

# CTA Quick Study

27 June 2008

## Budget Battle Update

### **CTA, Coalition Push for Full Funding as Conferees Work on Plan**

CTA and its Education Coalition partners have been working closely with a six-member legislative conference committee that is seeking to cobble together the legislature's final version of a 2008-2009 state spending plan. The Coalition's advocates have been urging the lawmakers to keep increases in school funding in their final budget version.

The members of the Joint Conference Committee on the Budget – Senators Denise Moreno Ducheny (D-San Diego), Mike Machado (D-Linden), and Bob Dutton (R-Inland Empire) and Assembly Members John Laird (D-Santa Cruz), Mark Leno (D-San Francisco), and Roger Niello (R-Sacramento) – have been working since June 12 to resolve the current points of differences between the Assembly and Senate versions. CTA advocates hope the Assembly and Senate budgets will substantially reverse Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's \$4.3 billion in proposed education cuts.

Representatives of the Education Coalition – whose members include millions of teachers, parents, school managers, and school employees-- stress that the governor's revised budget would reduce schools' Cost-of-Living Adjustment by \$3.1 billion, cut categorical funding by \$900 million, and slash community college appropriations by \$300 million. In news conferences in the CTA Governmental Relations Building near the state Capitol, Coalition representatives have briefed reporters about the irreversible damage the governor's cuts would do to more than 6,000,000 students across California.

The final budget adopted by the conferees is slated to go back to each house for its concurrence. That concurrence requires a two-thirds majority in each house, something that has been difficult to achieve in recent years because virtually all Republican Senators and Assembly Members have rejected proposals to boost state revenues and bridge a budget gap remaining at more than \$15 billion.

Legislative Democrats have been unable to convince their GOP colleagues to support even the closure of a loophole that allows wealthy Californians to escape paying their fair share of taxes on yachts and luxury recreational vehicles.

On June 18, Assembly Speaker Karen Bass (D-Los Angeles), Budget Chair John Laird (D-Santa Cruz), Assembly Member Kevin DeLeon (D-Los Angeles) and other Democratic Assembly Members slammed their Republican colleagues for their intransigence.

"The fact they are holding the people who depend upon the budget as hostage is unconscionable," the Speaker Bass stressed. "The issue is raising revenue and that's what we need to do," the Assembly Democratic leader insisted. She vowed that the governor's proposal and its cuts in funding for schools and other public services would not pass "on her watch."

Ultimately, the greatest challenge facing both houses will be to secure the two-thirds majorities in the Senate and the Assembly that are required to send a final legislative spending plan to the governor.

The state constitution requires lawmakers to send their final plan to the governor by June 15. The constitution also requires the governor to sign the budget prior to the July 1 start of the new fiscal year. Both deadlines have often been missed.

### **CTA Members:**

Urge your Assembly Member and Senator to support the legislative subcommittees' budget proposals that reject the governor's proposed cuts and restore billions to public education.

### **Covered Four Governors:**

## **Veteran Reporters Assert Bipartisanship Ruled "Back in the Day"**

On June 19, four long-time Capitol observers and gubernatorial biographers looked back 60 years and concluded that the last four Democratic and Republican governors were able to mobilize bipartisan commitments to the public good to help them deal with the state's fiscal crises.

Speaking to more than a hundred Capitol insiders convened for a luncheon by the non-partisan group, California Forward, Los Angeles Times Editorial Page Editor Jim Newton, UC Berkeley Visiting Professor Ethan Rarick, Reagan Biographer Lou Cannon, and Former SF Chronicle Capitol Reporter Greg Lucas concluded that pragmatism is less of a driving force during the 2008-2009 budget deliberations.

The four journalists asserted that Californians and their representatives are today much more skeptical about the role of government. Partisan positions have hardened, and more GOP lawmakers seem willing to follow a methodology that former Gov. Ronald Reagan derided in John Schmitz, a conservative that lawmaker the then-governor said would rather "go off the cliff" with his flags flying than reach an agreement, according to Cannon. In prior years, elected officials and the public generally shared a view that government could provide the solutions to problems, reported the author of four books on the late Pres. Reagan's political career.

The panelists concluded that former governors and lawmakers also shared pragmatism, despite their rhetorical flourishes. Then-Gov. Reagan said his experience on the bargaining team of the Screen Actors Guild had taught him that "The purpose of a negotiation was to get an agreement," Cannon recounted.

Cannon and Lucas stressed that the two Republican governors they wrote about – Reagan and Pete Wilson respectively – both took on enormous deficits and backed tax increases to help bridge the gap. Cannon observed that Gov. Reagan's tax proposals generally moved the state from a regressive tax system to a more progressive one, where the wealthy and corporations paid disproportionately more.

