



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF CALIFORNIA
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League Urges Realistic, Balanced Approach to Budget

Sacramento, CA – The League of Women Voters of California today called on the Governor and legislative leaders to reject the idea of a “cuts-only” budget, especially one that decimates crucial programs. Instead, the League advocates a balanced approach to California’s budget crisis that includes new revenues along with targeted cuts to programs.

“We urge you to give priority to protecting the essential safety net for those most in need,” said League President Janis R. Hirohama in a letter to the budget leaders, reminding them that “the primary obligation of government is to protect the welfare and security of its people.” The League believes that the budget must not eliminate such basic assistance programs as CalWORKs and Healthy Families and should avoid further deep cuts in programs such as Medi-Cal, in-home supportive services, and child welfare services. “To make draconian cuts while rejecting proposals for increased revenues would be both short-sighted and unconscionable,” continued Hirohama.

It is unrealistic to rely on cuts alone to fill a budget deficit of this magnitude. The League of Women Voters has long supported revenues that are sufficient and flexible enough to meet changing needs for state and local government services and that ensure fair sharing of the tax burden. Recent polls have shown that a large majority of Californians agree, supporting a budget solution that includes a balance of cuts and new taxes.

A number of viable new revenue sources are on the table, and the League urged lawmakers to consider them. In addition to new taxes or increases in tax rates, possible solutions include repealing corporate tax breaks—included in the budget deals last September and February—that will cost some \$2.5 billion per year. Other alternatives that should be examined are fees that can be established by a simple majority vote in the legislature and reductions in administrative costs.

Looking ahead past these extremely difficult times, Hirohama called for serious structural reform of California’s dysfunctional fiscal system. Reforms include eliminating the two-thirds vote requirements that paralyze government decision-making and establishing a fairer, more efficient tax policy. “For the good of all Californians, and for our future,” she concluded, “we expect our leaders to take on this important task. Our state deserves no less.”

Read the League’s letter to the Big 5 and the budget conference committee leaders at

<http://ca.lwv.org/lwvc/action/letters/2009-06-12budget.pdf>.

The League of Women Voters of California, a nonpartisan political organization, encourages informed and active participation in government, works to increase understanding of major public policy issues, and influences public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to men and women of all ages. With more than 89 years of experience and 850 local and state affiliates, the League is one of America’s most trusted grassroots organizations.

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