

# ADVOCATE

ELECTION 2012

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## Community College faculty unite to vote Yes on Prop. 30 and No on 32

Student registration drives planned

### ACTIVISM

FROM NEWS CONFERENCES to campus voter registration drives, CCA chapters are recognizing the importance of the upcoming election and are joining in the statewide campaign to pass Proposition 30 and defeat Proposition 32.

“There is so much at stake. One election could end it. Proposition 32 would prevent our union from being able to advocate for our students and our profession. It would even prevent us from advocating for vital funding initiatives like Proposition 30,” said CCA President Ron Norton Reel.

#### Getting students to vote

“One aspect of community colleges is that our students can vote, said CCA Vice President Lynette Nyaggah, who has been coordinating the CCA campaign. “That’s why we are actively involved in voter registration drives on our campuses. It’s crucial that our members

do everything they can to encourage their colleagues and their students to vote.”

Faculty at San Joaquin Delta College has taken that message to heart. They are joining with La Familia Vota, an Hispanic voter registration organization, to encourage Latino students and their families to vote No on 32 and yes on 30. The faculty association is also working with Rock the Vote to increase student registration. Activities

planned include a voter registration drive “competition” between student clubs, a presentation on the importance of registering to vote, and banners around the campus.

**We want our students to know they can make a difference.**

“We want our students to know they can make a difference,” said CCA Board Member Elizabeth Maloney, a Delta College faculty.

“If they want to have a voice in their education and work towards improving the quality of education, then the way to be heard is to vote!”

#### Church presentations

CCA Secretary DeWayne Sheaffer took his presentation to his church, where his message was warmly received.

“There were several retired

Please see Campaign, page 5 ▶

### WHERE WE STAND

- ✓ **YES** President Barack Obama
- ✓ **YES** Prop 30: Schools & Public Safety Act
- ✗ **NO** Prop 32: Special Exemptions Act
- ✓ **YES** Prop 40: State Senate Redistricting
- ✗ **NO** Prop 31: State Budget Cap
- ✓ **YES** Prop 35: Californians Against Sexual Exploitation

## Yes on 30 to prevent mid-year cuts

Gov. Jerry Brown launches the campaign

GOV. JERRY BROWN took to the campaign trail even before Labor Day to stump for Proposition 30, the Schools and Local Public Safety Protection Act, which will prevent deep cuts to colleges and schools this year.

During appearances in Sacramento, San Francisco, San Diego and Hawthorne, the governor joined faculty, teachers, school employees, parents and students to urge voters to support the funding initiative.

#### Half a billion from colleges

“If we cannot pass Prop. 30, we are taking a half billion out of our colleges and universities and \$5½ billion out of our schools. It doesn’t make sense,” the governor said in his remarks in front of New Technology High School in Sacramento.

“This is the most critical issue on the ballot this November, other than the presidency itself,” he said, “because it’s about the future, it’s about our kids and it’s about whether California, as a democracy, can make a public decision for our schools and take this responsibility that for at least the better part of a decade has been shirked.”

Although there is another funding initiative on the ballot, Prop. 38, it will not provide any funding for higher education.

“We want our members to be sure they know that when they go to the polls,” said CCA Vice

President Lynette Nyaggah. “Only Prop. 30 helps out community colleges, CSU and UC, along with K-12.”

Representing community college faculty at the campaign launch event in Sacramento was Linda Sneed, a part-time English instructor at nearby Cosumnes River College in South Sacramento.

#### Students shut out

“Over the past few years, I have seen dedicated, passionate community college instructors disappear from our campuses because of budget cuts. Students trying to earn their associate’s degree or complete their first two years of a four-year bachelor’s degree at our colleges have been effectively shut out of our system,” Sneed said.

“We can’t abandon or betray the hundreds of thousands of students and the thousands of staff who work so hard every day to support their dreams of a better life for themselves and their families, driving them away from college or into the hands of private, for-profit institutions that



Gov. Jerry Brown joined educators to launch Prop. 30 in Sacramento.

will saddle them with years, perhaps decades, of debt,” she said.

Proposition 30 provides billions in new funding by asking the wealthiest in California to pay their fair share to keep classrooms open and police on the street. All tax increases are temporary and all money goes into a special account that the Legislature can’t touch, requiring annual

Please see Prop. 30, page 5 ▶

# Cast your vote for students and the middle class

Vote Yes on Prop. 30 and No on 32

**SPEAKING OUT**

By Ron Norton Reel, *CCA President*

**THERE IS MUCH AT STAKE** in November, which is why this issue of the *Advocate* is devoted almost entirely to the election. Yes, there is an important presidential election, but in California, there's two initiatives on the ballot that will directly affect our profession, our students, and, our ability to advocate for both.