Cannon said that Reagan realized he was inheriting a major deficit from the Brown administration and privately called for tax increases within three days of taking office. While Reagan initially proposed a 10% across-the-board tax cut, the governor soon abandoned that plan and offered up a new budget proposal that included revenue increases.

California Forward, the group sponsoring the panel, describes its mission as to "transform our state government through citizen-driven solutions to provide better representation, smarter budgeting and fiscal management, and high quality public services so all Californians have the opportunity to be safe, healthy and prosperous in the global economy."

### **At CTA's Urging:**

## **Assembly Education Holds Two Costly CTA-Opposed CTE Bills**

Backed by CTA field communications and targeted grassroots lobbying, CTA advocates were able to defeat two CTA-opposed measures that would have obligated future Proposition 98 funding without knowing what the level of Proposition 98 funding would be. The bills would have mandated career technical education courses as a new local school district graduation requirement.

On June 18, the Assembly panel voted to hold "in its suspense" file CTA-opposed SB 672 and SB 681, both by Sen. Tom Torlakson (D-Antioch). The action means the bills are effectively "dead" for

this legislative session. To move them, the Senator would normally have to reintroduce the bills next legislative year.

Only four lawmakers voted for CTA-opposed SB 672: Assembly Members Joe Coto (D-San Jose), Martin Garrick (R-Carlsbad), Bob Huff (R-Diamond Bar), and Alan Nakanshi (R-Lodi). Only three lawmakers voted for CTA-opposed SB 681: Garrick, Huff, and Nakanshi

CTA's opposition to the measures came because of the specific provisions of the two bills. CTA advocates stressed to lawmakers the organization's support for effective career technical education (CTE) policies and programs. CTA believes California students in the public school system should have access to sequential career technical education programs that include proper counseling and guidance services. CTA also believes that high schools should provide a well-balanced and comprehensive curriculum including career/vocational education and academic courses to each pupil.

CTA's policy-making body, the 800-member State Council of Education, determined that SB 672 and SB 681 would not achieve these positive policy goals. The bills together created a new categorical program if Test 1 of Proposition 98 is triggered. This new so-called California Enhanced Instructional Time Program was linked to the requirement in SB 672 that high schools adopt a graduation requirement of two CTE courses for each pupil.

Among the major problems with the two measures, they would have

- Committed future Proposition 98 dollars if Test I is triggered for use in implementing the bill without reference to future budget commitments.
- Created an unfunded state mandate
- Created indeterminate cost pressures on existing programs.
- Crowded the master schedule options for pupils by limiting their access to a well-balanced curriculum so that they can meet current school district graduation requirements on time.

### **Fighting Discrimination:**

## **CTA Assails Bad Credential Bill, Mulls Changes to 2<sup>nd</sup> Measure**

CTA representatives are working against SB 1105 by Bob Margett (R-Glendora), a CTA-opposed measure that would discriminate against gay and lesbian educators. The bill has cleared Assembly Education, and CTA is working to defeat or fix it in the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

At the same time, CTA representatives are reviewing the latest amendments to a second CTA-opposed bill – SB 1110 by Sen. Jack Scott (D-Pasadena) – to determine whether the new version protects children without treating any category of teachers unfairly.

Sen. Margett's SB 1105 represents the worst kind of "legislation by headline." It responds to an erroneous Associated Press story in which CCTC representatives claim they need more power to revoke – without any hearing -- the credentials of teachers who plead "nolo contendere" to certain misdemeanors. Current law allows the CCTC to suspend the credentials of persons charged with the specified misdemeanors. The suspension immediately removes the teacher from the classroom and from contact with students. The law then allows the CCTC to keep the suspension in effect until the criminal case ends. At that point, the CCTC can hold a revocation hearing that allows the credential holder to confront his accusers and make the case that his credential should not be revoked.

- The Margett bill would allow the CCTC to revoke credentials without a hearing.
- The bill is discriminatory. It would empower the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing to use its credential enforcement powers against persons on the basis of their gender and sexual orientation.
- The misdemeanors – not felonies – are unrelated to the credential holder's school duties or assignments.

- The misdemeanors involve consensual behavior between adults and do not involve children.
- The bill does not provide schools or students with protections beyond those already afforded in law. Under current law, the accused's credential is suspended and he is removed from teaching immediately.
- The second measure, Sen. Scott's SB 1110, originally contained provisions similar to SB 1105's, but working with CTA, the author made significant changes to the proposal. CTA policy experts are in the process of reviewing the amended version to ensure that it protects students without wrongly undermining educator's rights.

**CTA Members:**

Urge members of Assembly Appropriations and your Assembly Member to vote against SB 1105 unless it is amended to meet CTA's concerns.

For more information, contact CTA GR Communications Consultant Len Feldman at [lfeldman@cta.org](mailto:lfeldman@cta.org).

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