
CTA Liaison News

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By CTA Vice President Dean E. Vogel and Secretary-Treasurer Gail Mendes

Volume 17, No. 7

11 May 2010

Californians Together Lobbies Hard Against More School Budget Cuts

Members of Californians Together: A Round Table for Quality Education (CALTOG) joined representatives of the California Association of Bilingual Educators (CABE) and the National Council of La Raza (NCLR) for an April 14th Advocacy Day at the state Capitol. Urging legislators to reject Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposals that would renege on this year's budget agreement and make more cuts to public education was high on the coalition's list of priorities for the lobbying.

CTA Liaisons to CALTOG also played a key role in a news conference in April designed to boost the Dream Act, legislation by Sen. Gil Cedillo that would allow long-time residents of California to apply for college financial aid regardless of their official immigration status. The governor has vetoed earlier versions of the measure.

Lawmakers at the event included the bill's author, Sen. Cedillo, Sen. Charles Calderon and Assembly Members Kevin de Leon, Tony Mendoza, and Hector De la Torre.

CALTOG is also looking at proposals to raise new state revenues by closing loopholes and imposing an "oil severance" tax that would force oil companies to pay the state for removing valuable natural resources from the ground.

The organization is also seeking to qualify an initiative, "the Local Control of Local Classrooms Funding Act," that would lower the margin required for passage of parcel taxes for schools from the current two-thirds to just 55%.

The Californians Together website is www.californianstogether.org.

CTA's Liaisons to the California State Parents Teachers Association are Nancy Hofrock and Kathy Reyes.

Consumer Federation Pushes for Fair Practices, End of Human Trafficking

The Consumer Federation of California Policy Board has adopted positions on three pieces of legislation that would help protect children and postsecondary education students. The organization adopted a support position on SB 657 (Steinberg), a measure that would increase the state's efforts to battle "human trafficking," the 21st century version of slavery that often involves children. The Consumer Federation is also supporting SB 1291 (Leno), a measure that aims to protect children from the possible negative effects of flame retardants. The organization is also backing AB 2393 (Ammiano), a proposal to ensure fair practices on the part of private postsecondary education intuitions.

The Consumer Federation's web site is www.consumercal.org.

CTA's Liaison to the Consumer Federation Policy Board is Peggy Colwell.

Close-up Mexican American Educators to Fete 45 Years of Advocacy, Achievement

The American Association of Mexican American Educators (AMAE) will soon celebrate its 45th anniversary as it continues working to achieve three major goals that are spelled out on its website:

- *To improve education for students of Mexican and Latino descent.* To achieve this goal, the organizations implements a wide range of programs, including programs to help educators teach students of Mexican and Latino backgrounds. In particular, AMAE is seeking to help resolve the problems of the underachieving students and to reduce the drop-out rate. The organization is aiming to help significantly the percentage of Latino students who graduate from college.

- *To advise state and local boards, administrators and faculties.* AMAE strives to

achieve this goal by applying its special expertise on the educational challenges of Latino communities, including testifying before legislative committees and joining lawsuits on vital issues.

- **To provide training and support for Latino educators.** The organization helps meet this goal by sponsoring workshops and conferences and encouraging Latino/Chicano educators to become educational leaders.

- **To promote understanding and recognition of cultural differences.** AMAE endeavors to bring to all students and understanding and sensitivity about Mexican and Latino cultures. It also liaisons between the Latino community and the educational system.

AMAE is set to hold its 45th anniversary celebration on June 10 in Los Angeles.

The organization's website is www.amae.org.

CTA's Liaison to AMAE is Christina Valdez.

CalSTRS Warns About Continuing Real Estate Pain, Projects 7% Yield

The Board of the California State Teachers' Retirement System (CalSTRS) has heard from its investment advisors that the nation's real estate slowdown will likely continue. Even so, the pension system reports that the diversification of its investment portfolio has kept the funds portfolio from suffering even larger impacts. CalSTRS is projecting that its total yield on investments should amount to 7% for the next five to seven years.

The system's management has proposed a new "hybrid" plan for providing counseling services to members. The plan would result in six regional offices in addition to the current local satellite offices. The plan is expected to be operational by July 2011.

CalSTRS also reported that furlough days in districts around the state have had a negligible impact on the retirement system.

In other CalSTRS news, the Board has elected as its new chair Jerilyn Harris. She is the governor's

appointee to represent retired members. CTA's Harry Keiley was elected vice chair of the organization that provides pensions to hundreds of thousands of California retired educators.

CalSTRS' web site is www.calstrs.ca.gov.

CTA's Liaisons to CalSTRS are Roberta Consani, Maggie Ellis, Phyllis Hall, and Michael Harrelson.

Stop Devastating Education Budget Cuts and Kill Bill to Scapegoat Teachers

California's schools have been devastated by more than \$17 billion in cuts, and Gov. Schwarzenegger has proposed making even more cuts. Worse yet, he's proposing to scapegoat teachers for the disabling effects of these funding cuts.

Gov. Schwarzenegger has gotten Sen. Bob Huff (R-Diamond Bar) to introduce a punitive bill— SB 955 — that would undermine teacher anti-discrimination protections in the name of "improving flexibility." The bill, coauthored by Sen. Gloria Romero (D-Los Angeles), doesn't address the real problem: the funding shortfalls that are decimating key programs and forcing thousands of teacher and instructional support professional layoffs.

CTA and its allies are fighting the cuts and backing loophole closings that would raise billions of dollars from corporations that are ducking their fiscal responsibility to support the state services they use.

CTA and its allies are also battling SB 955 by urging lawmakers to reject it. Right now, educator supporters are having to fight an effort by Senate President Pro Tempore Darrell Steinberg (D-Sacramento) to save the CTA-opposed bill by keeping it from getting a fair hearing in the Senate Labor Committee, which hears measures affecting the labor issues in SB 955.

For more information, go to the CTA web page (cta.org) and follow the links to legislative action.

You'll find ways there to communicate directly with Sen. Steinberg and your state senators.

You can also make sure we keep you posted on further developments by sending an e-mail to budgetadvocates@cta.org.

(The summaries include statements made at agency meetings and do not necessarily reflect CTA's policies or views.) *The Liaison News* is a publication of the Governmental Relations Division of the California Teachers Association/NEA, 1118 10th Street, Sacramento, CA 95814, 916/325-1500, ©copyright 2010.

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