



DIALOGUE



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DO YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO TELL YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS HOW TO VOTE? ABSOLUTELY!

by Janet McCulloch, AFA President and Regular Faculty in the English Department

We are educators and, therefore, eminently qualified to speak out about educational issues. In fact, it is one of our responsibilities as professionals to be aware of the ramifications of legislation that affects California's school systems. That is why we are asking you to take a strong stand on November 8 — **Vote "No" on Propositions 74, 75, and 76.** More importantly, please ask everyone you know to vote down these anti-education measures. The California Teachers Association (CTA) has launched an aggressive radio and television campaign to defeat these measures. While Proposition 74 targets K-12 teachers, Propositions 75 and 76 directly impact Community College political activity and our funding.

Groups who are fighting these measures have spent 80 million dollars in hopes of defeating Governor Swarzenegger's proposed "reforms." So far, the Governor has spent 30 million dollars campaigning for the passage of these propositions, and this doesn't include the Secretary of State's estimate of 80 million dollars for calling the election itself. Over 70 percent

of Californians surveyed believe that the election is unnecessary and a poor use of public funds. Clearly, the Governor is not listening to the people of California and has his own ideas about what's best for our education system. With that kind of attitude we cannot allow him to go forward with his plans without making our voices heard.

SPENDING CAPS EQUAL SPENDING CUTS: PROP. 76

Proposition 76 establishes a new limit on state spending, but the proposed cap would lead to a significant reduction in state spending over time. The California Community College System, along with the K-12, has been guaranteed funding under Proposition 98 provisions. This new measure would overturn Proposition 98 in favor of limitations on overall State spending. Furthermore, this proposition would give Governor Swarzenegger broad new powers over the Budget as he would not need to consult with the Legislature when applying mid-year cuts. Although many argue that the stalemate between the Governor and the Legislature

proves that the system is "broken," we certainly cannot support a measure of this type. Our government is based on the ideal that a balance of power should exist among all branches of government. This proposition removes the power from the Legislature where educators have powerful friends. Currently, California is 42nd in the nation in per-pupil spending in K-12 and, in 2002, California dropped to 47th in the nation in per-pupil spending in community colleges. The Governor might want to look at the devastating consequences of reducing educational spending rather than limiting it through legislative mandate.

SILENCING UNION LOBBYING: PROP. 75

Proposition 75 essentially attempts to limit the political power of unions. George Skelton writing in the Los Angeles Times reports that the measure requires "public employee unions [to] obtain annual, written permission from members to use their dues for political purposes." Backers of the measure are calling it "paycheck protection" but fail to mention that under the Burton

(continued on page 2)

TELL YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

(continued from page 1)

Bill (SB 1960) that mandated the Fair Share Service Fee, public employees are not required to pay that portion of their fees that is used for political advocacy. Since the enactment of the Fair Share Service Fee, educational unions and associations have had an infusion of needed capital which has been used in part to lobby the Legislature for causes favorable to education. It is small wonder that the Governor would like to limit this kind of lobbying. State Republican Chair Duf Sundheim, a Palo Alto attorney, said to the Los Angeles Times, "This will level the playing field." Democrats scoff at that sort of comment, noting that corporations spend at least ten times more on politics than do unions.

AFA's accountant and auditor, Mike Gibson, informed us that, among local bargaining units, the average for chargeable expenditures is between 60 and 70 percent. For the record, in 2004-05, AFA devoted 99.01% of its expenses strictly to negotiations and operating costs (also known as "chargeable expenses"). Under already existing statute, non-members (Fair Share Service Fee payers) are not required to pay the non-chargeable portion of their fees.

Last year, we incurred \$1,681 in non-chargeable expenses including donations to the Classified Senate's Scholarship Fund, the Harvey Hansen Picnic, the Volunteer Center's Giving Tree, and a total of \$500 to political campaigns.

ATTACKING K-12 TENURE: PROP. 74

Proposition 74 would eliminate teachers' due-process protections, extending the probationary period for K-12 teachers from two to five years. This would make it harder to recruit and retain quality teachers in the classroom, which would eventually affect the quality of students coming to the Community College. At Santa Rosa Junior College, the tenure process is four years, with Contract Three covering the third and fourth years. The Governor believes that two years is too short a period to evaluate a teacher before granting tenure. He proposes to increase the process to five years, with a pink slip issued every March 15. Why? The answer is obvious — an army of temporary workers with no reassignment rights will be afraid to voice strong opinions about other proposed educational reforms or contractual issues.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Since the passage of Proposition 13, educators have had to fight for everything we have. Proposition 98 was the best minimum guarantee for public school funding that we could have hoped for. Yet even with Prop. 98, California Community Colleges have not received our statutory share of that funding. Think what it will mean when the Governor has all the power to cut the system budget while we have no recourse through the Legislature. Moreover, if Proposition 75 passes, unions and associations such as ours will find it difficult to use dues and fees to protect education funding. Please ask pro-education voters to listen to you when you tell them that Propositions 74, 75, and 76 are not reasonable ways to solve California's budgetary problems.

VOTE NO
ON
PROPOSITIONS
74, 75 & 76
ON TUESDAY,
NOVEMBER 8

THE *AFA Dial ogue* HAS BEEN CREATED TO AIR CONCERNS OF ALL FACULTY. THE *AFA Update* WILL CONTINUE TO BE THE FACTUAL VOICE OF THE AFA, WHILE THE *AFA Dial ogue* WILL ENCOURAGE CONVERSATION AND PUBLISH OPINIONS ABOUT WORK PLACE ISSUES AND POLITICAL CONCERNS. WE INVITE ANY FACULTY MEMBER TO SUBMIT LETTERS, ARTICLES, OR OPINION PIECES. AFA RESERVES EDITORIAL PREROGATIVES.