

## **Message Points for CTA Members on the Governor's Special Election**

**September 8, 2005**

### **General Message Points**

- The Governor's special election initiatives are bad ideas that take California in the wrong direction. They seek to blame teachers, firefighters and nurses for California's problems.
- The initiatives that the Governor has put on the ballot for the special election are all part of a broader campaign against public workers and workers' rights. These initiatives give the Governor and his corporate and right-wing allies the power to cut education and health care, break collective bargaining agreements, promote privatization, and silence public employees if they try to speak up.
- Props. 74, 75 and 76 are part of one agenda to dramatically shift political power toward the Governor and his allies. Teachers, nurses, police and firefighters successfully stood up to Schwarzenegger when he tried to cut education, health care, and public safety. Now Prop. 76 would give the Governor unchecked power to make those cuts, without consulting anyone. Props. 74 and 75 specifically target teachers and other public employees to blame them for the problems in California and to make sure they can't speak up against Schwarzenegger.
- The conservative extremists backing Schwarzenegger and sponsoring all these initiatives have a hidden agenda to promote vouchers, silence teachers and eventually dismantle public education altogether.

### **Proposition 74 – The Blame Teachers Initiative**

- Prop. 74 extends the probationary period for teachers from two to five years and allows districts to dismiss any teacher who has two consecutive bad evaluations. These changes to the dismissal system are unnecessarily harsh and rob teachers of their right to a fair hearing. And under Prop. 74, teachers cannot challenge the content of any negative evaluations by administrators.
- Prop. 74 targets teachers and empowers administrators and school board bureaucrats. It gives principals more power to fire teachers without oversight from anyone. This initiative requires yearly evaluations of both probationary and permanent teachers and allows administrators to fire any teacher who receives just two consecutive negative performance evaluations.

- Instead of working with teachers to improve education, the Governor is attempting to blame them for the problems our schools face.
- Prop. 74 does not address a single one of the reforms that teachers know we really need to improve our schools. Prop. 74 doesn't reduce class sizes, provide new textbooks, computers, or other basic materials for our students, improve teacher training and support, or provide a single penny more in education funding.
- Opponents of Prop. 74 say that there is absolutely no academic evidence that increasing the probationary period for new teachers improves teacher performance or student achievement. California already has a teacher shortage. Prop. 74 will make it even harder to recruit new teachers because it adds 3 years in which probationary teachers have no rights.

### **Proposition 75 – The Hidden Agenda Initiative**

- Prop. 75 is another initiative that is not what it seems. The man who wrote Prop. 75 says he was urged on by one of Governor Schwarzenegger's top advisors, and admits the real idea is to target teachers who have challenged Schwarzenegger's bad ideas by hitting them – and only them – with new political restrictions, so they can't protect education funding and teachers' rights. The words on Prop. 75 may be fine, but the hidden agenda is just scary.
- Last time Governor Schwarzenegger tried to cut education and break his promise to fund our schools, teachers and CTA stood up to him and successfully fought back. Now Schwarzenegger and the out-of-state extremists and big corporations that support him are backing Prop. 75, because it targets teachers with new political restrictions that will reduce CTA's ability to fight back the next time Schwarzenegger and his allies go after school funding, try to eliminate teacher tenure, or promote vouchers.
- Prop. 75 could hurt CTA's ability to speak up against politicians and initiatives that target public education, such as measures on the ballot this November that change teacher tenure and overturn the Proposition 98 school funding guarantee. And by silencing CTA, Prop. 75 would only embolden those who want to establish teacher merit pay, make vouchers universal, and eventually dismantle public education entirely.
- Prop. 75 isn't necessary because current law already protects workers' rights. Under federal law, no teacher or other public employee can be forced to join a union and contribute to politics. In fact, every member of CTA has the option to opt out of political contributions.

## **Proposition 76 – The Cut School Funding Initiative**

- Prop. 76 gives the Governor unchecked power over the state budget and destroys our system of checks and balances. Under Prop. 76, whenever the Governor declares a fiscal emergency, he is free to make midyear cuts to whatever he wants, including education, without consulting anyone. That kind of unchecked power is just dangerous. And even if you trust this Governor, who knows what future Governors might do with this power.
- Prop. 76 cuts school funding by \$4 billion and overturns the minimum school funding protections approved by California voters when they passed Proposition 98. Prop. 76 means the Governor will never have to repay the \$2 billion he borrowed from our schools and eliminates the requirement that the state repay any money that it borrows from the schools.
- The midyear cuts allowed by Prop. 76 will be particularly disruptive to our students. They could mean that teachers will be laid off and that collective bargaining agreements with class size limits would be broken.