



Unionews

Volume 9 Number 4

February 25, 2004

Local 4909

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CCFT Recommendations for March 2nd

The progress made over the last few years in education funding, and consequently the ability of schools to deliver quality public education, has been severely compromised by the recession, fall in revenues to the state, and the state budget crisis that resulted. Without fundamental reform in the way the budget process works in California, we will continue to see declining funding. Students will suffer, and so will the future of the state of California.

There is an alternative. Vote YES on Proposition 55 (Educational Facilities Bond) and YES on Proposition 56 (the Budget Accountability Act). Proposition 55 helps rebuild our aging school infrastructure. Proposition 56 will reform the state budget process, making it possible for legislators to pass a state budget that will ensure a quality education for all Californians.

Why Yes on 56?

While the need to pass proposition 55 is evident in various buildings around Cuesta College and other local public schools, the reasons to vote for 56 may be less obvious. Here's the deal with 56:

Prop. 56 was put on the March 2 state ballot by a coalition of education groups and public sector unions, including the CFT. It will reform the broken state budget process by making the Governor and Legislature accountable for adopting a budget on time. It will return the state budget process to the people. The voters elect legislators to create laws, design social programs, and devise and enact a budget to make sure the state functions the way it is supposed to. But because of the burdensome two-thirds legislative supermajority required in California to pass the state budget, we have been held hostage by a tyranny of the minority. This has meant state budgets have been late seventeen of the past twenty-five years. In 2003, the budget was 67 days late and passed along a huge deficit to the next year. Real people, including students, seniors, and the disabled are hurt by the legislature's inability to pass a timely and efficient budget.

California is one of only three states (the others are Arkansas and Rhode Island) that require more than a simple legislative majority to pass the state budget. Proposition 56 will lower the two-thirds supermajority to 55%, enabling the legislature to pass a budget on time and do its job properly.

Proposition 56 will also cause the Governor and legislators to permanently lose their salaries for every day after the budget deadline until the budget is passed, requires the legislature to remain in session and work on the budget until it is signed, and requires the state to set aside a "rainy day" fund of at least 5% in good times so that budget cuts and tax increases will be less likely in challenging economic times.

(... Continued on pg. 2)

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(Election Recommendations Continued. . .)

On Tuesday, March 2, vote YES on Proposition 56

Post Script: Propositions 57 and 58 are a bit problematic. Marilyn Rossa explains, "CFT community college locals are still divided about whether or not to support propositions 57 and 58. I would say that most seem to be leaning toward supporting the propositions because the budget deficit could be disastrous for students as well as for faculty and staff jobs. On the other hand, some believe now is the time to finally restructure the California tax system. CFT has of yet not taken a position; CCFT has followed suit. Personally, I may vote against 57 and 58; then again, I might vote for them while holding my nose."

CCFT Executive Board Endorses Stew Jenkins for the 33rd Assembly District

The CCFT Executive Board voted unanimously to endorse candidates Stew Jenkins for the 33rd Assembly District seat. Mr. Jenkins' primary concerns were related to health care, energy and the environment, budgetary matters, and education. During a question and answer session with the EB, Mr. Jenkins told us, "I am 100% labor friendly and continue to be a union member myself." Mr. Jenkins also has the endorsement of Cal Poly's faculty union (CFA). He is a 42-year SLO county resident and graduate of SLO High and Cal Poly. Please visit www.electstewjenkins.org for more information.

Gaining a labor friendly representative is especially important during these trying times. Stew Jenkins has assured us that he will fight for labor interests. On the other hand, you could vote for Sam Blakeslee who, according to Stew Jenkins, recently said at a recent candidates' forum that "We could all get a lot more done, if we could get rid of unions." The choice is pretty clear from our perspective.

American Federation of Teachers Endorses John Kerry

Citing John Kerry's vision and record that will help "all citizens to achieve the American dream and keep our nation strong and secure," the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) endorsed John Kerry for President. The AFT represents 1.3 million pre-K through 12th-grade teachers, higher education faculty and academic staff; healthcare professionals; and state, local and federal employees.

"John Kerry, a decorated Vietnam veteran, has demonstrated through a long and distinguished career of public service that he will be a strong voice for all Americans and that he has the knowledge, background and ability to move this nation forward," said AFT President Sandra Feldman.

