

**State Council
Carolyn Doggett
June 10, 2012**

Good morning Council.

I know that we have a very busy day so I'm going to approach my speech a little differently today.

I want to share some of the many things that CTA, through our members and staff are doing for the betterment of public education.

Sometimes we are so busy doing the work, we don't take the time to talk about it and let others know what is happening ... to talk about how our union is making a difference every day for our students, educators and our future.

First, I want to thank Council for approving the CTA Budget and thank Secretary-Treasurer Mikki Cichocki and the Budget Committee for their hard work.

This is certainly not an easy or painless budget.

Honoring our dues formula and the no dues increase, there were cuts – some significant – in many programs.

But I am proud of the way CTA is working through and planned appropriately for the economic downturn.

I am proud of how we have worked and continue to work with our staff unions in addressing cutbacks.

I am committed to making any staff reductions through attrition and the staff unions have been part of that process.

And I am confident that while we may have to do some things differently, we will continue to serve you and all our members.

As Dean said, it's been a busy and challenging year. And if you only listened to the special-interest naysayers we haven't done anything.

After all, we're the status quo, right?

That couldn't be farther from the truth.

With significant input from CTA, the California Department of Education has submitted a California-defined Waiver to escape the burdensome provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act.

Rather than buying into Arne Duncan's bogus ESEA waiver plan that looks a lot like Race to the Top and simply trades one set of mandates for another, we held strong and urged the CDE to go a different direction.

The California Waiver builds upon our current school accountability system and moves the state toward a student growth model.

It eliminates the conflicting federal, AYP system and the goal that all students, based on one test score, reach proficiency by the next school year.

It eliminates labeling schools and districts as failures and it allows California to continue the success we have had in improving lower-performing schools by providing more flexibility in how federal funds are spent.

We'll see if the U.S. Department of Education truly supports local control and grants California's request.

CTA worked with NEA to respond to the latest RTTT proposal from Duncan.

In this fourth round, they are making competitive grants available directly to districts and schools.

There is more flexibility this time around and some pieces of this proposal are a little better.

But there are still a ton of mandates, including teacher evaluation changes.

It's still one-time money.

And a new requirement to have what's virtually an Individual Education Plan for *every* student creates a huge bureaucracy and new paperwork.

CTA is working on a bargaining advisory to assist local chapters, as I'm sure many of you will be hearing about from your administrators, if you haven't already.

CTA sponsored a very successful Chapter President's Lobby Day last month.

More than 200 educators converged on the capitol to talk to lawmakers about the need to pass a state budget quickly and to work together to pass the tax initiative in November and avoid more cuts to our schools, colleges and other essential services.

CTA's Legal Department has been front and center in a number of lawsuits and actions across the state:

Helping members in Adelanto uphold the school board's rejection of the parent trigger, because once again parents were coerced and bullied by the Parent Revolution to sign petitions.

Defending the rights of teachers during the layoff process and working with local chapters to ensure districts follow seniority requirements.

CTA supported the United Educators of San Francisco as an Administrative Law Judge rejected the district's attempt to create so-called "zone schools" and to allow the "wholesale skipping" of the law at those schools.

A similar challenge is playing out in Sacramento.

And CTA continues to work with UTLA to appeal the first ruling and clear violation of the education code that started these back-handed attempts to undermine teacher employment rights.

Also, CTA and NEA are closely monitoring the new lawsuit filed by the latest group of public education and teacher bashers ... Students Matter.

Students Matter includes Michelle Rhee, Eli Broad and Silicon Valley millionaire manufacturer David Welch.

This suit challenges the five California laws that define the employment rights of teachers, including requirements for RIF notifications, permanent status and due process rights to a hearing before being fired.

Right now, this case appears to be a lot of media and political grandstanding, but CTA is watching it.

Despite, as you know, what are extremely tough times to be bargaining, where maintaining current salaries and avoiding more furlough days are huge victories, CTA field and negotiations staff have worked with some chapter to bargain beyond impressive contracts:

Just to name a few...

a 3.5 percent salary schedule increase for our members in the Belmont-Redwood Shores Teachers Association

a 4 percent bonus for Old Adobe TA.

and 6 percent salary hike, along with benefit increases for La Honda-Pescadero TA.

CTA's Quality Education Investment Act continues to help lower-performing schools:

345 QEIA schools met their growth targets last year.

Nearly 50 schools increased their API scores by more than 50 points.

35 schools had API scores above the state goal of 800.

And 15 additional QEIA schools exited Program Improvement.

When you involve teachers in the solutions, you get results.

The IPD Strand at Summer Institute in July already has more than 160 participants as CTA continues to lead the charge to prepare educators for the new Common Core State Standards.

After attending a recent CTA training, a teacher commented, “Why isn’t our district telling us any of this? If it wasn’t for CTA, I’d know nothing.”

You are going to discuss and vote on the Teacher Evaluation Framework later this morning.

I’ve got to tell you this is CTA leading education reform and putting teachers in control of our profession.

