Finland — uses student test data in teacher evaluations.

It’s clear that the opposition is not interested in a teacher evaluation system that will improve teaching practice or improve student learning. Their stated goal is to create a system to identify “bad teachers.”

The failure of AB 5 to make it out of the California Legislature is a setback for the education community and all those who believe education reform requires a truly collaborative effort. AB 5 provided a much-needed step forward in improving the teacher evaluation process by incorporating best practices, community member engagement, and local negotiations.

Within the oppositional din could be heard the unmistakable effort to scapegoat teachers and education unions for the crisis in public education. The attack on AB 5 is part of an ongoing effort to shift discussion away from the real issue confronting public education — namely the massive underfunding of public schools.

— By Gary Ravani

The way forward: *Greatness by Design*

OVER THE PAST YEAR CFT was a proud participant in developing the recommendations of Superintendent Tom Torlakson’s Educational Excellence Task Force and we applaud the results of this lengthy process.

Co-chairs Linda Darling-Hammond and Christopher J. Steinhauser oversaw the creation of an extraordinarily useful document for improving public education in California, a set of recommendations collaboratively developed with stakeholder input, and reflecting the best research on what constitutes quality evaluation methodology.

Greatness By Design promises a roadmap for school reform based on best practices and classroom research, and insists on an integrated approach to teacher support, including teacher training, induction, evaluation and ongoing professional development.

The report makes clear that the objective of evaluation is to improve instructional practices and student learning, not to weed out so-called “bad teachers.” This welcome approach to evaluation insists on standards-based, multiple measurements of teacher performance, and incorporates valid and reliable performance

assessments into licensure and accreditation for both teachers and administrators.

The report also acknowledges that after years of cuts to school funding, adequate resources must be found to implement the recommendations. — GR



Gary Ravani taught middle school for 35 years in Petaluma and is president of the CFT Early Childhood/K-12 Council.

Classified



Classified employees in Pasadena welcome the new union.

Pasadena support staff gain power, respect with AFT Change from independent union carries many advantages of size and service

STRENGTH IN NUMBERS, access to more resources, and professional assistance are just a few of the reasons more than 240 professional classified staff members at Pasadena City College voted AFT their union this spring.

Formerly an independent union not affiliated with a state or national organization, the Instructional Support Services Union represented clericals, paraprofessionals, and computer technicians. But according to local union President Julio Huerta, because of the changing economic and political climate the union “proactively realized it needed the the added power of a state and national union.”

“CFT was the best fit,” says Huerta, “because of its state and national affiliations.” Local autonomy was a key concern. “The Federation was very open to how we operate already.”

Treasurer Gary Potts, a computer technician, adds, “When we were independent, we did it all ourselves. But with CFT, we have access to professional services including a field representative and training.”

Over the summer, Huerta and Potts attended CFT Union Summer School, the CFT’s first-ever week of inten-

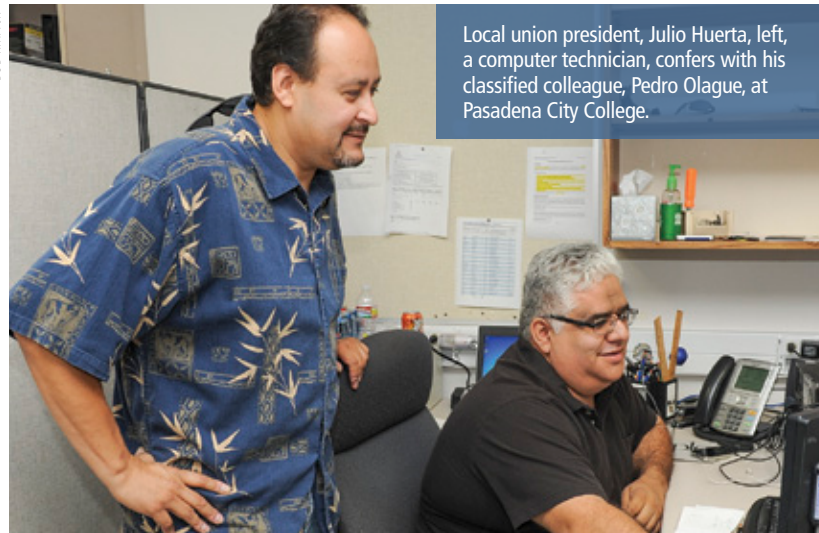
sive training for local union leaders. Learning opportunities included how to grow union membership, involve members in union activities, increase the union’s political power, and establish strong union representation.

