

Californians for Justice

Education Fund www.caljustice.org

1611 Telegraph Ave., #317
Oakland, CA 94612
(510) 452-2728
Fax (510) 452-3552

1971 Las Plumas
San Jose, CA 95133
(408) 272-0236
Fax (408) 272-0315

200 Pine Ave., Suite 502
Long Beach, CA 90802
(562) 951-1015
Fax (562) 951-9444

2014 Tulare Street, #718
Fresno, CA 93721
(559) 443-1394
Fax (559) 443-1343

2009 California Budget Statement

Contact: Paul Tran (562) 951-1015

This Budget Called My Back

July 24, 2009—In the coming days, California will pass one of the most decimated budgets in state history. Of the \$26 billion in cuts, \$6 billion, or nearly 25%, comes from California's K-14 Education, which already ranks dead last in the nation in per-pupil funding.

If this can be called a balanced budget, it seems to be balanced literally on the backs of the six million school children who attend California public schools. Of those six million, over two-thirds are students of color, many who are low-income, immigrants, and English language learners.

Californians for Justice acknowledges the many pitfalls of the state budget—Proposition 13, the supermajority budget vote, a hyper-cyclical economy—but as a racial justice organization working in the communities most affected by these education cuts, we must point out the racial and ethnic inequity inherent in these cuts.

In a state where the racial achievement gap is vast and tied to a Racial Funding Gap, we know that these cuts will disproportionately affect students of color and their access to qualified teachers, college preparatory courses, computer labs, and materials.

“Now, more than ever, the movement for educational justice in California must redouble our effort to expose and address the Racial Funding Gap in public education,” said Jeremy Lahoud, Executive Director of Californians for Justice. “We call on California's leadership to move beyond the current crisis and have a long-term vision.”

We know that the state of California cannot control a global economy. But it can control how it plans to spend its money and it can create a long-term funding plan for education that can cope with economic recessions. Californians for Justice currently supports two legislative pieces that can be part of that plan.

Assembly Concurrent Resolution 54 states that California will bring its per-pupil spending to at least the national average in the near future. And Assembly Bill 8 stresses transparency, efficiency, and equity in education spending so that all students, “no matter where they live or what their economic, racial, or ethnic background,” will be prepared for college and careers when they graduate from high school.

It's clear that California's budget process is sick and its illness is affecting our future teachers, doctors, nurses, and engineers. If an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure, then a long-term funding plan for education could be worth over \$6 billion for California's future citizens and certainly take a load off their backs.

Californians for Justice is a statewide grassroots organization working for racial justice by building the power of communities that have been pushed to the margins of the political process. We organize youth, immigrants, low-income people and communities of color in order to improve their social, economic and political conditions. For more info go to www.caljustice.org