

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Resolution A Teen Driving Safety

- 1 WHEREAS,** One of the purposes of PTA is to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth; and
- 2 WHEREAS,** Motor vehicle accidents are the No. 1 killer of teenagers in California and in the United States; and
- 3 WHEREAS,** In 1997, California adopted a program of Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) that features phased-in driver education and training, and driving restrictions that are phased out over time; and
- 4 WHEREAS,** Even though required by law, the vast majority of California high schools do not offer driver education courses, and almost none offer behind the wheel training courses, creating a problem of accessibility for many teens; and
- 5 WHEREAS,** Parents have the potential to exert a powerful influence over their children to become safe drivers by serving as good role models, by providing adequate practice experience, and by helping to assure their children's compliance with mandatory GDL restrictions; and
- 6 WHEREAS,** GDL laws have prevented many teenage deaths, but too many teen fatalities still occur, necessitating additional research and planning to identify, develop, and implement the most effective methods of creating safe, skillful, confident new drivers in order to further mitigate this danger; now therefore be it
- 1 RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils, and districts to educate parents, students, schools, and communities regarding the risks associated with teen driving, current GDL laws in regard to teen driving, and the crucial role of parents in helping teens become safe drivers; and be it further
- 2 RESOLVED,** That PTA units, councils, and districts work together and with parents, students, and community partners to urge local and statewide leaders to support research on effective strategies to further reduce accidents involving teenagers; and be it further
- 3 RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA encourage the development of standards for quality driver education and training programs, and support policy and/or legislation to make such programs accessible to all students; and be it further
- 4 RESOLVED,** That PTA units, councils, and districts urge schools, law enforcement, and communities to join with parents and students to implement programs to increase awareness of teen driving safety concerns and to improve teen compliance with GDL laws, seat belt laws, cell phone laws, alcoholic beverage prohibitions, and other safe driving laws and practices; and be it further
- 5 RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA work with community partners, law enforcement, driver education and training experts, the Department of Education, the Department of Motor Vehicles, and lawmakers to urge the adoption of such additional research-based policies and legislation as may be needed to effectively reduce accidents involving young drivers and their passengers to the lowest possible level; and be it further
- 6 RESOLVED,** That the Teen Driving Safety Resolution be forwarded to National PTA for consideration.

Originating Body – Community Concerns Commission, Board of Managers

Action by PTA Organizations

A "support" position indicates agreement that the resolution be forwarded to Convention.

California State PTA Board of Managers

Position

Support

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Vehicular accidents are the No. 1 killer of teenagers. Evidence shows that, where faithfully implemented, stricter state laws and Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) programs have helped turn the tide on the rise of fatal accidents involving teenagers. California has some of the toughest laws for new teenage drivers and yet has seen mixed results in teen driving statistics.

In California, we still lose too many teenagers to automobile accidents, and we must do more to research and understand their causes, so as to prevent them.

Years ago, the California Department of Education mandated driver education and in-car driver training in high school; it was a graduation requirement in many districts. However, since then competing priorities have forced driver education and training from the curriculum, and at present only one-third of California high schools offer driver education (classroom), and only five high schools in the entire state offer driver training (behind the wheel). Though driver education and training are effective at teaching rules of the road and driving skills, studies show no correlation between participating in driver education and training and becoming a safer teen driver. More research is necessary to discover how driver education and training can be made more effective at producing safe drivers.

Parents and the community need to ease young people into the lifelong habit of safe driving. All teens must have access to quality driver education and training that safeguards them as they become drivers. The community must insist on compliance with, and enforcement of, GDL program restrictions. Parents need to know the laws so they can ensure their teenagers follow them. Additional research is needed to determine the cause of the accidents that do happen, so that effective prevention measures can be designed and implemented.

The Graduated Drivers Licensing law is an excellent beginning; but without better information and education, public awareness, further study, and parent involvement, its full benefit cannot be realized, and countless additional teens will lose their lives needlessly on streets and highways.