But if you look at the issues, it's even more important than that. This election could signal the last gasp of the middle class that generations before us worked so hard to create. I realize I'm a speech and rhetoric teacher, but I am not overstating the reality that faces us.

**Initiatives go hand-in-hand**

These two important initiatives on the ballot go hand in hand. One is Proposition 30, the Schools and Public Safety Protection Act that provides billions for schools, colleges and essential public services and pays down the state's wall of debt by asking the wealthiest in the state to pay more of their fair share of taxes.

With the severe decline in state funding, the chickens have come home to roost. A recent survey from the Chancellor's office reveals that enrollment in California community colleges has dropped 17 percent since 2008. That's nearly a half million students have been shut out. The number of courses has declined by 24 percent statewide since 2008, as the system was drained of \$809 million or 12 percent of its funding.

Although Prop. 30 won't restore all the cuts that have been made to California's schools and colleges, it will prevent further devastating cuts that will wreak havoc on our schools. If Prop. 30 fails, we will face another \$6 billion in cuts this year – and that's on top of the \$20 billion we've had in the past four years.

But funding initiatives like Prop. 30 will be impossible if we don't defeat another initiative on the ballot, Prop. 32.

**Special Exemptions Act**

Proposition 32, the "Special Exemptions Act" will make it even easier for super PACs to buy our elections while rendering us virtually powerless to do anything about it. This is an even sneakier and more abhorrent retread of two other previous initiatives that were handily defeated over the past decade. You'd think that the two previous defeats of this initiative would have put the matter to rest. Instead, the backers of the initiative have worked harder to create a more deceptive proposal.

Simply put, Proposition 32 on November's ballot is not what it seems. It's presented on the ballot as a sort of "leveling the playing field" act by prohibiting corporations and unions alike from using dues for political purposes. But what

is hidden in all that is that corporations don't use employees dues for politics, they use their profits, and already outspend unions by 15 to 1. The real agenda is to weaken unions. Why? Once unions are out of the way, it will be so much easier for the people behind this measure to privatize public education, cut jobs, wages and our secure retirement.

**Secret super PACs**

The initiative exempts secretive super PACs, which can raise unlimited amounts of money from corporate special interests and billionaire businessmen to support their candidates or defeat their enemies and does nothing to prevent anonymous donors from spending unlimited amounts to influence elections. Corporations have spent hundreds of millions of dollars over the last decade on ballot measures and independent expenditure campaigns in our state. Prop 32 does nothing to change that – and instead, secretive super PACs will become the law of the land in California, with no checks or balances or accountability.



Ron Norton Reel

Locally, CCA chapters will be prevented from contributing to elect faculty-friendly trustees, participate in parcel tax and bond elections. Over the years, our members have become more involved in these elections at the local level because they have recognized the importance of having a voice at the board level. In many cases, it has made a direct difference in the contract our locals have been able to negotiate.

All this sounds paranoid, but it's not. We've seen what happened in Wisconsin and Ohio, when elected officials used their power to attempt to eliminate collective bargaining. Writing in the *Huffington Post*, former Wisconsin teacher Shaun Johnson reported that the average teachers' salary dropped by as much as \$2,000 since Gov. Scott Walker took aim at teachers, and more "strongly conservative education reforms, like voucher programs and the elimination of tenure protections, will arrive unabashedly as a new and very powerful political mandate establishes itself."

But California is the big prize, and California is where we must draw a line in the sand. Come November, community college faculty must join teachers, nurses, firefighters, police, working people and Californians everywhere to protect and uphold the middle class in this state. Vote Yes on Proposition 30 and No on Proposition 32.

# ADVOCATE

The Community College Association exists to protect and promote the well-being of its members through collective bargaining, lobbying and representation activities, thereby advancing universal and quality public education.

It is an affiliate of the California Teachers Association and the National Education Association.

**Community College Association**  
(916) 288-4921

**EDITOR – Dina Martin**  
(650) 552-5491

**CCA OFFICERS**

Ron Norton Reel, *President*  
Mt. San Antonio College  
[ronnortonreel@gmail.com](mailto:ronnortonreel@gmail.com)

Lynette Nyaggah, *Vice President*  
Rio Hondo College  
[lnyaggah@gmail.com](mailto:lnyaggah@gmail.com)

DeWayne Sheaffer, *Secretary*  
Long Beach City College  
[dtsheaffer@gmail.com](mailto:dtsheaffer@gmail.com)

Jim Weir, *Treasurer*  
Sierra College  
[jweir@sierracollege.edu](mailto:jweir@sierracollege.edu)

