

Fourth District Legislative Advocacy Communicator



FOURTH DISTRICT ADVOCACY TEAM

MARCH 2011

California State PTA takes budget position: "Let the voters decide!"

Urges PTAs to tell legislators to protect education funding by putting a tax extension on the ballot

The California State PTA (CAPTA) has issued a Legislative Action Alert urging its members to speak up and send this message to Sacramento legislators: "Let the voters decide! Protect education funding by putting a tax extension on the ballot."

The call to action was sent to units, councils, and districts across the state with this message:

"Public education in California continues to be threatened. Despite more than \$18 billion in cuts in recent years, a further reduction of at least \$2 billion (or \$350 per student) will occur unless the Legislature takes action soon.

"March [10] is the deadline for lawmakers to place a ballot measure before California voters to extend current tax rates. Your legislators need to hear from you right

LAST CHANCE TO REGISTER!

DON'T MISS OUT -



Sacramento Safari

March 21-22, 2011

Got a voice? Got children? SPEAK OUT!

Register now at

www.fourthdistrictpta.org/legislation/sac-safari.html

Learn about education policy and the workings of our state government. Hear from policy makers and elected representatives. Sign up today! **DEADLINE: MARCH 10**

- Rick Simpson, Deputy Chief of Staff to Assembly Speaker Perez
- Mac Taylor, California State Legislative Analyst
- Patricia Rucker, State Board of Education
- Sherry Skelly Griffith, Assn CA School Admin, Legislative Advocate
- Brad Strong, Children Now, Senior Director for Education Policy
- Senator Alan Lowenthal, Senate Education Committee Chairman
- CDE Dep. Supts.: Deb Sigman, Lupita Alcala, Bill Ellerbee
- Jo A.S. Loss, President California State PTA
- Debbie Look, Director of Legislation California State PTA
- Paul Richman, Executive Director California State PTA...and more!

Calendar of Events

Advocacy Roundtable:

Friday, April 15, 9:30-11:00 a.m. at FVUSD Board Room

2011 Sacramento Safari:

Monday, March 21 – Tuesday, March 22; register by March 10th. *Be sure to vote to approve your representative!*

Annual Creative Edge Lecture:

Wednesday, March 30, 10-11:30 a.m. at Segerstrom Concert Hall – "Launch a Creative Revolution" by Sir Ken Robinson; \$35; www.scfta.org

2011 Calif. State PTA Convention, Long Beach:

Events run April 28 – May 1. Legislation workshops: *From Issues to Action – All Politics are Local!* (Thursday); *What Every PTA President Needs To Know About Advocacy* (Friday); *Hot Topics: Get the Latest From Sacramento and D.C.* (Friday); *How To Be Heard in Sacramento* (Saturday). www.capta.org

now!

"California State PTA supports a balanced approach to solving the state's \$26 billion budget deficit. This approach includes additional revenues to protect against even deeper cuts to education and children's services. The Governor has proposed putting an extension of certain current tax rates for five years on a special election ballot. This proposal will provide voters with a direct opportunity to help stabilize the budget and protect education and other essential programs from further cuts.

"The first step is to persuade two-thirds of legislators in both the Senate and the Assembly to vote to place this measure on the ballot for a special election in June.

"Contact your legislators TODAY to urge them to place this measure on the ballot. Speak up for children!

"We are PTA - If not us, then who? Remember: The time to act is now!"

CAPTA has given simple instructions on how to contact legislators, with live links available on the capta.org website:

1. Find your Senator and Assembly members' contact information.
2. Call them TODAY in their district or Capitol offices. Here is a sample phone script: *Hello, my name is _____, and I am a PTA member in _____ (name of city). I want to urge Senator/Assemblymember _____ to put the tax*

extension measure on the June 2011 special election ballot. I support a balanced approach to solving the state's budget deficit so that deeper cuts to education and children's services can be avoided. Voters should have the opportunity to decide on this important issue. My child(ren) attend ____ (name of schools) and I believe these revenues are needed for their future. Thank you.

3. Fax or mail in a letter from you and/or your children about the importance of public education to your family. Here is an example of the text for your letter to use as a guide (but a letter in your own words is better than a form letter): *Dear Assemblymember or Senator _____: As a parent and a PTA member at _____ (name of school), I am writing to urge you to put the tax extension measure on the June 2011 special election ballot. I support a balanced approach to solving the state's budget deficit so that deeper cuts to education and children's services can be avoided. Voters should have the opportunity to decide on this important issue that will affect the future success of my children and of California. Be sure to include your full name and address in the letter.*
4. Urge your PTA to send a letter to the representatives in your area. Here is sample letter to use as a guide: *Dear Assemblymember or Senator _____: On behalf of _____ (name of PTA), representing ____ (# of members) members in _____ (city or county) we are writing to urge you to put the tax extension measure on the June 2011 special election ballot. We support a balanced approach to solving the state's budget deficit so that deeper cuts to education and children's services can be avoided. Voters should have the opportunity to decide on this important issue that will affect the future success of all children in California.*
5. Attend a school board meeting in your community or contact your local school board members and urge the board to adopt a resolution calling for extension of the temporary tax increases. (A sample resolution from the California School Boards Association is available on the capta.org website).

The key to CAPTA's message is for legislators to find a balanced approach to solving the state's budget deficit so that deeper cuts to education and children's services can be avoided. It is important for all members to offer a consistent message to best leverage our strength in num-

Ask the Advocacy Team

If you have any questions concerning advocacy issues, please contact us at: advocacy@fourthdistrictpta.org.

Key PTA Links

www.fourthdistrictpta.org – Click on Advocacy

www.capta.org – Select from menu: **Programs and Services: Advocacy** and **Children's Issues: Legislation**

www.pta.org – Click on Take Action

bers. Remember that when you speak as a member of PTA, you speak on behalf of all children, youth, and families. Our organization has experienced members who collectively volunteer millions of hours in our public schools each year, and offers strength in diversity, representing parents, grandparents, community members, students, school board trustees, administrators, educators, and school site staff members, across many ethnic and socioeconomic groups, and with many different religious beliefs and political persuasions. Together, we unite to speak with one voice for every child.

Current legislative priorities

To help you to be a better advocate, it is useful to know California State PTA's legislative priorities for 2010-11. Advocacy efforts focus on four major areas: Parent involvement; education; health; and community concerns. Accordingly, these are the year's major priorities:

- Reforming the state budget process and school finance system.
- Securing adequate funding for education and children's services.
- Eliminating the achievement gap.
- Ensuring access for all children to a complete and comprehensive education.

CAPTA has taken these specific positions regarding the overall state budget and school finance reform, to address our most immediate structural concerns:

- Support constitutional amendments to reduce the voting margin in the state legislature for passage of the state budget and revenue measures from the current two-thirds to a 55% vote or simple majority.
- Support legislation and/or ballot measures to lower the requirement to pass a local school parcel tax from the current two-thirds threshold to a 55% supermajority.
- Reform the school finance system to ensure alignment of resource allocations with the programs and services all children need to meet academic standards.

These positions support our commitment to ensuring that every child obtains a high quality public education.