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Resolution B

Achievement: Eliminating the Gap

- 1 WHEREAS,** PTA believes that parents are children’s first teachers and that parent involvement is essential throughout a child’s educational experience, and further that every adult has a responsibility to ensure that all children develop to their full potential; and
- 2 WHEREAS,** PTA believes that all children and youth have the responsibility and should have the opportunity to develop their abilities to their fullest potential; and
- 3 WHEREAS,** Research has shown that greater parental involvement in children’s education results in higher levels of student achievement; and
- 4 WHEREAS,** The U.S. Department of Education describes the achievement gap as “the difference in academic performance between different ethnic groups,” and the California Department of Education, defines the gap as “the disparity between the academic performance of white students and other ethnic groups as well as that between English learners and native English speakers, socioeconomically disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged students, and students with disabilities as compared with students without disabilities”; and
- 5 WHEREAS,** The California Standards Test (CST) and the California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE) show a significant and persistent gap in achievement among communities of color, recent immigration, low socioeconomic status, and students with disabilities within California; and
- 6 WHEREAS,** The disparity in the current delivery of education to children in California and the United States perpetuates the achievement gap, and the elimination of this gap is critical for the education of all children at all schools to be competitive in the global economy; and
- 7 WHEREAS,** The increasing shift in public education to standards-based curriculum and data-driven decision making should provide necessary information to assist parents, schools, administrators, teachers, and the greater community in understanding, developing, promoting, and supporting strategies to eliminate the achievement gap; now therefore be it
- 1 RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA, its units, councils, and districts partner with parents and schools in efforts to eliminate the achievement gap; and be it further
- 2 RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils, and districts collaborate with appropriate community-based business and education stakeholders in efforts to eliminate the achievement gap; and be it further
- 3 RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils, and districts advocate for legislation and public policies that improve academic achievement for all students and eliminate the achievement gap.

Originating Body – Second District PTA

Action by PTA Organizations

Position

A “support” position indicates agreement that the resolution be forwarded to Convention.

California State PTA Board of Managers

Support

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

“It has been proven that parent involvement transcends many of the barriers that contribute to the achievement gap, such as socioeconomic status, ethnic/racial background, and the parents’ level of education.”

**National PTA Past President, Linda Hodge*

There is no more important issue than ensuring that each and every child in the state of California receives a quality public education in K through 12 grades. As citizens of California, our highest priority is to ensure that current and future generations of public school students have the ability to, and are prepared to, achieve their goals with a firm foundation in language arts, math, science, and the arts. The purpose of this resolution is to focus the attention, energy, and commitment of California’s largest volunteer children’s advocacy group on increasing parent involvement at the school level in addressing the achievement gap between white and Asian public school students, and African-American and Latino students.

The achievement gap exists; it is the subject of extensive research, discussion, and policy development. The achievement gap threatens to undermine state efforts to improve our society, our economy, and our environment. The California State PTA is uniquely positioned to raise the issue of increasing involvement of African-American and Latino parents at the school level. A PTA resolution on the achievement gap is integral to promoting proposals and solutions at the school level to address and eliminate the gap.

PTA believes increasing the time and effort that parents spend supporting their children's education is a significant factor that promotes student achievement and aids in eliminating the gap. This resolution will help the California State PTA in its work of guiding parents, teachers, and school administrators in taking specific actions at the school and district level. PTA promotes continuous, lifelong learning that begins in the school and engages the family, society, and the global community.

Efforts to eliminate the achievement gap begin with words yet must end with actions – multiple, collective actions at all levels throughout the state of California. PTA will inform and support all public education stakeholders, including policymakers, in efforts to eliminate the gap. Eliminating the gap at every school so every child can achieve is of critical importance.

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*Advancing Research, Improving Education, Closing the Texas Achievement Gap, by Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) Organization

Resolution C

Lowering the Vote Requirement in the California State Budget Process

- 1 WHEREAS,** The foundations of representative democracy in the United States of America, expressed in the writings of America’s founding fathers and in the structure of the federal government, call for rule by majority vote; and
- 2 WHEREAS,** Within the United States, the legislatures of 46 states pass budgets by a majority vote, and the legislatures of 39 states pass revenue measures by majority vote, making California’s two-thirds vote requirement for both budget and revenue measures an uncommon practice; and
- 3 WHEREAS,** California’s two-thirds vote requirement to pass both the state budget and revenue measures has resulted in a dysfunctional process that promotes political stalemate, long delays in passage of the budget, and a constant imbalance between ongoing revenues and expenditures; and
- 4 WHEREAS,** The California State Constitution provides additional checks and balances to the budget process by requiring the budget to be balanced and by allowing the Governor to veto parts or all of the budget; and
- 5 WHEREAS,** The timeliness of the California state budget adoption and the quantity and stability of state revenues have profound effects on the public education system, children’s health agencies, and other state programs that impact children; and
- 6 WHEREAS,** PTA’s purposes, core values, legislation platform, and previous resolutions call for adequate and stable financing of public schools and call for programs that protect the health and welfare of children; now therefore be it
- 1 RESOLVED,** That California State PTA and its units, councils, and districts advocate for and actively support a constitutional amendment that reduces the voting margin for passage of both the California State Budget and revenue measures in the California Legislature to a 55 percent vote or a simple majority.

Originating Body – Fourth District PTA

Action by PTA Organizations

Position

A “support” position indicates agreement that the resolution be forwarded to Convention.