**CCA STAFF**

Robin Devitt (*Santa Fe Springs*)  
Alan Frey (*Sacramento*)  
Diana Lisi (*Foster City*)  
Marianne Reynolds (*Orange*)

**CCA Community College Consultants**

Lindah Martin  
Bonita Lovell  
Associate Staff

**ADVOCATE STAFF**

Susan Sanz  
Publications Support Specialist

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The CCA Advocate is also available online at the CCA Web site: [www.cca4me.org](http://www.cca4me.org)

## CCA Calendar of Events

| CCA Winter Conference    | Spring Conference and WHO Awards     | CTA President's Conference                |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Feb. 1-3, 2013           | April 26-28                          | July 22-25, 2013                          |
| Hilton Hotel, Costa Mesa | Hyatt Regency Mission Bay, San Diego | Asilomar Conference Grounds Pacific Grove |

Contact 650/577-5184 CTA Regional Resource Center (CCA)  
or register online at [www.CCA4me.org](http://www.CCA4me.org).



# Confessions of a campaign activist

Rio Hondo professor loves to phone bank

## PROFILE

**MARTHA CARREON**, a humanities professor at Rio Hondo College, is passionate about the importance of voting and being involved in campaigns. She is also a die-hard “phone banker” and undoubtedly, in October and up to the election, you will find her on the phone, talking to would-be voters about the importance of voting Yes on Prop. 30 and No on Prop. 32. She shares some of her thoughts on voting, phone banks, and making a difference.

### What have you done in previous campaigns?

During our board elections, I found it fun to actually talk to the people that would make a difference in the outcome of our board. I always personalized the conversation, apologized for calling, identified myself and then gave the spiel about the candidate.

I especially liked to do it in Spanish because there are a lot of people out there that feel more comfortable in their native tongue. It's important to me to tell them that I am not just calling for their vote, but the vote of anyone in the household that could vote – to encourage their whole family to vote. In other words, I emphasize

the importance of voting and what difference it would make to them.

### Do you have any special techniques you'd like to share?

The technique I used was unique. I told the team that I did not want to dial the phones. So – and this really worked – I had two people dialing while I just talked. It went very fast and we realized that the dialing was taking time. When one phone was ringing, I was already finished with the other, etc. I never dialed and everyone wanted to work with me. We would go through the list quickly and had very good responses. I guess that is why it was fun.

### What about this fall?

I will be participating this fall and Lynette (CCA Vice President Lynette Nyaggah, a Rio Hondo faculty) has asked me to work with students on our campus. I am now the advisor to the club “Latinos for Voting,” whose main goal is to get students to register

and to educate them about the issues. I have two to three dynamic students that have now taken training on how to register other students and are recruiting other students to help. It should be great to work with them.

The issues will make a difference in our lives and our economy. Our students will be the leaders in our community. We need to nurture their enthusiasm and encourage them to participate.

They can then see that their participation made a difference.

### Why phone bank?

Phone banking is effective because it reaches those who are not sure how they are going to vote. One has a chance to enlighten them. If we are passionate about our beliefs and issues, the passion will show through as we talk to people. Sincerity is a plus in phone banking and people can sense it. It is not

something that is just reading a paper to the person on the other side, connect with them.



Martha Carreon

# Legislature passes Student Success Act

CCA able to make significant changes to bill

**THE STUDENT SUCCESS ACT OF 2012**, which would significantly restructure student services in California's community colleges was approved by the Legislature on Aug. 30 and expected to be signed by the governor, but not without changes to the law submitted by CCA.

“We maintained all along that students who want to upgrade their skills, obtain certificates to advance their careers, go part-time, learn English and take personal development classes would be penalized by this bill,” said CCA President Ron Norton Reel. “Although the bill was passed by the Legislature, we were able to neutralize some of the more harmful aspects of the legislation.”

The legislation by retiring Sen. Alan Lowenthal, (D-Long Beach), and co-authored by Sen. Carol Liu, (D-La Canada Flintridge), received the support of Community Colleges Chancellor Jack and was passed on a bipartisan vote.

### CCA mustered opposition

CCA mustered opposition to the bill for months in the state Capitol and on local campuses. Faculty at Gavilan College, for example, even produced a YouTube video to highlight their opposition to the bill and promote what they consider to be real student success.

Community college faculty have had an ongoing concern that the “Student Success” recommendations would reduce the number of students in community colleges for reasons other than to transfer to four-year colleges. They were further concerned that the bill was not accompanied by the funding needed to produce stu-

dent success nor did it contain a definition of student success.

By late August, however, enough revisions had been made in committee, that CCA was able to remove its “oppose position” to the legislation.

