

Restoring California

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*Contact: Fred Glass, 510-579-3343; Sabrina Smith, 323-735-9515;
Anna Beatriz Cholo, 312-927-4845*

Broad Coalition to File “Millionaires’ Tax” to Fund Education, Senior Services, Public Safety

A broad coalition of educators, unions and community groups announced today it is filing a ballot initiative to restore critical funding to schools and universities, essential services for seniors, and public safety, as well as start rebuilding the state’s crumbling roads and bridges. It asks the wealthiest Californians—people who earn over a million dollars per year—to help pay to rebuild the state. The “California Funding Restoration Act” would increase personal income taxes only on those who make \$1 million or more annually to restore funding to services that make California communities stronger and safer, and ensure seniors receive the care they deserve.

“As a teacher and parent, I have seen the terrible impact of state budget cuts on our schools through teacher layoffs and larger class sizes,” says Joshua Pechthalt, president of the California Federation of Teachers. “It is time for the wealthiest Californians to pay their fair share to restore funding for education and essential services.”

The coalition tested various approaches in opinion research with likely voters. No other type of proposal came close to the strength of voter opinion in favor of the idea that the richest Californians should pay their fair share to restore funding for schools and services. Pollster Ben Tulchin notes that “Extensive recent public and private polling show that California voters strongly support a progressive approach of raising taxes on the rich to fund education and other essential services that have been cut in recent years.”

The coalition estimates that the initiative, under discussion by Restoring California since last March, will restore \$6 billion in funds for K-12 as well as higher education. It would help people like Jazmin Casa, an East Los Angeles Community College student, who says, “I lost my job caring for seniors because of the state budget cuts. Now, I’m fighting to keep my home.” Jazmin is an active member of California Calls.

Rick Jacobs, chair and founder of the 750,000 strong Courage Campaign says, “This is the only initiative proposal that would restore funding devastated by the recession, and rehire thousands of teachers, senior care providers and public safety personnel, without affecting the wallets of working families and the middle class. It addresses the heart of the problem: that total income share to the state’s richest 1% has doubled over the last twenty years, while their tax rates have fallen and the 99% have fallen farther behind.”

The coalition includes:

ORGANIZATION

COUNTY

California Federation of Teachers	Statewide
Courage Campaign	Statewide
California Calls	Statewide
Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment	Statewide
California Partnership	Statewide
Inner City Struggle	Los Angeles
Equality Alliance	San Diego
Community Coalition for Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment	Los Angeles
Strategic Concepts in Organizing and Policy Education	Los Angeles
Delores Huerta Foundation	Kern
Knotts Family and Parenting Institute	San Bernardino
Communities for a New California	Statewide
Oakland Rising	Alameda
Causa Justa/ Just Cause	Alameda
The Ella Baker Center for Human Rights	Alameda
Asian Pacific Environmental Network	Alameda
CAUSE	Alameda
Working Partnerships USA	Alameda
Poder Popular	Ventura
Warehouse Workers United	Santa Clara
Congregations Organized for Prophetic Engagement	Riverside
Mobilize the Immigrant Vote	Statewide
PICO	Statewide
University of California Student Association	Statewide