Huerta, also a computer technician, called the training “eye opening.” He attended the negotiations course and “learned techniques of bargaining a better contract. There was a lot of stuff we weren’t doing.”

union’s annual budget, calculating and implementing dues, and complying with labor reporting laws.”

The local’s immediate goal, says Huerta is to “sign up as many members as possible,” as well as implement the new dues and organization structures.” He says the local’s nine campus site representatives are “diligently campaigning” to increase membership and contacting workers directly. “We want to promote the

BOB RIHA, JR.



Local union president, Julio Huerta, left, a computer technician, confers with his classified colleague, Pedro Olague, at Pasadena City College.

“We want to promote the union more, be in the forefront when it comes to college committees...we want input in hiring decisions, the campus calendar, budget and curriculum coordination.” — Julio Huerta, computer technician

Some of the important points Huerta left with were, “you have to do your homework...educate yourself so you can educate the district. You have to be patient. You have to look at the ‘financials’ and use the information to get what your members want. You need to have the right team.” He adds, “You won’t get everything you want, though you have to try.”

Potts attended the week-long Treasurer Training course in which he “learned to be better organized about managing books, preparing the

union more, be in the forefront when it comes to college committees...we want input in hiring decisions, the campus calendar, budget and curriculum coordination...anything that affects classified.”

From there, Huerta says, “We will move on to bargain a new two-year contract. We need to protect benefits and jobs, and keep away from furloughs, layoffs, and pay cuts.”

Newly chartered AFT Local 6525 already feels the benefits of AFT affiliation, according to Huerta. “Col-

BOB RIHA, JR.



Gary Potts, the new union’s treasurer and computer technician, talks with a student.

lege administration listens when the union has an issue or problem, whether it be about an employee or disciplinary matter,” he says. “They used to take note before, but it’s different now. They take note more now that we’re AFT.”

— By Mindy Pines, CFT Reporter

VELMA BUTLER
COUNCIL PRESIDENT

California needs Prop. 30

We need Proposition 30 to boost funding for public schools and community colleges and prevent deeper cuts to programs already in crisis. This ballot measure will raise \$6 billion annually.

Prop. 30 will increase income tax rates on the highest wage-earners for seven years and raise the sales tax by a quarter cent for four years. It will boost General Fund revenue, increasing minimal funding guarantees for schools and community colleges under Proposition 98.

We believe the tax increase is fair and that voters must support it because those who can afford the increase will pay the most, and the small sales tax increase we all pay is minimal. It is time for us to put education and social services first and rebuild our Golden State. Let’s arm ourselves with information and get out the vote for November 6. Yes on Proposition 30!



TOP: BOB RIHA, JR.

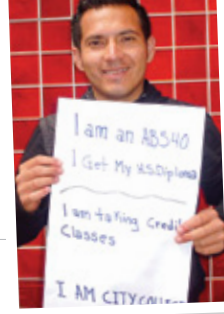
Two new laws bring improvements for classified

At press time, the governor signed bills that will improve the working conditions for classified employees. Following are the CFT-supported bills with the greatest impact.

AB 1908 will extend the layoff notice for classified employees from the current 45 days to 60 days. (*Alejo, D-Watsonville*)

AB 2307 requires that a classified employee placed on a reemployment list and subsequently reemployed in a new position will retain the right to be returned to the reemployment list for the remainder of the 39-month period, in the event he or she fails to complete the probationary period in the new position. (*Butler, D-El Segundo*)

Community College



Community stands with beloved City College of San Francisco Report faults school for having too little money and doing too much for students

IN EARLY JULY, more than 300 people packed a San Francisco meeting hall to express their outrage over a letter from the Accrediting Commission for Community & Junior Colleges saying City College of San Francisco must prove its fiscal stability by March 15 to remain accredited.

The college received the commission's most severe sanction, "show cause." Without accreditation, which allows schools to award diplomas and receive federal aid, the college could close. The report seems to fault City College for doing too much for students during bad economic times.

The school's importance to San Francisco makes the threat of closure particularly shocking, says Carl Friedlander, president of the CFT Com-

munity College Council. With 90,000 students on nine campuses, it is the city's largest provider of ESL classes, and workforce training programs.

