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**Contact: Robin Swanson
(916) 443-7817**

EDUCATION COALITION CALLS ON GOVERNOR TO HALT DEVASTATING PROPOSED CUTS TO CALIFORNIA'S SCHOOLS

SACRAMENTO – Today members of the Education Coalition detailed the devastating impact of Governor Schwarzenegger's proposed budget to California's students and schools, showing how a \$4.8 billion budget cut severely damages the quality of education in our state.

"Our students and schools did not create the current budget problem, and their futures shouldn't be ransomed because of it," said **David A. Sanchez**, President of the California Teachers Association. "The Governor's proposal would decimate the voter-approved minimum funding guarantee for schools and is incredibly short-sighted and unacceptable. In the midst of progress in student learning throughout California, this budget represents a giant step backward."

Education experts on today's panel showed that a \$4.8 billion cut to education means laying off more than 107,000 teachers, reducing per-pupil spending by more than \$800 per student and cutting more than \$24,000 from every classroom. It could also mean increases to class sizes statewide by as much as 35%.

"We need to protect smaller class sizes and give our students an opportunity to succeed in school," said **Pam Brady**, President of the California State PTA. "To sacrifice the gains we've made in student achievement and turn back the clock on education funding would be a terrible mistake."

"A state budget proposal that looks at cuts alone is not a real solution, because it doesn't address California's underlying problem of inadequate and unstable revenue sources," said **Bob Lee**, President of the Association of California School Administrators. "It's no secret that the resources California provides to schools and students don't match the expectations we have set for them. If California's goal is to raise student achievement in all of our classrooms, then the governor and lawmakers must fund our schools accordingly."

In the last two years alone, California has dropped from 43rd to 46th in per-pupil spending, which is nearly \$2,000 below the national average. States like New York spend 75 percent more per student than California.

"The governor's budget cuts would be disastrous to public schools, which are already doing more with less," said **Marty Hittelman**, President of the California Federation of Teachers. "These cuts are fundamentally inconsistent with the state's goal of improving student achievement."

"This proposed budget cut is the equivalent of cutting over 137,000 of California's school bus drivers, custodians, food service workers, building and groundskeepers and other school employees from our schools," said **Rob Feckner**, President of the California School Employees Association. "Far too often, these dedicated, vital school employees are the first to be let go – and that's not good for California's schoolchildren."

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“A 4.8 billion cut to education would be the same as eliminating all music, art and career technical education programs statewide,” said **Paul H. Chatman**, President of the California School Boards Association. “We know how important these programs are to helping students achieve, and we want to keep them in our schools.”

“Voters passed Prop. 98 almost 20 years ago to ensure our students and schools receive minimum funding,” said **Brian Lewis**, Executive Director of the California Association of School Business Officials. “They strongly reaffirmed their support for the minimum funding law in 2005, and continue to rank funding education as their top priority. This is not the time to shortchange our students.”

“This is a critical time to build on the significant progress our schools have made in recent years,” said **Sue Burr**, Executive Director of the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA). “Draconian cuts could devastate student learning and achievement. Instead, what we need is a budget that looks forward and invests in California’s future.”

“The big picture is that Californians value education and other public services,” said **Bill A. Lloyd**, President of SEIU Local 99. “The public wants to keep these services. California needs a serious conversation about how to find the funding for services we know are essential: schools, healthcare, care for the elderly and disabled, emergency services, and more.”

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