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Convention Release

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Governor Brown joins thousands to connect for kids at kickoff for annual PTA convention

Governor Jerry Brown today joined thousands of parents and PTA members from across the state on Thursday, April 28, for the start of the 112th Annual California State PTA Convention at the Long Beach Convention Center.

"Schools are the future, and you are the voice of those schools, so we've got to hear from you. You have the credibility," Brown told the delegates. "It's going to have to be the voice of parents and teachers and, yes, even the school students themselves, to awaken the conscience of California to our true path forward, which is to invest in the future, not steal from it."

Jo A.S. Loss, president of the California State PTA, said the association's members clearly support protecting education funding.

"Our nearly 1 million members have said loudly and clearly that adequate school funding is their top priority," Loss said. "They are deeply concerned about the massive budget cuts that education and children's programs have already absorbed in the past few years. We will continue speaking up for a balanced budget solution that will prevent deeper cuts that would affect children."

The PTA has been focused on raising awareness about the devastating impact of state budget cuts on children. The association recently launched a "Cut\$ Hurt Kids" campaign, supported by a Facebook page. Thousands of PTA members have already contacted legislators urging them to reject an all-cuts budget and to protect funding for education and other crucial children's services.

The annual convention, attended by about 3,000 PTA members and delegates, runs through Sunday morning. It is the premier training event for the association, which is the largest and oldest children's advocacy group in the state. Delegates here will map out the path ahead for the association, from electing officers to adopting resolutions that guide advocacy and public education efforts.

"California State PTA leaders and volunteers make a difference in the lives of children every day. Our mission is to educate our members to empower them to become advocates for California's children and families," President Loss told attendees during the opening meeting. "It takes a daily effort of our passionate and committed volunteers to ensure the sustainability of such a valuable and powerful ally for every child that speaks with one voice."

During the opening meeting of the convention, attendees were also greeted by Charles "Chuck" Saylor, president of the National PTA.

“When one child lands in prison and poverty because our education system has failed them, it is a tragedy,” Saylor said. “When a million children a year fall into despair because we are not providing them the high-quality education they deserve, it is an embarrassment for our nation and ourselves. If we continue to deny our children the resources they need, we are condemning ourselves to futures of despair.”

Saylor then spoke about the way PTA can remedy this bleak reality.

“Our children need effective advocates for their wellness and academic success,” he said. “They need caring adults skilled at building alliances that support improving public education. Most of all, they need an army of passionate defenders working tireless on their behalf in schools, communities, statehouses and Capitol Hill. Our children need PTA. What we do is transformative. When PTA engages more parents in education, our kids will succeed in school and in life.”