

Budget fight — why it matters

Future of state services hinges on fiscal solution

By Yvonne Walker, President, SEIU Local 1000

The importance of the struggle for a balanced solution to California's fiscal crisis goes far beyond the Capitol or even our state government.

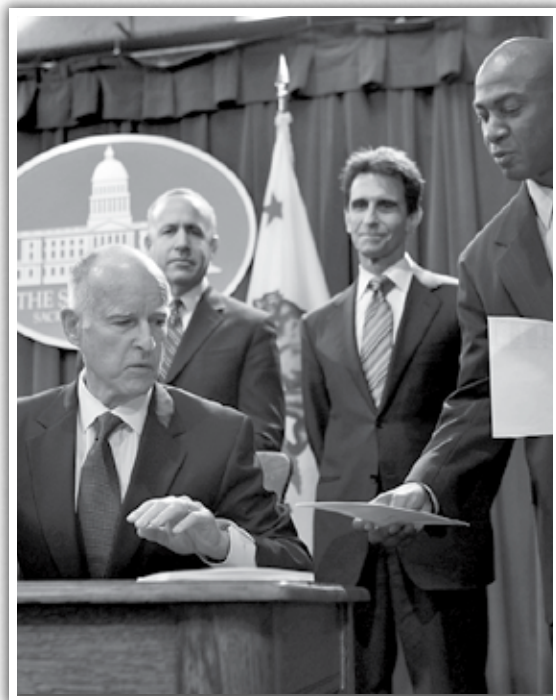
It is a test of our democratic institutions and how we as a state cope with a serious, systemic funding crisis starving public institutions that provide safety, security and education to middle class families. This crisis tests the ability of the Legislature and the ability of California voters themselves to set the state's priorities.

Balance cuts & revenues

Shortly after taking office in January, Gov. Jerry Brown attempted to do things differently. He presented a sober, thoughtful budget plan—free of gimmicks—that would balance \$12.5 billion in program cuts with a nearly equal amount raised by allowing voters to extend existing taxes for five more years.

The program cuts, while painful, were necessary to close the \$25 billion deficit. Most of these cuts have already been approved by the Legislature. But the other half of Brown's plan, allowing voters to decide on tax extensions, has been held hostage by a group of legislators taking advantage of the requirement for a two-thirds vote to put tax measures on the state ballot.

So far this group has refused repeated compromise offers from Brown. After months of negotiations, the group moved the goalposts and issued a list of more than 50 demands they needed met before they would let voters decide on tax extensions. The demands included many that are similar to attacks on middle class families in Wisconsin and other states.



Keep schools & safety

Brown warns an “all-cuts” budget would take \$25 billion from programs and will devastate local schools, police and fire services, and many other state programs.

Local 1000 supports honest efforts to make government more cost efficient and more effective. We are not resisting compromises that will preserve vital core services. In this fiscal climate, some changes are necessary. We support practical solutions, but we remain opposed to ideological grandstanding. Why demand tax cuts when California's corporate tax rates are already lower than any time in the past 30 years? Is maintaining an anti-tax pledge really worth closing schools, opening up prisons and jails, and gutting programs that benefit middle class families?

It is time for all legislators to put aside ideology and do what is right for their constituents and for California as a whole. Let the people decide.

APRIL 20, 2011

UNION UPDATE

Union History

This day in labor history— Ludlow massacre 1914

Colorado militia kills 12 children after setting fire at camp of striking miners

This day 97 years ago—April 20, 1914—was the most tragic day in the deadliest strike in American history.

A total of 19 people lost their lives in the Ludlow Massacre, including a dozen children of striking miners who were killed when Colorado authorities—including company-hired guards hurriedly sworn in as state militia—set fire to a tent camp where strikers were living after they were evicted from company-owned housing. Most of the children and their parents died while trying to hide from the guards, who had opened fire on those who tried to flee the blaze.

“It is a story of horror unparalleled in the history of industrial warfare,” the New York Times wrote at the time. “In the holes which had been dug for their protection against the rifles’ fire, the women and children died like trapped rats when the flames swept over them.”

The Ludlow Massacre remains relevant today because it shows the level of sacrifice that American men and women were willing to make for fair wages and working conditions. The incident also shows

how far companies and government would go in order to keep their employees from organizing together to seek better wages and working conditions.

Eight-hour day sought

The strikers demanded an eight-hour workday, the enforcement of state mining safety laws, and the right to shop at businesses other than company-owned stores.

The tent camp was occupied by 1,200 striking miners and their families, who were mainly immigrants from Greece, Italy and Mexico. On the day of the massacre, families were celebrating Greek Orthodox Easter when, without warning, state militia attacked the tent camp. The gunmen took several strike leaders into custody and shot them to death.

But the deaths of the children shocked the nation. The youngest victims were two babies born at the camp; three-month old Elvira Valdez and four-month old Frank Petrucci. Many angry miners took up arms after the massacre. President Woodrow Wilson soon ordered federal troops to come in and restore order.



Many striking miners armed themselves after women and children were killed at Ludlow camp

Resource Center

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Special election for CalPERS board

Ballots to be mailed on April 21

SEIU Local 1000 has endorsed Michael Bilbrey in the race for an open seat on the CalPERS board in a special election.

Bilbrey, a vice president of the California School Employees Association, is running for a seat that came open with the resignation last year of Kurato Shimada.

A ballot package should be mailed to your home April 21. Please read the instructions carefully. Ballots must be returned by May 19.

If a candidate does not receive a majority of votes in the initial election, a runoff election will be conducted between the two candidates who received the highest number of votes.

For more information about Michael Bilbrey, visit: www.bilbrey4calpers.com

Local 1000 election ballots mailed April 20

Completed ballots due by May 20

Election ballots for Local 1000 offices, including president and other statewide positions, are being mailed to all members by April 20. The deadline for returning ballots is May 20. Please read the ballot instructions carefully to ensure that your vote is counted.

Ballot count is scheduled for May 21 at 9 a.m., 1321 Howe Ave, Suite 200, Sacramento. Observers are welcome.

Unofficial election results will be posted on seiu1000.org on May 23.