

Our Children, Our Future:

Local Schools and Early Education Investment Act

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EDUCATION INVESTMENT INITIATIVE SUBMITTED FOR TITLE AND SUMMARY *Every school and every child will benefit*

Sacramento, CA – The Our Children, Our Future: Local Schools and Early Education Investment Act was submitted to the Attorney General today for title and summary for the November 6, 2012 ballot.

The initiative will provide a transformative investment in our children and California K-12 education, on which the future of California and its economy depend. It will create a new, dedicated source of per pupil funding that will go directly to local public schools, including charter schools, and provide funding for early childhood development and child care programs. It will also establish tough new accountability, oversight and public disclosure reforms requiring transparent, results-oriented school site-specific budgets developed with parent, teacher and community input.

The measure will raise approximately \$10 billion a year in new revenue through a sliding scale income tax increase that varies with taxpayers' ability to pay, with the highest income earners contributing the most. The money will not be part of the state budget and can only be spent on local schools and early childhood education and childcare as authorized by the provisions of the Act. The Governor and Legislators are prohibited from using the money or directing how it may be spent. The measure will end after 12 years unless it is again approved by voters. That gives our schools enough time to demonstrate how the new funds have improved educational outcomes, while protecting taxpayers.

Of the money raised, 85 percent will be allocated on a per pupil basis to all local public schools and 15 percent will be used to raise standards and expand access to public preschool and early childhood programs to help prepare children to succeed when they reach kindergarten.

The initiative sponsor is the Advancement Project, a national civil rights organization founded in 1999 to "even the odds for communities striving to attain equal footing and equal treatment." It has the financial support of Molly Munger, founding co-director of the Advancement Project and a former federal prosecutor and business litigator who left her corporate life to become one of the state's most passionate and effective advocates for communities and schools in need.

"California once had schools that were considered the best in the nation," Munger said. "If we all join together to invest more resources in our children and classrooms, we can once again make California schools great, and give every child the support and opportunity they deserve to succeed."

The Our Children, Our Future: Local Schools and Early Education Investment Act will enable California schools to take a giant step toward providing a well-rounded education that supports college and career readiness for every student, including a high quality curriculum of art, music, physical education, science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), and vocational and technical education courses; as well as smaller class sizes; school libraries, school nurses, and counselors.

"The time is now to make a real, transformative investment in our schools," said Dr. Don Shalvey, Deputy Director of US Programs at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Co-Founder of Aspire Public Schools. "All Californians should share in the cost of improving our schools because we all share the benefits that better schools and a well-educated workforce will bring to our economy and the quality of life for our state."

"The Our Children, Our Future Act focuses, first and foremost, on restoring essential education programs that have been cut," said California State PTA President Carol Kocivar. "We have heard, loud and clear, from parents and others who belong to PTA that school budgets have been cut too deeply. We call on everyone who cares about the future of our children and our state to support this vital measure."

"Investing in our schools to prepare children to succeed is the best thing we can do for the future of our economy and our state," said David Rattray, Senior Vice President of Education and Workforce Development, Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce. "Without a quality education, our children will not be able to compete in the global economy."

The initiative contains tough, effective accountability provisions that require oversight, audits, public input, and disclosure. For the first time, schools will be required to have a transparent school site budget and disclose exactly how they spend all the money they receive. The Our Children, Our Future Act limits what schools can spend from these new funds on administrative costs to 1 percent and strictly prohibits the use of these funds to pay for salary or benefit increases. Instead, the money will be used at local school sites to expand instructional programs, reduce class sizes, and save teaching positions, based on local needs and priorities.

"The Our Children, Our Future Act finally gives us local control of our education dollars by sending the money directly to local schools, not Sacramento, and requiring parent, teacher and community input on how the money will be spent," said Caprice Young, Founding President and CEO of the California Charter Schools Association.

"The Our Children, Our Future Act is critical for our children and the quality of education we provide them," said Catherine Atkin, President of Preschool California. "The Act will help prepare low-income young children to succeed in school and in life by raising the standards for early childhood education programs and by expanding the number of children who can attend."

A copy of the initiative and more information can be found at:
www.OurChildrenOurFuture2012.com.

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