

Council Decides – October 2011

CTA Will Lead the Way in Initiative Battles Ahead

In his [first speech](#) to State Council as CTA president, Dean E. Vogel vowed that the 325,000-member union will lead the way when it comes to defeating a deceptive paycheck initiative about to qualify for the November 2012 ballot, and in passing a school funding measure that's still in the works. CTA is part of a broad coalition seeking a public funding initiative that supports education and all essential public services.

Council members voted to oppose the paycheck scam, called the “Stop Special Interest Money Now Act.” They also approved CTA spending up to \$8 million next year to oppose or support ballot measures. Vogel reminded delegates that whatever coalition funding initiative is settled on in the next few months, Council policies say it must be based on the union's principles of [tax fairness](#) and it must be based on progressive taxation. Also, it should generate at least \$8 billion to help heal years of unprecedented cuts.

Noting that U.S. corporations already outspend unions by about 15 to 1, Vogel vowed that CTA will work with a strong labor alliance to defeat the [paycheck deception scam](#) next year for a third time since 1998. By banning all California unions from using payroll-deducted funds for political purposes, the initiative would unfairly silence the political voices of the middle class, while letting wealthy corporate interests spend as much as they want. They are picking this fight here because “California is one of the last union strongholds,” Vogel warned. [Learn more about the paycheck deception initiative.](#)

On another front, [CTA's recent support](#) of the Occupy Wall Street movement, Vogel said, has everything to do with public education. “Public education is central to rebuilding our country and to shrinking the growing chasm between the haves and the have-nots.”

Attacks on Unions Are Nationwide

Coordinated attacks on collective bargaining and basic union rights are mounting across the country, CTA Executive Director Carolyn Doggett said in her [speech](#), and the battle is on “for the very heart and soul of the America we believe in.”

“It's a battle for an organized democracy that values economic opportunity, equality and social justice for every American. And it's a battle for the belief in every child — not just a select few,” Doggett said.

This year alone, 11 states passed anti-collective-bargaining and dues reduction bills, and educators and public employees in six states lost full bargaining rights. There are threats to collective bargaining rights in 20 other states. In addition, “38 states introduced legislation this year to impede voters at every step of the electoral process,” Doggett said. Six states now require voters to show a government-issued ID before they can cast ballots.

Attacks on public education continue, but Doggett reminded delegates that those attacks come from a small segment of the population. Polls show the public strongly trusts teachers. A recent CTA poll showed that 70 percent of California voters “had a favorable opinion of teachers and CTA’s ratings were at an all-time high,” she said.

Invoking labor expert [Dr. Elaine Bernard](#), who directs the Harvard Trade Union Program, Doggett said building community coalitions and showing union solidarity are critical as we move ahead. “Our future really is up to all of us, and the best way to predict the future is to create it!”

We Are the 99 Percent: Delegates Join ‘Occupy LAUSD’ Protest

In an emotional show of solidarity, scores of Council delegates — educators from across California — joined CTA President Dean E. Vogel in a march on Oct. 22 from the Council hotel in downtown Los Angeles to join United Teachers Los Angeles President Warren Fletcher and UTLA members at their “Occupy LAUSD” protest at the headquarters of the nation’s second-largest school district. The [ongoing UTLA protest](#) there is about keeping public schools public. It’s to stop the influence of billionaires like Bill Gates and Eli Broad in the district and to demand the richest 1 percent pay their fair share of taxes at a time of teacher layoffs and overcrowded classrooms.

Vogel joined the chants of “We are — we teach — the 99 percent!” More chants of “We are one! We are one!” greeted his remarks at the protest rally as Vogel detailed Council’s willingness to answer a call to action from UTLA delegates during its meeting as a sure sign that CTA members believe “an injury to one of us is an injury to all of us.” Watch a short [CTA video](#) of Vogel’s remarks, and his [television news interview](#) from the picket line.

CFA Call to Action: Nov. 8-9 Picketing, Nov. 17 Two-Campus Action

To protest the ongoing privatization of CSU campuses and lavish executive salaries, [California Faculty Association](#) leaders asked Council delegates to join them on [informational picket lines](#) on all 23 CSU campuses on Nov. 8-9. A one-day Nov. 17 concerted action at CSU East Bay in Hayward and CSU Dominguez Hills in Carson is about unpaid wages in the previous CFA contract.

A CFA [flier](#) to Council delegates warned: “For 12 years, California State University Chancellor Charles Reed has attempted to turn the People’s University into a for-profit corporation with highly paid executives. We don’t want to become a degree mill that rips off working people and saddles them with enormous student debt. Enough is enough.”

The showdown also concerns bargaining proposal take-backs and massive student fee hikes. The Nov. 8-9 picketing locations vary by date. Find the date of the CSU campus picket line nearest you by downloading a document [here](#).

Co-Producer of ‘American Teacher’ Speaks at Council

Delegates were inspired by former teacher and CTA member Ninive Calegari of San Francisco, the co-producer of the new documentary *American Teacher*. She described making her dream

come true of telling the real story of challenges facing public school educators, and was the keynote speaker at the Oct. 21 dinner to kick off the weekend, with many educators gathering to watch a CTA screening of the film the following evening.

Narrated by actor and public education advocate Matt Damon, the film follows the paths of four educators who talk about the power of teaching and its many rewards and challenges. It shows why teachers need to be supported and valued. Watch the film's [trailer](#). Read more about [the film's themes](#) in the CTA *California Educator* magazine, or enjoy a [Q & A with Calegari](#).

- **CALL FOR QUESTIONS:** Did you attend the screening on Saturday and have a question you'd like Ninive Calegari, the co-producer, to answer? E-mail it to jgoldman@cta.org by November 9, and it could be printed with her response in an upcoming *Educator* magazine.

Other Actions: Board Member Elected, Candidates Supported

In other significant actions, Council delegates elected Kendall Vaught to the CTA Board of Directors for District M and Laura Finco to the CTA/ABC Committee, District C.

Council also:

- Approved endorsement of state Senate, Assembly and congressional candidates for 2012 races on a tiered basis, ranking levels of support from 1 to 5, strong to weak. The rankings are in the full State Council [report book](#) on pages A-12 to A-18.
- Affirmed its support for allowing the Legislature to approve the state budget and revenue increases based on majority rule, rather than a two-thirds vote. Council approved a motion to have the Political Involvement Committee evaluate any legislation or legitimate ballot measures regarding simple-majority vote efforts and to allow local chapters and members to support and encourage legitimate efforts toward this goal.