### Changes made

Among the changes to the bill that CCA was able to make included removing the requirement of a maximum unit cap; broadening categorical funding eligibility to include disadvantaged and disabled students; identifying minimum uniform academic and progress standards so they don't unfairly disadvantage financially needy students; adding student protections and notifications of BOG fee waiver conditions; requiring notification of the availability of student support services.

CCA still remains concerned over the lack of a strategy for measuring the success of all students, including those who may not be transferring to a CSU or UC campus. Students that are still likely to be penalized by not meeting the definition of success might include peace officers, firefighters and nurses who need to take one or two continuing education courses, or students who lack the necessary language, computer and math skills necessary for success.

“We didn't get all of our concerns addressed, but we feel the authors listened to our concerns and responded with some important changes. We will continue to monitor the legislation and continue to provide input as it is implemented,” Reel said.

### We feel the authors listened to our concerns and responded with some important changes.

The Student Success Act is expected to:

- Restructure the way student support services are delivered to improve the assistance that students receive at the beginning of their educational experience. The bill refocuses existing student services resources to support orientation, assessment and education planning services and lays the groundwork to expand these services as more resources become available.
- Provide that campuses using an assessment instrument for student placement utilize a statewide system of common assessment once available, to improve consistency and efficiency within the 112 campus system.
- Require colleges receiving student support service funds to post a student success scorecard to clearly communicate progress in improving completion rates for all students and closing the achievement gap among historically underrepresented students.
- Require students whose fees are waived because of their economic need to meet minimum academic standards.

# This election is too important to sit out

Your collective bargaining rights could be at stake

## OPINION

By Alan Frey, CCA staff consultant

I KNOW IT'S HARD to believe, but I started working with the California Teachers Association 35 years ago right after the Rodda Act was passed and I can attest to the difference collective bargaining has made for faculty in this state.

My previous experience in the state of Connecticut where collective bargaining had been in place for years had given me a unique perspective. Hailing from a state that had long negotiated contracts it was fascinating for me to witness the birth and subsequent maturation of the bargaining process from the ground up and how the impact of negotiating has improved the welfare of college faculty.

### Gains could be undermined

The truth is, faculty in California owe everything to collective bargaining, and all of our gains could be undermined if Prop. 32 is not defeated in November. It's a one-two punch.

Proposition 32, on its face seems simple. However, it's the potential consequences that will impact community college faculty for the rest of their careers.

The issue is deceptive. Although it alleges to cut out campaign and candidate funding for unions and corporations, the reality is that the unions are the major target. The initiative is backed by corporate interests that have sheltered themselves from the impact of the proposal through a series of loopholes that permit massive and unregulated funding for campaigns and candidates.

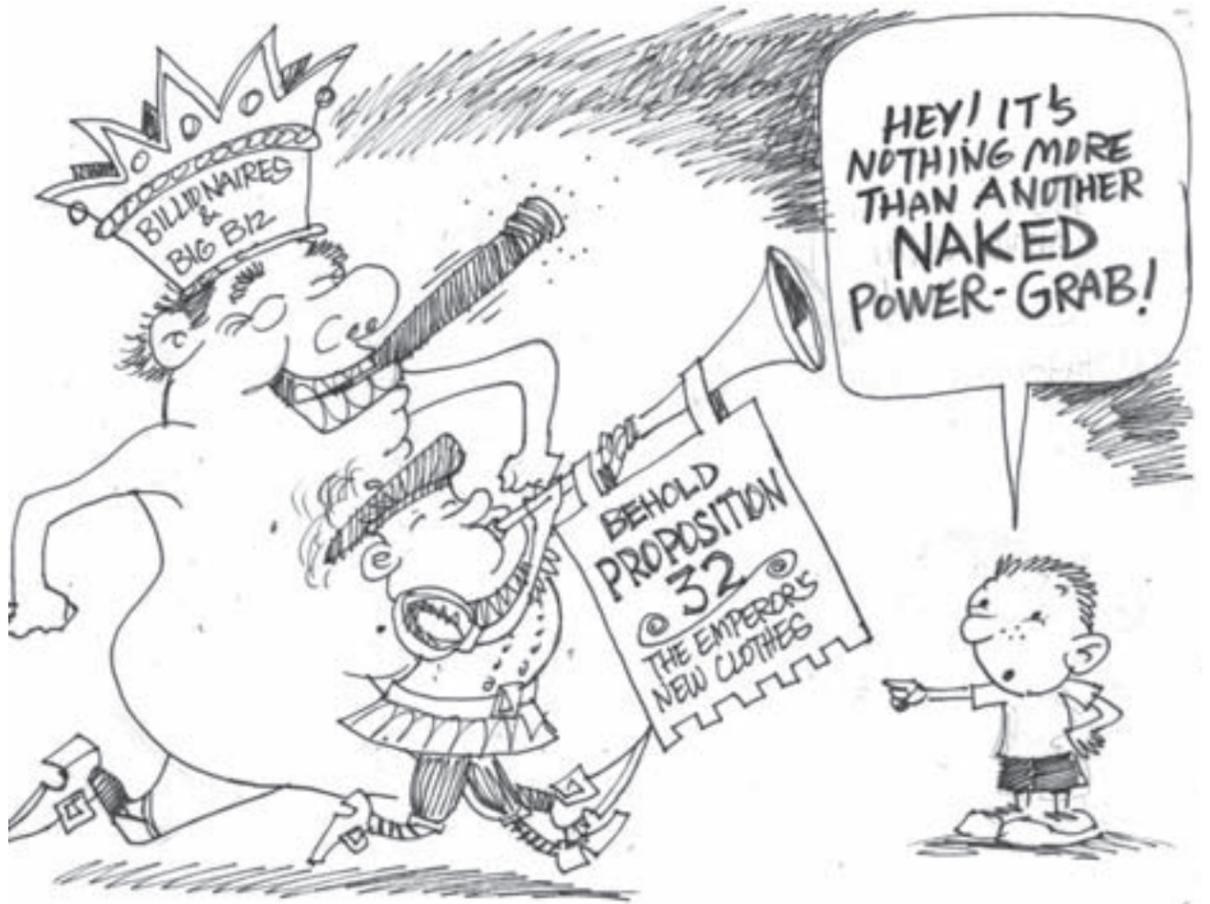
This initiative must be defeated to ensure that unions which represent the middle class have a fighting chance against wealthy corporate interests. At the very least, we want to try to keep the playing field somewhat level.