Friedlander questioned the commission's focus on finances rather than programs. "I think they're too intrusive in these fiscal areas," he said.

CCSF Board Trustee Chris Jackson says that the report ignores lost state funding. "Over the last three years, we've lost \$53 million, and there's no acknowledgement of that," he said.

Both the San Francisco Community College Federation of Teachers, Local 2121, and SEIU Local 1021,

schools need," she said. Williams, who came to CCSF from the foster care system, is an Urban Studies major who plans to transfer to a four-year university. "The open access for people who have struggled," she says, "is so critical for working class people."

Compounding the crisis, the Fis-



To show the community how City College impacts San Franciscans, Local 2121 started a tumblr site, I Am City College (iamcitycollege.tumblr.com). The site features photos of students and faculty holding signs saying what the college means to them.

CARL FRIEDLANDER
COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Shoddy arguments used to slight faculty

Attacks on collective bargaining in public education are nothing new, but we are now seeing, for the first time I can remember, complaints in the media about the "excessive" authority granted to Academic Senates in the 25-year-old regulations developed by the Board of Governors after AB 1725 became law.

These complaints were explicit in a widely ignored report called "The Road Ahead," from a group called California Competes. Robert Shireman, the group's director, recently reiterated "the problem with Academic Senates" in a San Francisco Chronicle op-ed titled "Broken System Dooms CCSF."

In contrast with Shireman's impressive work on reforming student lending, simplifying financial aid, and critiquing for-profits, his analysis of the California community colleges is way off base. However, since his recent arrival in the Golden State, he has spoken with lots of business types but no elected faculty leaders, so the shoddiness of his argument is not a bit surprising.

"This commission gets into things that other commissions around the country don't involve themselves in." He says the commission has minimal oversight and isn't subject to many of the transparency laws governing public agencies.

Far more California colleges have gotten warnings and been placed on probation than in the five other accred-

the staff union, have been working to pass a temporary \$79 parcel tax to raise desperately needed revenue for the college.

"Right now, it's about finances and the parcel tax," said Alisa Messer, president of Local 2121, who worked with SEIU, students, elected officials and community members to organize the July meeting. "We're working to

cal Crisis & Management Assistance Team released a report in mid-September detailing how the college should balance its budget. The report recommends anything above the norm, such as the number of full-time staff, part-timer benefits and part-time wages, should be cut.

"The FCMAT report vastly overstates the impact of AFT members' salaries and benefits on the district's financial situation," Messer told the Board of Trustees on September 18.

Friedlander has no doubt the leadership at CCSF will focus on making sure the college stays accredited and open.

"When you have a sanction, you've got to set aside concerns about the severity of it, or whether it's unjustified, and focus on fixing the problems the commission sees," he said. "The commission has been out of whack in terms of the number and severity of its sanctions, but that's not going to change in the next year. City College of San Francisco must endure."

—By Emily Wilson, CFT Reporter

"We're working to grow a coalition of students and staff and the community because we know that any response to save the college has to include everyone."

—Alisa Messer, president of Local 2121

iting commission regions in the country. Cuesta College and College of the Redwoods also face losing accreditation.

"We have three colleges in California on 'show cause' and 20 more on probation," Friedlander said, "In the rest of the country, there are no colleges on 'show cause' and only four on probation."

grow a coalition of students and staff and the community because we know that any response to save the college has to include everyone."

Shanell Williams, president of the Ocean Campus Associated Students Council, has been working on the parcel tax campaign. "It's imperative that the state reassess how much the

University



Higher education faculty say, "We support more classes."

Tonkovich teaches and organizes with humor, joy and irony UC Irvine lecturer and author credits mentors, and Ronald Reagan, for his activism

ANDREW TONKOVICH is a lecturer in the English department at UC Irvine and president of UC-AFT Irvine, Local 2226. He edits the literary magazine *Santa Monica Review*, and hosts Bibliocracy Radio, a weekly books show on KPFK 90.7 FM in Southern California. Recent short stories, essays and reviews of his have appeared in *Faultline*, *The Rattling Wall*, *OC Weekly* and the *Los Angeles Review of Books*.

Q How did you become interested in unionism?