Feldman emphasized that Kerry understands that public schools and teachers need support if they are going to ensure that every child reaches his or her potential. "He will make fulfilling these needs a priority - from fixing our aging school buildings, reducing class size, recruiting and retaining quality teachers and giving them the resources they need to do their jobs, to making sure that every child comes to school healthy. He will fight to maintain equal opportunities in higher education and to make college more affordable for all," she said.

CCFT Welcomes New Members

- Jennifer Barber, Part-time, English
- Cherie Chaney, Part-time, Counseling
- Katherine Neidhardt, Part-time, Social Sciences
- Joan Foster, Part-time, Library

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Board Member Puts the Chill on Employee's First Amendment Rights

by Matthew Fleming

The CCFT Executive Board was made aware of a letter sent by Angela Mitchell, the President of the SLOCCCD Board of Trustees, to a classified employee at Cuesta College. This letter was a response by President Mitchell to the employee's comments at the February 4 Board of Trustees Meeting regarding a lack of accurate documentation on the works cited to adopt President Rosenwasser's new salary schedule. We feel that a reprinting of this letter as well as a response letter from CFT's Field Representative is necessary to make the Cuesta Faculty aware of the grievous nature of Angela Mitchell's correspondence.

-----REPRINT-----

February 6, 2004

TO: CLASSIFIED EMPLOYEE

FR: Angela Mitchell, President, SLOCCCD Board of Trustees

RE: Response to Your Comments at February 4 Board of Trustees Meeting

As an employee of SLOCCCD, you are required to adhere to Board policies. Had you followed Board Policy 2300 "Principles of Operation" before making your comments at the Board's February 4, 2004 meeting, you would have discussed your issues about the recently approved salary schedule for the position of Superintendent/President with Dr. Rosenwasser. Had you done that you would have learned the following: [President Mitchell then proceeds to list 5 reasons how and why the board adopted President Rosenwasser's salary schedule].

[continued. . .] I remind you that employees are hired to provide service required of their position during their work hours. In the future please follow Board Policy 2300 if you have an issue you want to raise with the Board of Trustees. Professionalism, courtesy, and integrity are expected of all employees. The Board has already adopted standard operating principles that apply to it and all employees. A review of those will show you the principle related to communication and courtesy. If you have further questions or disagreements, raise them first with your supervisor and then Superintendent/President Rosenwasser before bringing them to the Board of Trustees.

C: Board of Trustees

Dr. Marie E. Rosenwasser

-----REPRINT-----

From: Tom Tyner [CFT Field Representative]

Sent: Friday, February 20, 2004 12:13 PM

To: Ilene French

Subject: In response to your letter to [a classified employee]

In response to your letter to [faculty name], CCCUE respectfully disagrees with your opinion that [she] was out of line in speaking to the Board of Trustees.

It appears that the intent of your letter was to chill the constitutional first amendment rights of an employee, who has the right, as does any citizen, to speak to the board on matters of public interest/concern. Nothing in Board policy can deny an employee his/her constitutional rights, and while the Superintendent/President may desire that all communications from employees come through her prior to going to the Board, she does not have the legal power to deny an employee access to the Board.

Moreover, it would seem that the Board, rather than discouraging communication from its employees, would encourage such communication since the Board is the employer for all employees and should have an interest in their input regarding the affairs of the District. To restrict all communications from employees to the Board by requiring they be filtered through the President/Superintendent is not only illegal but also discourages honest, open communication between the Board and its employees. It is not in the best interests of the Board or the District to have only one line of communication open with employees--the administrative line--or to discourage in any manner communication from employees to the Board. [This letter was written after consultation with CCCUE's legal counsel.]



Payroll Deduction Authorization For Committee on Political Education

(Type or print neatly!)

Name: (last) _____ (first) _____ (m.i.) _____

Social Security # _____

I hereby authorize payroll deduction from my salary for the monthly payment (excluding June and July) in the amount of \$_____ to the Cuesta College Federation of Teachers Committee on Political Education (COPE). This authorization shall remain in effect until I revoke it in writing to the CCFT Secretary-Treasurer and the Cuesta College Payroll Office and shall be effective as of my next pay warrant following its submission to the employer.

Signature

Date

(Note: Payroll deductions to the Committee on Political Education paid to AFT/CFT locals are not deductible for federal income tax purposes.)

Return to CCFT, c/o Mark Tomes, DSPS, Cuesta College, P.O. Box 8106, SLO, CA 93403-8106

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