



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

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In case you missed it...

California Progress Report

Suspending Prop. 98 Would Permanently Rob Billions From Public School Students

By Marty Hittelman

Repealing corporate tax breaks makes more sense

To address the ongoing state budget deficit, the governor and legislative Republicans have proposed suspending Proposition 98, the state's minimum school funding law, so they can cut several billion additional dollars from school funding. The California Federation of Teachers (CFT) strongly opposes suspending Prop. 98.

The governor and Republicans refuse to provide more state revenues to cover the necessary education programs. Meanwhile, they've been busy handing out huge tax breaks to corporations. So, while cutting public school students' basic education, the governor and his Republican allies have punched huge new loopholes in the state's budget benefiting a handful of the largest corporations.

California schools have been cut \$11 billion in the past year. Suspending Prop. 98 would further drain basic resources from schools that have already been forced to increase class sizes, cut programs critical to student learning, cancel bus routes and eliminate summer school programs, as well as librarians, counselors and arts and music classes.

Educating our kids is investing in our future. Closing corporate tax loopholes that benefit only a handful of the largest corporations is a common-sense step to take. California can't afford tax breaks for big corporations while our kids are neglected.

The wealthiest people in California and large corporations, after years of tax reductions, could afford more taxes to support the well being of the entire population. CFT proposes to increase state revenues with fair tax policies for individuals and businesses that can afford it.

Suspending Prop. 98 would devastate public education

Statewide, education program reductions have resulted in layoff notices to 25,000 certificated and 10,000 classified. Millions of dollars have been taken from each K-12 school district, and will result in class sizes increasing by as much as 35%.

In community colleges and universities, students will lose classes, contingent faculty and support personnel will be laid off, and student costs will rise (proposed quadrupled tuition), along with the time necessary to graduate.

California already underfunds education and other services

California ranks 47th in the nation in K-12 per-pupil spending. California community colleges rank 45th in the nation in per pupil spending. California ranks 48th in the nation in state employees per resident. When the governor and the Republicans say, "We have a spending problem," they are dead wrong. California is under-funding education. California's K-12 public schools educate more than 6.3 million kids. The community colleges serve 2.5 million adults. These are the largest systems of public education in the country. Failure to adequately fund them will severely impact the state's future.

Another way: tax fairness to preserve and improve education and other services

California is the richest state in the richest country on earth. The problem is not that we don't have the money. The problem is one of priorities, and that the money is in the wrong pockets. The top 1% of wealth holders owns 34% of the wealth. Their tax rates today are lower than they used to be. In 1993 the highest tax bracket in the California was 11% of income; today it is 9.3%. The same is true for corporations. In 1980 California corporations contributed nearly 15% of the state budget; today they pay 11%. The Legislature has enacted more than \$12 billion in tax cuts for individuals, families and businesses over the past 15 years. It is time to reverse this trend so we can continue to provide necessary services to Californians. We need to address the state's structural budget problem, with progressive tax policies that largely do not adversely affect the average Californian.

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Repeal corporate tax loopholes put in place during last year's state budget deal would save more than \$2.5 billion a year. That's preferable to suspending Prop. 98 and cutting billions from public education. Our kids get only one chance at their youth and their education.

Close loopholes, not schools!

Marty Hittelman, a community college math professor from Los Angeles, is the President of the [California Federation of Teachers \(CFT\)](#), which is a member of the [American Federation of Teachers \(AFT\)](#). The CFT represents faculty and other school employees in public and private schools and colleges, from early childhood through higher education in California.

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