### Message is simple

Again the message is simple we must defeat Proposition 32.

But with all of that said, the truth is in what has not been revealed. There is an old adage that goes something like this: "There are things you know. There are things you don't know and still there are things you don't know, you don't know." Proposition 32 falls directly in the last category and I will attempt to explain why.

Collective bargaining for community college faculty has been in existence for over 35 years. When passed in 1975 and signed by then, and now, Governor Jerry Brown, college faculty were given the right to negotiate the wages, hours and working conditions under which they are employed. The results have been beneficial to both the faculty and their employers as it has



Richard Crowson

created an atmosphere where the working conditions apply equally to all and the interpretation of the relationship has been solidified.

But the forces against collective bargaining have been lurking in the underbrush for years. Conservative anti-public employee organizations and their leaders now believe it is prime time to repeal the hard-won rights of employees and allow management to impose its will unfettered. Nationwide this trend has surfaced in many states but it has become clear that California is the main target.

### The truth is, faculty in California owe everything to collective bargaining, and all of our gains could be undermined if Prop. 32 is not defeated in November.

So let's think about the future consequences if Proposition 32 passes and unions lose their ability to play in the political arena. Think of the old saying that "once the camel gets its nose in the tent....." and you will have a clear picture of the perils that confront us.

In the college arena we know that management has long sought to reverse the 50 percent law which dictates that half of college expenditures must be spent on instructors' salaries, which in translation means that learning is the major portion of a community colleges mission. Also remember that management wants to kill the 75/25 law that calls for districts to employ more full-time faculty. These

two issues are political measures that would surely be ripe for repeal if the faculty voice is silenced in Sacramento.

Additionally and more ominously, is the threat to collective bargaining. Conservatives hate the fact that employees have rights. There is a firm mindset in administration that in labor relations terms is called "Boulwarism." Named for former General Electric Vice President Lemuel Boulwar, "Boulwarism" is a tactic which, simply stated, says that management knows what's best for their employees. This concept was the gospel among large corporations who have long fought against unions and the right that employees should have a say in the employment relationship.

### Boulwarism is alive

Even now the concept of "Boulwarism" is alive and well in the community colleges. For the first time in our history districts are ignoring the collective bargaining process and employing the deadly game of "unilateral implementation" of the last, best and final offers they make. Long considered a suicidal path for management, the atmosphere in California and nationwide has promulgated such a strong anti-public employee mindset that the imposition of a contract is now contemplated without fear of employee backlash.

In peril are issues for faculty that will upend the relationships that have been built over the past 30 plus years as districts will seek to impose an 18 unit workload, have employees pay out-of-pocket for all fringe benefits, freeze step and column movement at will, mangle our salary schedules, return to nepotism and favoritism of certain pet employees and a host of other dangers too scary to contemplate.

