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May 2009

*Vote on
May 19 like
your future
depends on
it! (Because
it does.)*

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Vote no on Prop 1A on May 19

Budget woes continue; ballot measures not a real solution; more of the same

Analysis and opinion by Russell Kilday-Hicks, UE editor

There is no question that California is a unique place. It is said that we often lead the nation in trends. That's not always a good thing. As our unemployment rate climbs upward in the low double digits we are all too familiar with budget woes, leading the nation in economic angst and certainly volume of state budget deficit. We

also seem to be out in the lead in complexity, some claiming that California has become entirely ungovernable.

The pro-1A campaign says it will solve everything from house-a-tosis to athlete's foot.

Add to this bad situation one more element ballooning into a different kind of state pandemic: confusion. On May 19 the legislative budget compromise is presented to state voters. Passed in emergency session at the eleventh hour to stave off bankruptcy, this package, Propositions 1A

to 1F, has something everyone can hate. The question is, do the voters understand the measures enough to know what they might be getting?

The pro campaign says Prop 1A will solve everything from halitosis to athlete's foot, promising to create "for the first time" a "savings account" to secure our financial future (and, along with 1B, restore our schools to past glory). There is apparently no longer any truth in advertising requirement—these claims are patently false. First, California already has a reserve fund (set at five

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Why vote no?

- Avoids finding real solutions to our systemic budget problems
- Poorly written, with obscure language that no one can interpret
- Not a solution to our budget mess but a power grab by the governor
- Crafted and put onto the ballot in a deal between the "Big 5" with little legislative and no public input
- Limits growth to hurt the CSU
- Forces us to "save" even when we can't afford to, forcing cuts

Legislative Committee Chair Vicki McLeod moves on after 20-plus years of service



Vicki McLeod worked at the Pomona campus for more than 20 years, serving her union locally and statewide

By John Watson, CSUEU Communications

After half a dozen years on CSUEU's Legislative Committee, most recently as chair, and 24 years as an employee and union member-activist, Vicki McLeod left CSU Pomona and CSUEU late last year to pursue new opportunities in the California State Assembly.

She was tapped to serve as district office manager for newly elected Assemblywoman Norma Torres, who won the 61st district seat in a landslide on November 4. McLeod's new responsibilities include serving as spokesperson, administrator, and all-around right-hand person

Politics are in her genes, as her mother is State Senator Gloria Negrete McLeod, representing the 32nd district following three terms in the Assembly.

"My mom has served as a real inspiration," says McLeod, who joined the CSU Pomona staff in 1984 and most recently served as an administrative analyst/catalog specialist overseeing the university catalog. "She's a former president of the local union chapter at Chaffey Community College, and my father is a retired LAPD lieutenant who brought me up to always

help people."

She adds, "My mother and I have gotten involved with unions in order to help our co-workers, making sure that employees' rights aren't violated."

In her approximately five years as chair of the CSUEU Legislative Committee, McLeod revamped and revitalized the union's Lobby Day tradition, among many other accomplishments. Taking place each spring, Lobby Day features members from across the state descending on Sacramento for scheduled meetings with their legislators to press union causes. Under McLeod's leadership, the number of participants and legislator meetings grew every year.

"During her tenure, Vicki ran the most effective Legislative Committee that I've seen in my time at CSEA," says CSEA Governmental Affairs Manager Sherrie Golden. "It's been a very involved committee—everyone is very conscientious about their roles as participants in this important committee."

McLeod was equally active with Pomona's CSU Chapter 319, which she most recently served as vice-president and treasurer. "I learned a lot from my union officers on campus," explains McLeod. "We were

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*'Vicki ran the most effective
Legislative Committee that
I've ever seen.'*

Designing Our Future: CSEA's General Council 2009 offers something new

By Russell Kilday-Hicks, UE editor

For political junkies, the last decade or so of CSEA's General Council conferences have been a mixed exercise in intrigue and infighting for those who took sides—and frustration for the uninitiated, who were often left wondering if CSEA could ever get its act together. These biannual gatherings of delegates

from each of the four affiliates in the association have been exciting in their own way—lots of gossip, lots of wheeling and dealing in the corridors—but, when it's all said and done, few results to make labor proud.

This one promises to be different. Not that there won't be some thrills and spills, with delegates having to choose

between competing candidates and visions. It's just that the internal struggles that had threatened to tear CSEA apart have dissipated, thanks to the work done at the previous two GCs (2005 and 2007), where delegates realigned the CSEA structure and overwhelmingly passed Bylaws, Procedures & Policies 8-07 (B&P-8), which put CSEA on a path toward a shared future, with each affiliate firmly in charge of its own destiny.

This year's General Council, to be held in L.A. over Labor Day weekend, will benefit from B&P-8 in many ways. It has enabled, as President Obama said in his inaugural speech, CSEA to

"leave childish things behind." Union leaders are planning for an entirely different experience—one that will inspire everyone.

"With the former acrimony behind us, we're hoping that this year's delegates will be free to focus on the real questions," CSUEU President Pat Gantt said. "What kind of organization do we want to build? What's it going to take to get from here to there? How can the resulting organization help all of the affiliates' members in these difficult times?"

