



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

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CFT President says Legislature should enact fair revenue package

Spend federal stimulus education funds now

SACRAMENTO – The president of the California Federation of Teachers (CFT) responded to the results of Tuesday’s special election, and to a new post-election poll that shows Californians oppose cuts to education and prefer progressive taxes to close the state budget gap.

“California voters have rejected a spending cap as well as an extension of regressive taxes,” said Marty Hittelman, president of the California Federation of Teachers. CFT opposed all the ballot measures except Prop. 1B. “The voters rejected a confusing, half-baked mess. Prop. 1A, for example, was so incomprehensible that even its supporters couldn’t explain it.”

Hittelman pointed out that the election results do not mean severe cuts are now inevitable. “Voters consistently support fair taxes that fund public education. Parcel taxes and school bond issues have been passing across the state,” said Hittelman, who pointed to a post-election poll that validates a progressive tax solution for the state budget.

Hittelman noted the results of a poll released today by the No on Prop. 1A campaign that found strong support for public education funding and a willingness from voters to support increased taxes on tobacco, oil extraction and other potential revenue sources. Hittelman said “The Legislature should pass a fair revenue package and explain it clearly to the people. This poll shows that if they do the voters will back them.”

Hittelman said that in addition to a fair tax policy, part of the funding solution for education lies in spending federal stimulus funds for education now. “School districts and the Legislature should make sure federal stimulus dollars for education are spent now, not

two years from now. The Los Angeles Unified School District, for instance, plans to hold those federal stimulus funds for two years, while laying off thousands of teachers this year and next. That makes no sense. The purpose of the stimulus funds is to stimulate the economy NOW, to help our economy recover within two years.”

Hittelman said another critical order of business is to restore majority rule to our legislative process by overturning the unfair, undemocratic two-thirds requirement for a budget. “The real problem we face is intransigent, anti-school Republicans who place ideology over the public interest,” said Hittelman.

Hittelman added that “CFT calls for fair, progressive taxes on oil and tobacco companies and higher income individuals, and getting rid of corporate tax loopholes. Tax the same people the governor and the Republicans have been protecting while taking their campaign contributions. With these fair tax policies in place, we would be able to adequately fund public schools, public safety, public health, and a decent future for the state.”

As the statewide affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, the CFT represents faculty and other school employees in public and private schools and colleges, from early childhood through higher education.

For more information, please visit: www.cft.org

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