



California Teachers Empowerment Network

Standing out from the crowd, fully informed on the issues

Please note that in addition to the traditional emailing of the CTEN monthly newsletter, we will once again post it on the CTEN blog - <http://www.ctenteachers.blogspot.com/> As usual, there are several controversial issues covered in this letter and we urge you to share your opinions with other teachers.

March 18, 2020

Dear Colleague,

Super Tuesday has come and gone, and the big news for California is that Prop. 13, a “[\\$15 billion bond measure](#)” to fund construction and modernization of public schools and universities, has gone down in a stunning defeat. As Mike Antonucci reports,

[Supporters raised almost \\$13 million](#) for the campaign against no funded opposition. The California Teachers Association contributed \$1 million, with the California Federation of Teachers and SEIU also chipping in.

The bond also provided funding for charter school facilities, so the California Charter Schools Association kicked in \$500,000.

Naturally, the measure also received substantial support from developers, building trade organizations and assorted business interests, including the state chamber of commerce and California Business Roundtable.

But as Howard Jarvis Taxpayer Association president Jon Coupal suggests, Californians may be getting weary of ongoing taxes:

According to data from the California Taxpayers Association, voters have rejected nearly half of the 236 local tax and bond measures on the March ballot and another 56 remain too close to call. This is a remarkable statistic considering the history of local revenue measures in California.

According to the website California City Finance, local revenue measures have had at least a 70 percent pass rate in all but two major statewide elections since 2012.

To read Antonucci’s and Coupal’s pieces, go [here](#) and [here](#).

Super Tuesday also saw the end of several candidates' run for president. In fact, it now appears that Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders are the only two who are still standing. Regarding their positions on education, *EdSource* has a handy guide to all the Democrat candidates' positions.

To access the guide, go [here](#).

The NEA has just endorsed Joe Biden, and AFT almost has. Back in 2015, after an alleged poll of .04 percent of the membership, the union heartily endorsed Hillary Clinton as its choice for president. That move really nicked thousands of the union's Sanders' supporters, and over [4,500](#) teachers signed a Change.org petition demanding that AFT withdraw its endorsement. The union didn't budge, however.

Chastened, Randi Weingarten's union promised to make it more open and democratic this time around. But on Feb 21st, AFT's "[executive council](#)" made a top-down decision to winnow the field to just three candidates, Joe Biden, Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders. Then, in a 3,300-word post a week later, Weingarten anointed Warren as her personal favorite. Shortly thereafter, Warren dropped out of the running.

To read AFT's and Weingarten's statements, go [here](#) and [here](#). To read about NEA's choice, go [here](#).

On school choice, all the Democratic candidates have been opposed and vehemently so. Whether it be charter schools or vouchers, the candidates, all trying to secure the blessings of the teachers unions, have stressed the importance of maintaining the traditional public school monopoly. But the Educational Freedom Institute has posted a "school choice hypocrisy" map which details how politicians across the country avail themselves of education options. For example, Joe Biden "opposes funding programs that would allow less fortunate kids to attend private schools, even though he sent his own kids to an [expensive private school](#)."

To see the map, go [here](#)

Ed Ring, co-founder of the California Policy Center, writes "California's K-12 Spending Exceeds \$20,000 Per Pupil." He claims that the commonly acknowledged per-pupil figure is inaccurate.

For the most recent available historical data, start with \$72.4 billion in spending in 2017-18, an amount that is found on the Ed Data home page on their "[Financial Data](#)" tab:

This figure needs to be adjusted as follows:

- deduct pre-school, adult education, and community college spending,*
- add the state's annual CalSTRS contribution,*
- add debt service on school bonds (or instead, add capital spending, but a lot of debt funds go into operating budgets (or "deferred maintenance" budgets) so not sure which to pick – it should be one or the other),*
- deduct from student headcount all charter school attendees,*

- deduct from total revenue all funds directed to charter schools,
- verify that \$72.4 billion was the entire gross amount of incoming funds.

To read more, go [here](#).

Also on school choice, one of the area’s greatest secrets is “town tuitioning” which exists in parts of New England. In Vermont, [93 towns – more than a third of the state’s municipalities – have no public schools, and the kids get an excellent education](#). These “tuition towns” are small. So small that they really cannot support a public school. Instead, tax money goes to parents who send their children to a local private school. And if that school doesn’t comport with parents’ expectations, the parents can place their kid in another school, with the money following the child – all this with [no added cost to the taxpayer](#). As communication strategist [Dr. Laura Williams](#) points out, “Because parents, not bureaucrats or federal formulas, determine how funds are allocated, schools are under high economic pressure to impress parents—that is, to serve students best in their parents’ eyes.”

Vermont’s town tuitioning program was launched in 1869, making it the oldest school choice program in the country. Additionally, [Maine](#) and, as of 2017, [New Hampshire](#) have tuition towns.

To learn more, go [here](#).

As the sex ed agenda goes on unabated in California, parents in other states are fighting back. Fourteen Wisconsin parents represented by Alliance Defending Freedom and the Wisconsin Institute for Law & Liberty, public interest legal firms, have filed a lawsuit in an attempt to stop a policy they say “[instructs teachers to assist and encourage children in adopting transgender identities without notifying—and possibly while deceiving—parents](#).” The suit specifically targets schools in Madison after the district adopted a policy which includes the [following provisions](#):

- Children of any age can transition to a different gender identity at school, by changing their name and pronouns, without parental notice or consent.
- District employees are prohibited from notifying parents, without the child’s consent, that their child has or wants to change gender identity at school, or that their child may be dealing with gender dysphoria.
- District employees are even instructed to deceive parents by using the child’s legal name and pronouns with family, while using the different name and pronouns adopted by the child in the school setting.

Hardly radical, the lawsuit very simply calls for school officials to be transparent and honest when dealing with parents, and “[to meet standards of informed consent](#).”

Unfortunately, California seems to be going in the other direction. *The Epoch Times* reports that in January, the California Teachers Association changed an existing policy in an internal document, to “explicitly include transgender and non-binary youth among the students who can [leave class without parental permission](#) to receive birth control, abortions, and other such

services.” While the updated policy does not include a provision for “hormone therapy,” the rationale discussed by CTA’s civil rights committee in making the policy change “indicates that’s the final goal.”

Granted, while CTA is not a law-making body, the powerful union all too often gets its way in Sacramento; as one of [the biggest political spenders in the state](#), the powerful lobby [holds great sway](#) of over many legislators.

To read more, go [here](#).

If you, as a parent or teacher, object to the sex ed agenda in California, CTEN may be able to secure you legal representation. Please contact us for more information.

And finally, just a few words on the Coronavirus. With many schools being closed, teachers have certainly been affected. I think the most important thing we can all do at this point, is remain vigilant and sane on the issue. For some perspective, go [here](#). To track the spread of the virus, go [here](#).

Due to union “opt-out windows,” which are very possibly illegal, this may be the time to quit if you are planning to do so. If you have any questions about the process, or have experienced any problems because of your decision to leave your union, please let us know and we will do our best to help you – possibly getting you legal assistance, if necessary. We will also be able to share your concerns with other teachers across the state. And talking about sharing, please pass this email along to your colleagues and encourage them to join us.

Also, anyone wishing to donate to CTEN can do so very simply through check, money order or PayPal - <http://www.ctenhome.org/donate.html> As a non-profit, we exist only through the generosity of others. Thanks, as always.

Sincerely,
Larry Sand
CTEN President