Not only are the working conditions of faculty the learning conditions of students, but faculty would also be prevented from advocating for their students as well.

In short your future is at stake and so is the ability to advocate for your students. Vote NO on Prop. 32.

## Campaign Resources

NEED TO FIND OUT about the November election and how ballot initiatives will affect you? Looking for ways to get involved in the campaign? Interested in using social media to reach out to voters? For the latest news, resources, videos, activities and actions you can take, check out CTA's Campaign website at [www.cta.org/campaign2012](http://www.cta.org/campaign2012)

# • Campaign

Continued from Page 1

teachers and folks from other labor unions who came up to me after service wanting not only support but to canvas the neighborhood and place information on the door steps of houses," he said. "They really want prop 30 to pass and to defeat 32."

Sheaffer said his pastor even conducted a call and response to the congregation at the end of the service to remind them how to vote.

Faculty associations at Hartnell, Gavilan and Monterey Peninsula have put together a local plan to get out the vote and will be working with the area's Labor Federation as well. Hartnell Faculty Association President Ann Wright also spoke at a news conference launching the No on 32 campaign this summer during CTA's Presidents Conference at Asilomar.

Pointing to the severe cuts in community college programs and student services, Wright said, "We know we can't just ask for education funding, we have to advocate for it. The loop-



Ann Wright

holes in Prop 32 will allow special interest groups and PACS to spend millions on campaigns and exert their influence, while hobbling unions who are the major groups who defend the middle class. Proposition 32 is touted as campaign reform, but is unfair in its very design. Some reform!"

on the Prop. 30 and 32 campaign. The Southwestern College Faculty Association is working to elect two trustees and is involved in the Prop. 30 and 32 campaigns at the same time. Along with working in coalition with the local labor federation, faculty members have committed to site visits, gathering voter commitment cards, walking precincts and phone banking.

Eric Maag, the interim president of the Southwestern faculty association, observed that there is still some work to do when it comes to educating faculty and the public on Prop. 32.

"We were finding that a lot of our members thought that Prop. 32 was about campaign finance. Once they knew the details, almost 100 percent changed their minds," he said.



Elizabeth Maloney

## Resolutions of support

Several faculty associations, including Rio Hondo, Long Beach, College of the Canyons, and College of the Siskiyous have presented resolutions supporting Prop. 30 to their Boards of Trustees, most of whom were more than willing to comply. CCA's Board also approved a resolution in support of Prop. 30. Unlike another funding initiative, Prop. 38 on the ballot, Prop. 30 would help prevent further budget cuts to community colleges.

Other college faculty associations are participating in local trustee elections while working



Lynette Nyaggah

**There is so much at stake. One election could end it.**

# • Prop. 30

Continued from Page 1

audits with strict accountability. If Prop. 30 fails, public schools and colleges will be cut by another \$6 billion this year, including an additional \$300 million from the California community college system's \$3.7 billion budget.

Due to budget cuts, enrollment throughout the community college system has decreased by more than 485,000 students since 2008.

## Prevents mid-year cuts

"If Proposition 30 fails, local colleges face even more dramatic cuts in the middle of the academic year," said Community College Chancellor Jack Scott.

Funding for community colleges has been cut \$809 million, or 12 percent, over the past three years. Colleges face another \$338 million cut in January if Proposition 30 does not pass. Scott also noted that from 2008-09 to 2011-12, course sections (classes) have declined nearly 24 percent system-wide.

Under Prop. 30, only the highest earners, couples making more than \$500,000 pay more income tax. A quarter -cent increase in the sales tax rate will still result in consumers paying less sales tax than they have in the past few years. The income tax increase will expire in

## If Proposition 30 fails, local colleges face even more dramatic cuts in the middle of the academic year.

seven years and the sales tax rate increase expires in four years.

The governor is hopeful that California's highest income earners will support the initiative.

"I've gone throughout California and asked people if I could give you a salary next year of \$1 million, would you be willing to pay

another \$4,500 in taxes?" Brown said. "I've not met one person who would turn down that deal."

As governor, Brown said he wants to make sure the voters understand the stakes. "The people will decide, and whatever they decide, I will carry out, but my preference, my strong recommendation is yes on 30 for California."