A The short answer is Ronald Reagan, who unintentionally radicalized me as a young person. I marched in solidarity with the air traffic controllers who had been fired by Reagan, then with anti-war and Central American anti-intervention activists. As a UC Irvine lecturer a decade later, I looked for the union, which was hard to find then. I hung out with the teaching assistants, who were young, radical, and fun. Pretty soon I found librarians and some former activists from the local, not to mention the remnants of a union coalition. Like me, everybody seemed to be waiting for something to happen.

Q What triggered your involvement in your union?

A The English Department failed to conduct my timely "continuing appointment" review. I contacted our brand new union rep and, in the following order, won my review, got my appointment, agreed to run for union president and thus assured my role as thorn in management's side, senior-most continuing lecturer in the department and committed unionist. Since our 2002 walk-out and subsequent terrific contract, UC Irvine has hired more than a dozen continuing appointments in my department alone.

Q&A

with
Andrew Tonkovich



Q What inspired you to host a radio show?

A I am today an activist, writer and teacher because of KPFK. Listening to, volunteering for, and supporting Southern California's Pacifica radio station as a young guy taught me to appreciate radio and its audience, and

"As a lecturer, my pedagogy is as much about provoking political awareness and civic literacy, consciousness-raising and modeling activism as about learning vital academic skills."

—Andrew Tonkovich, UC English lecturer and president of UC-AFT Irvine

to admire the work of programmers practicing an elegant and effective art form, better than television. Many years later, as a serious reader, book reviewer and editor of a literary journal, I offered my experience, enthusiasm, and presumed expertise to the only place that made sense for me.

Q How does your activism shape your experience of being a lecturer?

A I was an activist first, though my radical education was due to activist teachers, including Peter Carr, co-founder of the anti-nuke group Alliance for Survival, and Sondra Hale of L.A. Radical Women. My first activist work was with the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and I later directed Westside SANE/Freeze and the L.A. chapter of the National Lawyers Guild. As a lecturer, my pedagogy is as much about provoking political awareness and civic literacy, consciousness-raising and modeling activism as about learning vital academic skills.



Q What are the challenges of being an activist in Orange County?

A Public education here is, and should be, a cheerful challenge to cultural and political institutions that still dominate: malls, segregated gated communities, GOP electoral hegemony, racist Tea Party and "Minuteman Militia" organizing, mega-

Q How has your work served as creative inspiration for your writing?

A My teaching in Orange County, as an adjunct at community colleges and, for nearly two decades, as a lecturer at UCI has been inspiration for my essays and fiction. I completed a novella about an instructor whose students are kidnapped by a right-wing minister seeking to rescue his flock from a character who very much resembles me: pro-union, feminist, anti-war, and eager to teach the dreaded "critical thinking" to the children of parishioners who'd perhaps prefer they not embrace what Noam Chomsky calls "intellectual self-defense." I try to teach that skill, and demonstrate it, with humor and joy.

BOB SAMUELS
COUNCIL PRESIDENT

Why Prop. 30 matters at UC

If Proposition 30 does not pass this November, the UC budget will be cut an additional \$375 million, and we will likely see some draconian changes.

One change being discussed is raising tuition by 20 percent. Another possible solution is to remove the cap on the number of high-paying nonresident students, making it harder for Californians to attend.

The most threatening proposal would allow elite campuses to drop state funding and regulations so they can charge whatever they want and accept whomever they want. In this model, some campuses would be completely privatized, while the "poorer" campuses would be state dependent.

In this neo-liberal structure, the cash-deprived, non-elite campuses would cater to underrepresented California students, while the wealthy, privatized campuses would serve nonresident, wealthy students. Sounds like a good recipe for increasing social inequality.



TOP: PRISCILLA LUVIANO

Local Wire

Reporting Local Action
Around the State



ARMANDO ARONZO/THE PERFECT EXPOSURE

At a back-to-school community fair, early educators in Los Angeles County handed out 1,000 backpacks stuffed with school supplies as part of their Brighter Futures Start Now campaign.

LOCAL 1475

Backpacks for students... Even before early childhood educators nationwide got a shout-out from President Obama at the Democratic National Convention, the **Early Childhood Federation of Teachers** in

Los Angeles County was busy reaching out to its community.

The AFT local co-sponsored a back-to-school community fair that drew hundreds of families to a neighborhood park in August. There, under a blazing sun, AFT members

handed out about a thousand school bags: lunch totes to preschoolers and backpacks stuffed with school supplies to older children. The members also distributed AFT brochures on autism, science, and literacy.

