



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

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EDUCATORS' LEADER: Governor's Proposed Budget is "Disaster" for Schools; Cuts \$7 Billion, Alternatives Exist

CFT President Marty Hittelman released the following statement in response to the governor's proposed budget:

The budget proposed by the governor is a disaster for the students of California. It fails to provide adequate school funding. It also undermines vital health and human services that students need to achieve their best. The budget proposal cuts education funding by more than \$7 billion. It will harm student achievement at all levels, from preschool to higher education. This budget will erase progress made in the past decade towards our high standards of achievement.

Long-term solutions to our state's revenue shortfall are missing, due to Republicans' allegiance to a blind and inflexible antitax philosophy. Instead of addressing the short and long term needs of California, this budget proposal ignores the need for stable school funding. Our polling has shown that Californians are willing to support our schools, including a willingness to pay additional taxes for that purpose.

The governor has proposed that schools shorten the school year to reduce costs. This clearly will set students back. There are better alternatives.

Here are some of the options available for additional revenues to support public education:

- Federal economic stimulus funds for schools should be *fully directed to schools*
- Restore income tax rates to 10% for Californians earning over \$250,000 and 11% for over \$500,000 (\$7 billion in non-recessionary years)
- Institute an oil severance tax of 9.9% as is present in all other oil-producing states (\$1.7 billion with oil at \$100/barrel)

Our public schools have already experienced more than \$500 million in unexpected budget cuts this year—forcing many schools to lay off teachers and education support professionals as well as eliminating art, music, and vocational education programs that help students learn and succeed.

These proposed cuts will require laying off a broad range of educational employees and drive qualified teachers to other states where education is adequately funded. Class sizes will increase, individual instruction will decrease, learning conditions will be compromised and hundreds of thousands of students will be left without nurses, counselors or instructional aides.

These cuts come at a time when California already ranks 47th in per-pupil spending, and dead last in the number of counselors, librarians and school nurses per student. Schools are being asked to absorb more than our fair share of cuts – more than any other sector of government. That’s putting education last, not first.

For a clear idea of the scale of the governor’s proposed \$7 billion cuts to education, here are a few of the possible ways these cuts could be accomplished:

- Increase class sizes by 50%
- Lay off 160,000 classroom teachers
- Cut more than \$31,500 from every classroom

The vote this week by the Los Angeles Unified School District to lay off up to 2,300 classroom teachers is just the beginning of the deluge of teacher layoffs that will occur under the governor’s proposed budget.

The simple fact is California’s schools need additional revenues to provide our students with the education they deserve.

Californians need an approach that would permanently raise the revenue necessary to ensure California's future success.

Marty Hittelman is available to comment on the proposed state budget by contacting Steve Hopcraft or Fred Glass at the above numbers or email.

A list of state revenue options that could erase the entire budget shortfall can be found at cft.org.

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