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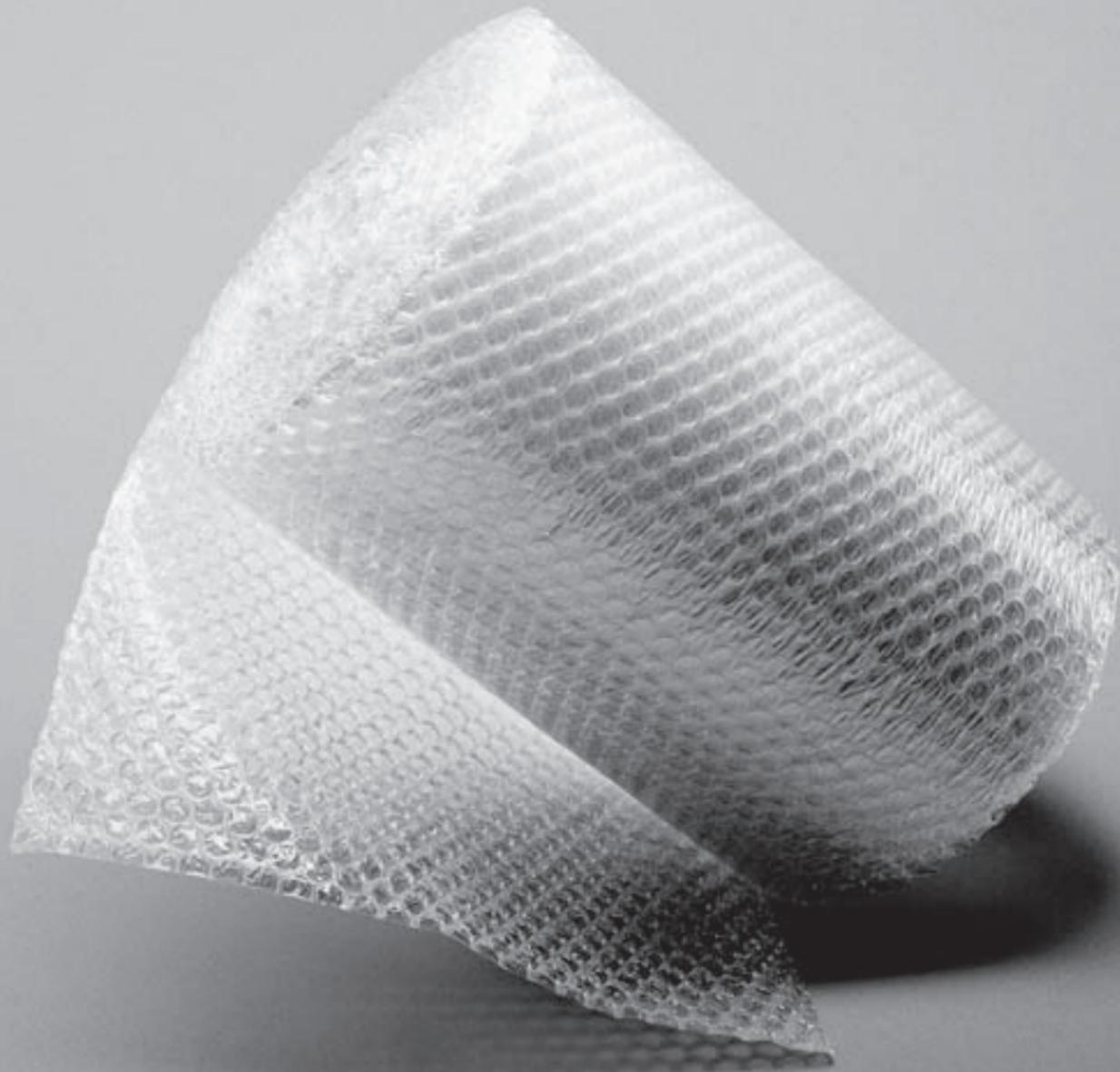


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# Prop 32: a bill of rights for billionaires

Measure would cripple the ability of unions to advocate for the middle class

## ANALYSIS

By John Logan, *professor of labor studies*  
San Francisco State University

**CONSERVATIVE ACTIVISTS** in California are promoting a deceptive ballot proposition that would increase the ability of business groups and billionaires to dominate state elections. The measure, Proposition 32, claims to be an even-handed effort at campaign finance reform – but nothing could be further from the truth. Prop. 32 (or “Stop Special Interest Money Now,” as its big money supporters prefer to call it) would cripple the ability of unions to participate in politics, but have little or no impact on unlimited spending by corporate executives and other wealthy individuals.

### Big business benefits

Data compiled by the non-partisan Center for Investigative Reporting demonstrates that the business interests who would benefit most from Prop. 32 already dominate California election spending.

Between 2001-2011, business interests spent over \$700 million on initiatives, candidates, and parties, while labor unions contributed well under half that amount – just over \$284 million. Wealthy individuals bankrolled a further \$231 million. Under Prop. 32 neither the spending by business interests nor wealthy individuals would face meaningful limitations – indeed, it would likely explode – while that of unions would be all-but eliminated.

