



Berkeley Federation of Teachers

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Dear BFT Member,

I want to welcome you to the 2012-2013 school year. I hope you had an energizing and recuperative summer.

We head into this year very strong as a union. For the fourth year in a row, in the midst of the worst recession since the 1930s, we have succeeded in avoiding layoffs, class size increases, and furlough days. This is due in large part to the high level of union and political activism on the part of our members. We have preserved funding for our preschool programs, and have largely protected our Adult School funds. We are very active in our community, and especially in efforts to achieve the 2020 Vision and close opportunity gaps in our district. We have advocated strenuously for our temporary teachers, and will continue that struggle. Our members played a vital role in the local Occupy movement and we will prioritize that important work in the year ahead.

We are going to need to call upon these strengths, and upon every single BFT member, as **we face the most significant attack on our rights as union members and working people since the special election of 2005.** There is a sophisticated and well-funded effort in Prop. 32 to make California go the way of Wisconsin, Ohio and Indiana. We must fight back.

In addition, **we MUST pass Proposition 30, the Schools and Local Public Safety Act.** Proposition 30 will tax the rich in order to provide more revenue for schools and public safety.

Proposition 32: Special Exemptions Mean Corporations Have No Limits

This fall, Proposition 32, the Special Exemptions Act, threatens our union's ability to fight for jobs, good wages, workplace safety, retirement security and excellent teaching and learning conditions. Proposition 32 appears to limit the ability of both corporations and unions to spend money to have a voice in political decisions, but it is riddled with exemptions for LLC's, LLP's, real estate companies, hedge funds, law firms and others. There are no limits in Prop. 32 on the ability of CEOs and billionaires to donate money to political causes. **This deceptive and dishonest initiative is designed with a single purpose in mind: to silence the voice of unions and working people in the political process.**

In this way, Prop. 32 is the first half of a "one-two punch". First, limit the ability of unions and working people to have a voice, and then launch a war to eliminate collective bargaining, pensions, seniority, tenure and the voice of working people. **The folks behind Prop 32 want California to be the next Wisconsin. We cannot let that happen.**

Proposition 30: Taxing the Wealthy to Support Schools

After years of cuts, California's schools, universities and local public safety services are at the breaking point. BUSD is facing \$4 million in mid-year cuts this year if we do not secure more state revenue for our schools in November. Proposition 30 raises taxes on the wealthiest Californians to provide \$9 billion in the coming year for schools and public safety, and \$6 billion per year for six more years. Clearly the passage of Prop. 30 is vital to our success in our contract negotiations, and

to continuing to prevent layoffs and furlough days in Berkeley. More important, it is critical to our ability to provide all children with access to an excellent education that allows them to fulfill their potential as human beings.

With these threats to our jobs and our voice as working people it will not surprise you that BFT is going to be asking all members to play a role in our robust campaign to defeat Prop. 32 and pass Prop. 30. An hour here and there of your time will make a HUGE difference. **Please begin by reading the enclosed information about Prop. 30 and Prop. 32.**

School Board Elections November 2012: BFT Endorses Leyva-Cutler and Appel

BFT and the Berkeley Council of Classified Employees have endorsed incumbent Beatriz Leyva-Cutler and first-time candidate July Appel for Berkeley School Board in the November 2012 election. Both of these amazing women bring dedication and a passion for public education to everything they do. I strongly encourage you to read the enclosed information about these candidates.

The Board elected in the November election will be the leaders who ratify our next contract. It is vital that we play an active role in electing these two highly qualified candidates.

Contract Negotiations Continue

Negotiations for a new BFT/BUSD contract continue. BFT continues to prioritize increasing the wages of our members, both in the short and long term. **The key variable in our success will be the passage of Proposition 30 in the November election.** The best way that you can support your BFT Negotiations Team is to be actively involved in the campaign efforts this fall.

Please be sure to read the monthly *BFT Action* and the periodic *Negotiations Updates*, and to turn to your Site Rep(s) for help with any questions or concerns. **An informed membership is a powerful membership.** With your participation and support we can continue to advocate for the teaching and learning conditions that will empower us to provide the best possible education to our students.

Last, but not least, I encourage all BFT members to attend a very special evening, cohosted by BFT, the Oakland Education Association and KPFA, with **Jonathan Kozol**, author of *Letters to a Young Teacher*, *Savage Inequalities*, *Amazing Grace* and many other important works. Mr. Kozol bears witness to the impacts of social inequality in our schools and is an inspiring speaker and activist. This event is meant to honor and respect all teachers, public school staff members and students, and tickets for these groups are only \$5. Please contact BFT at 549-2307 to reserve tickets.

Wishing you an excellent 2012-2013 school year!

In Unity,



Cathy Campbell
President, BFT

*P.S. The BFT and BCCE offices have moved. We are now located at 1432 University Avenue, between Sacramento and Acton. A flier with detailed directions is included in this mailing. **Because of the critical issues facing our community and our state this fall, we hope you will look at all of the enclosed materials.***