

ACTION



CTA photos by Dave Carpenter

Our students come first, says Sanchez

The governor's budget proposal "is not just talking about mortgaging the academic future of our students," says CTA President David A. Sanchez. "It's more like a foreclosure."

In his address to CTA's State Council of Education, he said he was stunned that in this so-called "Year of Education," the governor is proposing to cut \$4.8 billion from public school funding.

He challenged the governor and lawmakers to do what is right, and to exercise leadership by setting priorities and implementing a balanced approach to the state's financial crises. Any talk of program cuts, he said, must also include talk about revenue increases.

"Our students didn't create this budget crisis, and their education shouldn't be ransomed to solve it."

In a recent meeting between

the governor and Education Coalition representatives, Sanchez warned against making devastating cuts. "I told him that this is not how you put students first. It is not how you show that education is important. And it's not how you build a stronger California."

It might be an uphill battle to convince the public that a state budget crisis actually exists, he told Council.

"We're going to have to start the same way we did in 2005 — by educating the public and our colleagues about what is at stake for our public schools."

CTA has launched radio ads in conjunction with the Education Coalition and developed a new publication, "Budget Watch," to keep local chapters informed. In addition, a "Budget Crisis" section has been created on the CTA website [www.cta.org].

"You can e-mail Governor Schwarzenegger and your state lawmakers — because this fight is bigger than the governor this time around," said Sanchez. "Tell them to put our students and schools first. Tell them our children count!"

DINA MARTIN

Presenting the Friend of Education award to Assembly Member Gene Mullin (center) are CTA Executive Director Carolyn Doggett, Director Larry Allen, Vice President Dean E. Vogel, President David A. Sanchez, and Secretary-Treasurer Daniel R. Vaughn. Below, Anne McCaughey of Stockton addresses Council.



Teachers elected to CalSTRS board

Two teachers who recently won election to seats on the board of the State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) received accolades from CTA's State Council of Education at the February meeting.

Returning for another four-year term is CalSTRS Board Chair Dana Dillon, an elementary school teacher/librarian in Siskiyou County. A member of the Weed Classroom Teachers Association, she also represents her area on CTA's Board of Directors. She has served as chair of CTA's Retirement Committee and a member of the NEA Board of Directors.

Harry Keiley, president of the Santa Monica-Malibu Teachers Association and chair of CTA's Political Involvement Committee, won his first term to the CalSTRS Board. He teaches history and government.

Carolyn Widener, a professor in the Los Angeles Community College District, won re-election



Accepting applause are CalSTRS Board members Dana Dillon and Harry Keiley.

by acclamation to the seat she has held since 2001. She is vice president of the Los Angeles College Faculty Guild, which represents nine Los Angeles community colleges.

The 12-member governing board includes only three elected representatives. The governor names the other six representatives. The state controller, treasurer and superintendent of public instruction serve as ex-officio members.

Educators urge Congress to pass Social Security Fairness Act

After 15 years as an architect, Peg Cagle entered the classroom during the 1990s to meet California's growing demand for math and science teachers. But when she retires, she will pay a huge and unexpected price for her dedication to the children of Los Angeles due to a Social Security offset, known as the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP).

"I knew that my career move would result in an immediate pay cut," says Cagle, a member of United Teachers Los Angeles. "I did not realize, however, that I would suffer further financial penalties upon retirement."

Currently, educators in about 15 states do not pay into the Social Security system.

WEP penalizes individuals, like Cagle, who spent part of their careers in jobs not covered by Social Security.

Cagle and a delegation of four other CTA

members, NEA Director Patty Taylor, CTA Director Dana Dillon, CTA-Retired President Arlene Pavey and CTA Retirement Committee Vice-Chair John Anderson, went to Washington, D.C., in January to lobby on behalf of the Social Security Fairness Act. The bill would repeal WEP and another punitive provision — the Government Pension Offset (GPO), which reduces the survivor/dependent benefit.

"When you are on a fixed income and have lost a spouse, this amount can make the difference between self-sufficiency and poverty," says Cagle, who testified before a House subcommittee as did Taylor.

The time for congressional action is long overdue, says NEA President Reg Weaver. "If Congress is serious about encouraging professionals from the private sector to answer the call to teach, it must repeal these offsets."