This will be CSEA's 65th GC. In See "CSEA's GC" on page 2

CSEA Women renew their commitment

By Nancy Kobata, CSU Fresno

On Friday afternoon, some arrived by car, some by shuttle, some by taxi, wheeling in suitcases and carrying bags. They arrived from all over California. There was an air of expectancy and excitement as they entered the lobby and noticed the banner that said "Welcome to the 2009 Women's Conference." Laughter and squeals of delight filled the hotel as participants located friends, received goody

bags and headed off to their rooms to change for the evening reception.

That evening, lights reflected brightly off the tables filled with jewelry, purses, cosmetics and lingerie. Like brightly colored birds, the ladies filled the room in their finery. Into this room the Lt. Governor, John Garamendi, stepped confidently, greeting each group as he moved through the crowd. Several asked, "Where's Patty?" as if they were asking after an old friend. "She will join me here shortly," he replied. As she did, the two of them as a couple addressed the group, giving us the personal stories and See "CSEA Women" on page 2



Looking forward

What's on the horizon for CSU Employees Union?

- May 20 General Council delegate voting deadline
- May 19: Special state election with many budget deal measures
- Early June: "May Revise," governor's budget proposal fine tuned
- June: CSUEU statewide elections (4 statewide officers and barg. unit councils)
- June 2: California state and local election day
- June 30: End of fiscal year, California budget due; CBA ("the contract") expires
- Sept. 5-7: CSEA's 2009 General Council, Bonaventure Hotel, Los Angeles

No on Prop 1A: it's not a solution ...

Continued from page 1
percent of the General Fund). Prop 1A merely increases the amount to 12.5 percent, but, instead of saving when you have extra money (a sensible thing to do), it requires us to save even when we don't. Imagine being forced to save "for a rainy day" during a downpour—and the roof is leaking, and your mortgage payment is late, and the car was just repossessed ... well, you get the idea.

Supporters also say Prop 1A is "designed to help control state spending" by "eliminating programs that don't work and holding people accountable." Unless there is text written in invisible ink that magically will appear after we vote for it (a dirty trick I wouldn't put past our governor) I just don't get it. The part about "controlling" state spending (by setting a spending cap) and eliminating programs (by requiring us to "save" through spending cuts in lean budget years) is implied in language that sets the current inadequate level of funding as a base for the next 10 years and only allows for limited growth. However, characterizing vital state programs as ones that "don't work" begs the question: for whom are they not working? We also have to ask, holding which people accountable? The measure doesn't answer these questions, but the process of how they got on the ballot gives us a clue to the answers.

If you love what most people rightly hate about politics, closed-door deals between a few, have I got some ballot measures for you. The only thing missing was the smoke (legislators are not allowed to smoke in the capital building). Of course, you could always vote no just on the principle of the thing.

As explained by David Low, lobbyist for the California School Employees Association (the other CSEA) to the activists gathered for CSUEU's Lobby Day training recently, the budget and ballot initiatives were a "textbook example" of how the process should not work.

"Negotiations should be a quick pro quo process," Low said. "You give something up, you get something in return. This negotiation was a series of quids. The choices were

constantly between something bad and something worse."

He also accused the Democratic leaders of abandoning their supporters. "Negotiations require constant communication with your constituents and building pressure on your opponents. This negotiation was done in secret, behind closed doors," Low said. That means just about no

Maybe we are ungovernable.

communication at all.

That process resulted in the divisiveness of the final deal. "Negotiations should bring your allies together and split your enemies," Low said. "This split our allies and unified our enemies. The result was a flawed set of initiatives that has labor fighting labor."

Low also despaired of the two-thirds vote requirement. "The manner with which Prop 1F got on the ballot is a perfect example of why the two-thirds vote requirement for budget passage is a problem. California is one of three states in the nation requiring a two-thirds vote, the others being Rhode Island and Arkansas. This threshold means that even though a majority of legislators approve a budget, a small block can withhold their votes and grind the entire process to a standstill. Then this same minority uses the impasse to leverage their pet issues, receive special funding, or push for non-budget related issues," Low said.

This tactic was used in last year's budget process to take away overtime and holidays from state employees, outsource state employee jobs, and give millions in tax loopholes to corporate entities. "Every year anti-labor legislators use the two-thirds vote requirement on the budget to push their anti-worker agenda," Low said, concluding, "We need to stop the tyranny of the anti-labor minority in California and join the forty seven states, and the Congress of the United States, who all pass budgets with a majority vote."

As a result of this broken process California is stuck in the rut of each budget passed makes the next one harder still. All the ballot measures do little to address the real issues,

one being the gap between funding and spending, and give us more of the restrictions on spending that got us into this fix in the first place.

The word "controlling" is the key to understanding. Who is the controller? Prop 1A gives the governor and his appointee, the Budget Director, more power. Plus, in a moment of frankness Republican leader Mike Villines said: "Prop 1A will tie the hands of liberals and make them cut their pet projects."

