



For Immediate Release

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PRESS RELEASE

April 29, 2010

PTA convention kicks off *Rally marks first day as thousands arrive for annual event*

SACRAMENTO – Several thousand PTA members and delegates today kicked off the 111th annual convention of the California State PTA. The annual event will run through Sunday morning at the Sacramento Convention Center downtown, just blocks from the Capitol.

Among the first day's highlights was a rally outside the Capitol protesting budget cuts to education and other critical children's services. Thousands participated in the afternoon event, which was part of the California State PTA's ongoing **9 Million Reasons To Speak Up** campaign to highlight the needs of the state's more than 9 million children.

"The tremendous energy and turnout at our rally demonstrates, loudly and clearly, that Californians support investing in our children and in our future," said Debbie Look, director of legislation for the California State PTA. "We will keep raising our voices as we are doing today to make our elected leaders understand this, and to urge them to stop cutting budgets for education and critical children's services."

Another highlight of the opening day of the convention was a report to attendees from President Jo A. S. Loss.

"Now, more than ever, we believe our voice and participation are imperative," Loss said. "It is always the right time to do the right thing for California's children."

The annual convention is the premier training event for the California State PTA, the state's largest and oldest children's advocacy association, with nearly 1 million members. Informative workshops cover hot-topic issues. For instance, an early learning workshop on Thursday featured federal expert Carmen Nazario, Assistant Secretary, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

The gathering also is a time for celebrating past accomplishments and making plans for the future, as delegates vote on policy resolutions that guide the work of the association. Highlights of this year's convention include the following.

- **A Candidates Forum** with leading candidates for Superintendent of Public Instruction, co-sponsored by the League of Women Voters of California Education Fund; at 11:30 a.m. Friday, April 30.
- **Inspiring speakers**, including Kelly Kovacic, a California Teacher of the Year.
- **More than 75 workshops** to help PTA members and leaders develop their skills.
- **Performances and displays** by student artists honored by the PTA's Reflections program.

everychild. onevoice.

The California State PTA has nearly 1 million members throughout the state working on behalf of public schools, children and families, with the motto, "Every child, one voice." The PTA is the nation's oldest, largest and highest profile volunteer association working to improve the education, health and welfare of all children and youth. The PTA also advocates at national, state and local levels for education and family issues. The PTA is nonprofit, nonsectarian and noncommercial.

For more information about the California State PTA, visit www.capta.org.