The biggest corporate spenders include Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America of Washington, DC, with over \$71

million, PG&E, with over \$66 million, Chevron Corp., with over \$50 million, and the tobacco giants Virginia-based Philip Morris and North Carolina-based R.J. Reynolds, with a combined total of \$65 million. Most of this spending was on initiatives that provide special breaks for corporations. Prop. 32 would not fix that – its many exemptions mean that corporations could still spend big on campaigns and super PACs

Unions are also major players in California politics. The two largest players, the California Teachers Association and the State Council of the Service Employees International Union, together account for \$168 million of spending, well over half of labor’s total spending.

The biggest single contributor, the teachers union, has spent heavily to protect funding for K-12 public education and limit class sizes for California students, not for corporate tax breaks or to block health warnings on tobacco and other carcinogens. Prop. 32’s restrictions against spending through payroll deductions – which is how unions raise money for political campaigns – would virtually eliminate this public interest spending.

The outcome would be to slash spending in support of funding for public education, health and safety, or to protect working Californians, but encourage massive spending by tobacco, pharmaceutical and real estate giants. And we would soon see an avalanche of ballot measures designed to weaken labor standards, targeting wage and hour laws, paid sick leave, health and safety provisions and other essential protections.

Prop. 32 would also have no impact on spending by billionaires, the 0.1% of the electorate who

are currently bankrolling federal super PACs. Over the past decade the top fifty wealthy individuals have spent over \$231 million on California elections. Two of the top three billionaire spenders in California – Jerry Perenchio and Charles Munger, who together have spent over \$30 million – are major contributors to the Prop. 32 campaign. The last thing California needs is a measure that would increase the ability of billionaires to dominate and distort our politics.

These wealthy individuals are seeking to silence the voices of schoolteachers, firefighters and nurses, but are actively involved in buying elections. This shows the deep cynicism behind Prop. 32. Its principal backer, the right-wing Lincoln Club of Orange Country, was a key player in the Supreme Court’s Citizens United decision, which has led to a massive increase in billionaire-funded super PAC spending. The Lincoln Club welcomed Citizens United as a victory for free speech, but now wants voters to believe it supports even-handed campaign finance reform.

Prop. 32 is a “billionaires’ bill of rights,” not an imperfect but well-intentioned effort to tackle special interest spending. If it were to pass, businesses and billionaires who have spent almost a billion over the past decade would dominate California elections even more than they do today, while ordinary Californians would be stripped of an effective voice. It is no wonder that the nation’s leading good governance groups unanimously and unequivocally oppose this effort at deception.

*Logan is director of labor and employment studies at San Francisco State University. This piece is used with author’s permission.*

## What we learned about Mitt

Dispatches from a Massachusetts community college professor

By Donnie McGee, *professor of English,*  
Bristol (Mass.) Community College

**FALL ELECTIONS** are just around the corner. Barack Obama and Mitt Romney are in a close race for the presidency, but with two very different agendas. Romney’s higher education plans translate into more privatization, less federal funding, and diminished access for our students. In contrast, Obama plans to invest considerably in public colleges nationwide. He knows they can provide pathways to prosperity for everyone. As a community college professor from Romney’s home state, I know first-hand what Romney’s education policy looks like.

Community colleges are the last bastion of hope and opportunity for millions of Americans. Obama knows these colleges can trans-

form lives and revitalize communities, and he has pledged billions of dollars in support of these institutions. Romney does not get this.

When Romney was Governor in Massachusetts, students and educators struggled under his leadership. Romney failed to fund public higher education effectively. As college enrollments went up, state funding went down. Educators did more with less. And students paid the price. College fees rose by 63 percent while Romney was in office.

Romney crafted the state budget with a singular resolve: to streamline government and reduce state spending. He sought little input from agencies or elected officials and showed no concern regarding the costs in terms of services terminated or jobs taken away. His spending cuts targeted public education and those who

were most vulnerable – not unlike the Ryan Budget he now supports. Romney did not consider that government has a responsibility to serve all the people.

For Romney, reducing funding to public higher education was, and is, an appropriate way to make government work. He also would eliminate the recently enacted safeguards on student loans and for-profit institutions, simply to steer more money into private control. He fails to understand that a public education system that serves everyone well is a prerequisite for an economy that will effectively serve the nation.

In the past three years, Obama did not accomplish all that we had hoped for, but the nation is moving in the right direction after a cataclysmic recession. For educators who are sitting on the political sidelines, consider the Romney alternative. So much is at stake here. Quality public higher education should be accessible and affordable for everyone. Obama knows that. Romney does not. This fall keep the American Dream alive for our students, too.

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Donnie McGee