Leaders from both parties halfheartedly roam the land hawking their latest miracle cure-all compromise deal that no one seems especially motivated to purchase. As unionists, we are not unfamiliar with compromises. We have to make them every time we go to the bargaining table. But, when pushed too far, at some point you must take a stand. Political leaders tell us this is the best deal we can get right now, but passage is looking increasingly unlikely. What happens if these ballot measures do go down to defeat?

As the red ink continues to dominate the budget ledger, with an additional \$8 billion problem looming for the next fiscal year, the legislators may be back in emergency session in no time to, no doubt, cook up yet another compromise from hell.

There are those against 1A for the wrong reasons, because it extends temporary tax increases another two years. The reality is this that just postpones the struggle to find the real solutions that must come sooner or later. Extending regressive taxes that hurt those most in need as our economy continues to decline (while giving out more corporate gifts) is downright criminal.

Maybe we are ungovernable, but the reason is not that we don't care about our schools and services that enhance the standard of living for us all. We are not holding our legislators, and especially our governor, fully accountable. This may be the cost of confusion. Clearly the way out is demanding that our leaders lead with an expanding vision of California, not one shrinking back because the future has been determined unaffordable.

our own members as models in a fashion show in beautiful clothes from Drapers and Damons. As the workshops drew to a close, some of us headed off to dinner and others off to spend the evening at the Red Hawk Casino.

Sunday morning arrived all too quickly, and as we laughed at the antics of Dixie, we knew our time together was short. As we hugged our new friends and said good-bye, it was our hope that the friendships we had forged, the laughter we had shared, and the bonds that had been created would last long enough to get us to the next CSEA Women's conference in 2011.

to his march and all of us to our workshops.

We reached new heights together.

We had reached new heights together.

er as we attended sessions on EQ and generational values, networking tips, technology tips and financial issues. Our lunch break featured



There was a strong CSUEU contingent at the conference

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McLeod moves on ...



Vicki McLeod and friends at CSEA's 64th General Council, San Jose, 2007

That sentiment is echoed by chapter President Deborah Campbell. "As vice-president, Vicky kept me grounded. As treasurer, she kept our budget together. And as head of the Legislative Committee, she made Lobby Day fun and interesting. She was an instrumental force on this campus, and I'm going to miss her a lot."

Taking up chair duties as of McLeod's departure is Natalia Bremer, the San Francisco State University chapter's treasurer and a long-time member of the Legislative Committee.

Golden predicts yet more politics in McLeod's future. "I think this new venture will give Vicky the experience she needs if she decides she wants to step into public office some day. And she's the person in her family to take on that role if she so chooses. We all wish her well!"

CSEA's GC promises to be different ...

Continued from page 1
CSEA's 77-year history, for many of those years, this conference was an annual event, at some point switching to every other year. Starting this year, it will be held every three years.

Each affiliate chapter or DLC sends elected representatives to GC. The formula for determining how many: one delegate for every 100 members or greater part thereof, meaning that if you have 151 members you would get two delegates. GC delegates are the real authority in CSEA, making important bylaw and budget decisions that affect all four member affiliates. Over 1,000 delegates from all over the state come together to give CSEA direction and pick statewide officers—president, vice president, and secretary/treasurer.

CSEA president Dave Hart expressed his hopes in a January letter to delegates: "The coming General Council will give us an opportunity to review our progress, consolidate our gains, and begin 'Designing our Future,'" which is the conference theme.

Not only is the general atmosphere different this time around, but the planning process has been expanded to reflect the changed environment. In the past, GC was a CSEA staff-organized event. This time, officers and staff from each affiliate, lead by Hart, are working together to make the event reflect what unionism is all about—an exercise in worker solidarity.

"We have the opportunity," Hart wrote, "to design a future where affiliates work together on a voluntary basis, where no affiliate dominates another, where no affiliate is disadvantaged, and where all affiliates can pursue their own programs, drawing on the experience and strength of the others ... to make decisions together that strengthen CSEA's ability to deliver services, work

toward common goals, and lay the foundation to expand CSEA business services to other orga-

What kind of organization do we want to build? What's it going to take to get from here to there?

nizations."

Future issues of *University Employee* will provide more details, as well as coverage during and after the event with podcasting of sound and video. It really is a new day for CSUEU.

"We've spent too much time in the past on internal struggles and back room politics. With all of that behind us," said Hart, "we're looking forward to GC being a place where we can come together, learn from each other, and figure out how to use our strength for everyone's benefit."

You won't want to miss it.

'Quotable'

"I like paying taxes. With them I buy civilization."
—Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes

Job-merging workshops ready to go

Coming to a campus near you!

Stumped on how to engage your members? Would you like to increase attendance at your

Beach, Dominguez Hills, and San Bernardino campuses.

The committee, chaired by Nancy Kobata, Fresno chapter president, previously offered workshops on classification, and IRPs to the campuses.

Campuses are combining job duties in some very strange combinations.

All of these workshops were praised highly by the attendees, and empowered our members as well as offering them a chance to interact and obtain a more global view of classification issues. Many of those attending felt it was a good opportunity to see their union dues at work.

Eventually, the goal will be to have a whole variety and selection of workshops available for campus leadership to offer to their members.

If you wish to attend this workshop, contact your local chapter leaders.