Meanwhile, the CTA Institute for Teaching is now in its eighth year of promoting teacher-driven change.

Merced High School last month completed a three-year Positive Deviance effort of improving student learning by focusing on the strengths of students, rather than weaknesses.

The Twin Rivers Algebra Success Academy is expanding to Elk Grove, Eureka, Paradise and Riverdale.

Nearly five dozen CTA members have started more than 20 regional Teacher Think Tanks to engage in conversations around education policy, professional growth and improving student learning.

And the IFT is just about to announce this year’s grant winners.

A record 53 applications from educators and local chapters were received.

And honestly, these are just a handful of items CTA has done in the last few months.

We are able to do this work and make a difference for educators across the state because we collectively exercise the power of the ballot.

And by that, I mean our voice and our right to vote. We couldn't get any of this work done without engaging in politics.

In a famous speech calling on voting rights for African Americans, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. demanded, "Give us the ballot."

I'm going to paraphrase here, but the essence of the speech was:

Give us the ballot and we will no longer have to worry the federal government about our basic rights.

Give us the ballot and we don't have to plead with Congress to do what's right.

Give us the ballot and we will take matters into our own hands.

I'm proud to say CTA has done that repeatedly over the years.

Next year marks the 150th Anniversary of CTA.

And I am always reminded that CTA was founded for one reason and one reason only ... and that was to have a voice in the political process.

When the California Educational Society met in San Francisco in 1863, there were 100 in attendance – and they were all men.

The first piece of business was to pass a resolution asking the Legislature and the voters to increase “school apportionments.”

We have been involved in politics ever since.

Last week’s election is a perfect example.

94 percent of the CTA recommended candidates for Assembly, State Senate and Congress were successful.

I’m going to come back to one very close Assembly race in a bit.

In local school board races, there were 17 candidates funded by our ABC PAC.

Eight won.

CTA supported 12 local school bonds or parcel taxes.

Nine passed.

A pretty decent outcome.

That is the good work of the ABC Committee and local chapters and members.

This new primary system of top two voters – regardless of party – advancing to the November Election has certainly changed the political landscape.

With 800,000 votes still uncounted, there are 15 undecided races.

One of them is Assembly District 46, here in Los Angeles.

This race pitted four Democrats against one Republican, and more importantly is the inaugural poster child race for Michelle Rhee and her organization Students First.

Their candidate is charter school operator Brian Johnson.

As Director of Larchmont Charter School, he established an admittance policy that gave preference to students whose parents could afford to pay a “founders fee” to the school.

A policy that was so blatantly discriminatory, even the LA School Board forced him to rescind it once it was exposed.

A group of four well-financed and well-coordinated Independent Expenditure committees ... backed by Rhee, Gloria Romero and Democrats for Education Reform, the California Charter Schools Association, and a bunch of out-of-state millionaires – who don’t have kids in California public schools – spent more than \$1.6 million trying to buy an Assembly seat for Mr. Johnson.

I say trying, because the race for second place is a dead heat between Johnson and the Republican candidate.

This race is a battle for what we, as educators and we as CTA, believe in for public education.

It’s about the right of every student to have access to a quality public school.

It is a battle about the truth in education reform.

And because we are not afraid to stand up for what we believe in.

Because we are not afraid to stand up to these special interests whose education agenda is to point fingers and blame teachers ... CTA also spent a little money in this race.

Five times less than they did, but I would like to show you our television ad.

As I said, absentee ballots are still being counted in this race.

We won't know the outcome for at least another week.

But this year is just one example of how we can have the power of the ballot.

In the past 10 years CTA members have:

- defeated school vouchers,
- passed more than \$20 billion in statewide school construction bonds,
- lowered the vote requirement to pass local school bonds,
- defeated attempts to eliminate the state's class size reduction program,
- defeated bills on merit pay, assaults on our collective bargaining rights and attacks on a secure retirement,
- passed legislation to support lower-performing schools,
- stopped a terrible reauthorization of NCLB that would have made the law worse,

- elected thousands of pro-education candidates to local school boards,
- passed legislation to recognize the contribution of GLBT Americans and Americans with disabilities in social science instruction
- elected a Superintendent of Public Instruction who has included educators every step of the way,
- and when the Governor broke his promise in 2005, defeated an all-out assault on public education, school funding, educator rights and the rights of union members,
- and last May, CTA organized a week-long take-over of the State Capitol that had never been seen before.

More than 50,000 educators, parents and students participated in various actions throughout the state.

This is the power of the ballot.

And this is the voice we will lose if the Special Exemptions Act is passed.

I know we have defeated similar initiatives before, but we must not take anything for granted.

You saw their deceptive video.

We have to tell the real story in this campaign.

Our voice, our democracy, and a government of the people, by the people, and for the people are at stake.

Let's celebrate our 150th year, the same way we founded this organization...speaking out for our students, speaking out for educators, and speaking up for what's right.

Bring me the ballot!

Bring me November!