California State PTA Board of Managers

Support

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The California state budget process has become dysfunctional, resulting in poorly crafted, consistently late state budgets that have a detrimental impact on public education and other state programs affecting children.

Delays in the passage of the California State Budget have become commonplace. Only four of the last 20 budgets have met the constitutional deadline of passage by June 15. During those delays, the state is not authorized to make some payments, including funding for Medi-Cal providers, child development agencies, categorical funding for K-12 schools, and Cal-Grant scholarships. Individuals and institutions without deep financial reserves suffer during the unfunded period. School districts and other institutions dependent on state revenue are forced to make their own budgetary decisions and begin the fiscal year without knowing how much funding they will receive from the state.

State budget negotiations frequently degenerate into partisan stalemate, causing lengthy delays in the passage of the budget. The latest example is the 2008-2009 California State Budget, which was a record-breaking 85 days late. The result was a budget that neither party could stand behind. Like our legislators, California voters are concerned.

Nonpartisan budget experts, such as the California Legislative Analyst and the director of the California Budget Project, concur that California legislatures and governors have not addressed the state’s structural imbalance between revenues and expenditures. Recurring borrowing, overly optimistic revenue projections, and use of one-time funding for continuing expenses have been features of numerous state budgets. Such budgets do not provide the stable, long-term funding that PTA has always sought for public schools.

Changing the voting margin required for passage of the state budget and revenue measures from the current two-thirds of the state Senate and Assembly to 55 percent or a simple majority would improve the budget process. With

a 55 percent or simple majority, passage of the budget would occur in a timelier manner, providing more stable funding for public schools and other children's services. The California State Constitution would continue to provide checks and balances. The constitution requires a balanced budget and gives the Governor the power to veto line items or the entire budget. An override of the governor's veto requires a two-thirds vote of the Legislature. The vote of the majority of elected representatives speaks for the majority of California voters. The vast majority of states employ this system, and it embodies the kind of representative democracy envisioned by our nation's founders.

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Resolution D

Social Host Accountability and Underage Drinking

- 1 WHEREAS,** The minimum legal drinking age is 21 years as established by the Federal Uniform Drinking Age Act of 1984, and yet alcohol is the most abused substance for minors ages 12 to 20; and
- 2 WHEREAS,** Underage drinking is directly involved in the deaths of approximately 5,000 youth under the age of 21 every year nationwide, is linked to two-thirds of all sexual assaults including date rape, contributes to a 10 times higher incidence of physical assault and a 12 times higher incidence of unintentional injury; and
- 3 WHEREAS,** The *2007 Surgeon General's Call to Action* reports alcohol use may alter adolescents' development and put them at higher risk for long-lasting, detrimental effects on the developing brain; and
- 4 WHEREAS,** Research identifies adults or "social hosts" as the primary source and private homes the primary site of alcohol availability, drinking games, and binge drinking for our youth; and
- 5 WHEREAS,** In California there is no state law addressing social hosting, and there is only a small number of cities and counties in which social host laws have been enacted; and
- 6 WHEREAS,** Where they exist, social host laws may act as a deterrent through the assessment of fines, community service, and/or jail time for those who practice social hosting, and provide law enforcement with the ability to intervene at parties where underage drinking occurs most: in homes and on private property; now therefore be it
- 1 RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA, its units, councils, and districts provide factual information to students, parents, and community members regarding the detrimental effects and significant dangers of underage drinking and social hosting; and be it further
- 2 RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA, its units, councils, and districts encourage and support legislation to adopt social host laws that would prohibit adults from providing alcohol or allowing the consumption of alcohol in homes and on noncommercial property by youth under the age of 21 who are not their children; and be it further
- 3 RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA, its units, councils, and districts support law enforcement in upholding the minimum legal drinking age of 21, including but not limited to social host laws and ordinances; and be it further
- 4 RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA forward this resolution to the National PTA for consideration by the delegates at the National PTA Convention.

Originating Body – Orange Community Council, Fourth District PTA

Action by PTA Organizations

Position

A "support" position indicates agreement that the resolution be forwarded to Convention.

Fourth District PTA

Support

California State PTA Board of Managers

Support

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The minimum legal drinking age in all 50 states is 21, yet alcohol is involved in the deaths of more teens than all other illicit drugs combined, by a 4-to-1 ratio. Youth who begin drinking before the age of 15 are four times more likely to become dependent on alcohol than those who wait until age 21. Research has shown that on average, youth and adolescents first use alcohol at 13.1 years of age. The *Surgeon General's Call to Action, 2007* states that alcohol is the most widely used substance of abuse among America's youth, ages 12 to 20.

