



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

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CFT president Joshua Pechthalt issued the following statement today in response to Governor Brown's 2013 State of the State address:

"The broad outline of the vision laid out by Governor Brown for California is one that the members of the California Federation of Teachers can agree with. We applaud Governor Brown for his stewardship of the state budget. He deserves credit for his honesty in telling the people of California that we needed to pass fair taxes as an important part of the state budget solution, and for his perseverance in helping make it happen. We are looking forward to the restoration of public services to Californians who need and deserve them after years of budget cuts.

"It was heartening to hear the governor's public recognition of the important and positive role played by union members and leaders in the political process of the state, especially when compared with other states in which working people and their unions are under attack.

"The governor's comments on the principle of "subsidiarity" and public education were sharp and deserve notice outside California. We could not agree more with his critique of "when distant authorities prescribe in minute detail what is taught, how it is taught and how it is to be measured," and it is gratifying to hear his preference: "I would prefer to trust our teachers who are in the classroom each day, doing the real work—lighting fires in young minds."

"We are pleased that the governor wants to bring our school funding formulas in line with the needs of the students and families who require the most assistance. For students who start off behind, whether due to poverty or

language skills or physical disability, it is important, necessary and a matter of, as he says, justice, to give them a hand up.

“Governor Brown’s emphasis on local governance for funding and programs, however, needs to be balanced with the recognition that some state mandates are in place for important reasons of equity as well, and these need to be respected and integrated with the concept of local control.

“The governor’s comments on local control also underscore the reality that even with passage of Prop 30 and Prop 39, California remains among the last states in the nation in per pupil funding, student-teacher ratio, and in need of further revenues to return to the days when the state was in the middle of the pack in educational resource allocation, let alone among the first.

“The governor has made clear that Proposition 30 is not a permanent solution to California’s budget challenges. It has allowed us to hold the line on tuition increases in higher education, and to stop the layoffs of faculty and staff in all levels of public education. It has bought us time to look for long-term revenue solutions, and we should actively pursue them now so that California’s teachers and students can look forward to when our level of funding and resources can fulfill the promise of Governor Brown’s citation of Yeats: “Education is not the filling of a pail but the lighting of a fire.””

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