Nearly 30 unions, businesses and education agencies, along with some elected officials — all part of a new coalition called Brighter Futures Start Now sponsored the fair. The event included entertainment by Aztec dancers, Radio Disney and Telemundo.

Local 1475 represents about 1200 teachers, associate teachers, and support staff at Head Start programs in more than 80 cities and towns in Los Angeles County. The union is intent on empowering the professionals who educate and care for young children.

>Go to brighterfuturesstartnow.com

Rank & Files

Steve Hall, math instructor and president of the Ventura County Federation of College Teachers, Local 1828, is running for a seat on the school board of the nearby Oxnard Union High School District with the backing of AFT members in the Oxnard Federation of Teachers and Classified Employees, Local 1293.

Keresha J. Durham, a member of the Greater Santa Cruz Federation of Teachers, Local 2030, and Christopher Davis, a member of the San Jose/Evergreen Faculty Association, Local 6157, were both awarded \$1000 member grants under the AFT Robert Porter Scholarship program. Durham used the grant to complete coursework for an additional credential authorization. Davis is working on a second post-graduate degree to help him focus on helping youth in Title I schools.

Jimmy Gomez, adjunct faculty and mentor with the Puente Mentorship Program at Los Angeles Trade Tech, and member of the AFT College Faculty Guild, Local 1521, is running for state Assembly in the new 51st district representing northeast Los Angeles. Gomez is also political director for the United Nurses Associations of California, AFL-CIO; has served on the California Democratic Party Rules Committee and was editor-in-chief of the Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy.

Martin Bennett, instructor of American and California history at Santa Rosa Junior College, member and former president of the Santa Rosa Junior College Federation of Teachers, Local 1946, was named Outstanding Faculty for 2012 by the campus Classified Academic Senate. Bennett plans to retire from teaching after 22 years at the college, but will stay busy with community organizing as co-chair of the Living Wage Coalition of Sonoma County; member of the Leadership Council of the North Bay Organizing Project, a faith- and community-based group he co-founded; researcher and policy analyst for UNITE HERE, Local 2850; and a regular contributor to the Santa Rosa Press Democrat and other publications, writing on labor and employment issues

UC-AFT

Law librarians choose AFT... The nine professional librarians who work at the Hastings Law School in San Francisco voted to join the **University Council-AFT**, which represents lecturers and librarians working at the University of California. The Hastings librarians will form a new unit of UC-AFT. A majority of the librarians at the Law School signed cards asking to be represented by UC-AFT.

Negotiations for a first contract will begin when the state Public Employment Relations Board recognizes the new unit. The first concern of the Hastings librarians is to get the law school's administration to follow existing employee rules and procedures. An enforceable contract will be key to achieving that goal.

LOCALS 2030 & 6084

Voters say big YES! to schools... Santa Cruz took a strong stand for public schools when voters overwhelmingly passed two parcel tax measures in June. Measure I extends a \$38 parcel tax for district high schools to support counseling and library services; Measure J

extends an \$85 parcel tax to support art and music in elementary schools.

The **Greater Santa Cruz Federation of Teachers** and **Santa Cruz Council of Classified Employees**, teamed up with school administra-



Watch the cute video at <http://goo.gl/ZzuGI>.

tors, district school board members, and a group of dedicated community volunteers to ensure passage.

"The election result — approval by 80 percent of the voters within our school district boundaries — was nothing less than remarkable," said Barry Kirschen, president of the teachers' union. These results continue a long history of support for public education in Santa Cruz. A

decade ago voters passed a \$100 million facilities bond, and in 2008 voters extended a \$105 parcel tax aimed at keeping class size small.

LOCAL 1493

Faculty wow factfinders... When faculty members turned down a tentative collective bargaining agreement, the **San Mateo Community College Federation of Teachers** geared up for factfinding. Chief negotiator Joaquin Rivera presented compelling facts documenting that the district could afford to meet the union demands for parity with other employee groups in the district.

Faced with a potentially unfavorable report and aware of significant organizing among the faculty, the district asked to suspend factfinding and resume contract negotiations.

With a new tentative agreement containing 2 to 3 percent raises for all faculty, the bargaining team went back to the membership. A resounding 97 percent of faculty voted to ratify the new agreement. President Teeka James said voter turnout was the highest in the local's history.