Social hosting, a disturbing practice in society today, is defined as adults in private settings providing alcohol and/or allowing underage drinking among children who are not their own. While some believe that consumption of alcohol before the age of 21 is an inevitable "rite of passage," research demonstrates this behavior is detrimental to our youth. The consequences of underage drinking include a wide range of medical problems. Research has shown that the brain changes dramatically during adolescence, and consumption of alcohol during this stage of life can seriously inhibit its normal growth and development. In addition, underage drinking contributes significantly to

participation in risky sexual behaviors and the incidence of physical and sexual assaults, suicide attempts, drowning, alcohol poisoning, and traffic accidents.

An encouraging note in the *Surgeon General's Call to Action* is that underage alcohol use is not inevitable, and we are not powerless to stop it. The Surgeon General points out that an adolescent's decision to use alcohol is influenced by many factors, including normal maturational changes as well as various social and cultural environments that surround adolescents: their families, schools, peers, and communities. Therefore, it is the collective responsibility of all these groups to assist in the prevention and reduction of underage drinking.

Found on the MADD website, *Reducing Underage Drinking: A Collective Responsibility* documents the wide-ranging and devastating consequences of youth consumption of alcohol, and urges states and localities to enact a comprehensive set of strategies to reduce underage alcohol consumption, including strengthening social host liability laws affecting those under the age of 21. Legislators across the country are responding to the harms associated with underage drinking by enacting a range of new laws targeting property owners on whose premises underage drinking occurs. As of January 2007, 24 states had enacted social host statutes.

The state of California has no social host law; however, 40 of its cities and counties have passed social host ordinances, including the social host liability ordinances passed in every Ventura County jurisdiction. The first national study of civil social host law found that social host liability laws reduce binge drinking, and drinking and driving. These ordinances do not prohibit family activities within the home involving the use of alcohol by immediate family members or religious practices that include the use of alcohol.

According to the Surgeon General, addressing the public health problem of underage alcohol use begins with an examination of our own attitudes toward underage drinking and our recognition of the seriousness of its consequences for adolescents and their families, as well as for society as a whole. Underage alcohol use is not a benign, acceptable rite of passage, but is a serious health and safety threat to adolescent development that cannot be ignored.

Education, communication, and legislation are essential in comprehensively addressing the problem of underage drinking and the practice of social hosting. By providing up-to-date and research-based information, facilitating open and honest communication, and supporting strong social host legislation, we will convey the fact that underage drinking is unacceptable and fulfill our commitment to advocate for all children. We owe them nothing less.

###

RECOMMENDATION TO RESCIND
Aids Prevention Education in the Curriculum
Adopted by Convention Delegates May 1988

- WHEREAS,** One object of the PTA is “to promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community and place of worship;” and
- WHEREAS,** Presently there is no cure for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome (AIDS) and no vaccine to prevent infection with the AIDS virus; and
- WHEREAS,** AIDS prevention education is currently the only preventive measure in the battle against the spread of AIDS; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to support the development of a candid and relevant AIDS prevention curriculum formulated to include an abstinence education program in their respective school districts; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge that decisions regarding AIDS prevention curriculum be made at the school district level with the active involvement of parents, educators, students, health personnel and other community members; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge its units, councils and districts to sponsor programs to educate parents, students, educators and community about AIDS prevention; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA forward this resolution to the National PTA for consideration by the delegates at the National PTA convention in Salt Lake City.

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

According to Dr. C. Everett Koop, U.S. Surgeon General: “AIDS is a life threatening disease and a major public health issue. Its impact in our society is and will continue to be devastating. By the end of 1991, an estimated 250,000 cases of AIDS will have occurred with 179,000 deaths within the decade since the disease was first recognized. In the year 1991, an estimated 145,000 patients with AIDS will need health and supportive services at a total cost of between \$8 (billion) and \$16 billion. However, AIDS is preventable. It can be controlled by changes in personal behavior. It is the responsibility of every citizen to be informed about AIDS and to exercise the appropriate preventive measures.”

The National PTA received a grant of \$109,361 from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control to conduct a nationwide AIDS Education Project. The project theme, “AIDS Education at Home and School – PTAs Respond to the Need,” reflects the two major goals of the project: (1) to give parents the information they need to help them talk with their children about AIDS; and (2) to help PTAs work to get AIDS education into our nation’s schools.

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Action by PTA Organizations

Position

A “support” position indicates agreement that the resolution be forwarded to Convention.

California State PTA Board of Managers

Support

Rationale: *The language and call to action in this resolution are in contradiction to current codes, requirements, recommended practices, and an adopted resolution. California State PTA Standing Rules (10.3.2 and 8.13.4) outline criteria, including these listed, for determining when a resolution should be considered for rescission. “HIV/STD Prevention Education in our Schools” was adopted by 2008 Convention delegates.*