



Community College Council of the California Federation of Teachers  
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

# Perspective



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# Performance-based Funding: A Poison Pill in the Governor's Budget Proposal, page 2

and more...



## President's Column

Jim Mahler, president, CFT Community College Council

# Performance-based Funding: The Other Poison Pill in this Year's Budget

In the Governor's budget plan for 2018-19, he does some good things, like providing money to give community colleges the option of offering one year of free tuition to students, but there are some bad things as well. As the feature piece in this issue addresses, Brown is pushing an ill-advised plan for an online college that replicates what we already do, is damaging to students, has little accountability, and threatens to drain resources away from the existing system. In sum, it's a terrible idea that seeks to provide education on the cheap in the name of "access" and it gives working adults the false panacea of an online degree factory.

Unfortunately, that's not the only piece of questionable policy being promoted by the Governor this year. Also in this budget plan, Brown is proposing to move away from a traditional funding formula based on enrollment to one that ties some of

receiving financial aid and a final quarter tied to completion numbers.

The idea here, according to the proponents of the plan, is to provide financial incentives to colleges to improve completion and transfer rates. While this sounds

**Brown is pushing an ill-advised plan for an online college that replicates what we already do, is damaging to students, has little accountability, and threatens to drain resources away from the existing system.**

the money colleges receive to the number of degrees and certificates students complete along with the percentage of students who finish in three years. More specifically, under Brown's plan no college would get less money than it did last year but, after that, half of all additional future funding would be linked to enrollment with another quarter based on the number of students

like a reasonable idea on the surface there is a significant problem with it: there is no evidence to suggest that it works.

As *EdSource* reported in their recent piece on the Governor's proposal, researchers at the Community College Research Center note that "there is no evidence that such funding has boosted the numbers of students earning associate or bachelor's degrees."

And it's not just one source that makes that claim. Despite a years-long push by corporate funded think tanks like Lumina promoting this and a host of other awful education reform ideas, the returns on performance-based funding are not good.

For instance, in a thoroughgoing recent report on the subject, "Why Performance-Based College Funding Doesn't Work," Nicholas Hillman of the Century Foundation documents how despite its use in 35 states, performance-based funding has yet to yield significant positive results. In fact, despite the glowing rhetoric of the reformers, Hillman notes that "the



PHOTO CREDIT: DEAN DROBOT

assumptions don't match the reality" as it has not even been illustrated that this model is even slightly more effective than traditional funding formulas.

As he concludes: "there is little empirical or theoretical support behind performance-based funding in higher education, yet states continue to adopt and expand their efforts even when the weight of evidence suggests performance-based funding is not well suited for improving educational outcomes."

The answer, Hillman asserts, is not the carrot and stick model of performance-based funding, but rather improving the funding for the lowest performing colleges. For those of us who have spent years advocating for more funding for higher education, his logic is elementary:

*Colleges that have more financial capacity are in the best position to serve students well; in fact, funding per student is one of the strongest*

*predictors of college graduation. As states divest from public higher education, they shift the financial responsibility onto students in the form of higher tuition. Rather than stemming this tide, performance-based funding may actually reinforce this race to the bottom in that colleges that have the greatest capacity are those that will be most likely to perform well. If this occurs to a high extent, then financial incentives are a blunt policy instrument not well designed for improving college completions. Instead, states should focus on building the resource capacity of the lowest-performing colleges and then allocate funds according to performance-oriented needs.*

So rather than jump on the ideological bandwagon here, the Governor would be better served to learn from the failure of other states that have fallen for this educational assembly line snake oil. Otherwise, colleges will be incentivized to use their too-scarce funding to turn themselves into degree mills. **CCC**

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR

March 23-25	CFT Convention	Hilton/Costa Mesa
April 28th	CFT Committee Meetings	Southern California location TBD
May 5th	Community College Council Meeting	Southern California location TBD
May 5th	State Council Meeting	Southern California location TBD
June 5th	Statewide Primary Election	

## Perspective

The California Federation of Teachers is an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO.

The CFT represents over 120,000 educational employees working at every level of education in California. The CFT is committed to raising the standards of the profession and to securing the conditions essential to provide the best service to California's students.

**President** Joshua Pechthalt

**Secretary-Treasurer** Jeff Freitas

**Senior Vice-President** Lacy Barnes

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### COMMUNITY COLLEGE COUNCIL

**President** Jim Mahler

AFT Guild, San Diego and Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community Colleges, Local 1931  
3737 Camino del Rio South, Suite 410  
United Labor Center Bldg.  
San Diego, CA 92108  
Email [ajtjim@mac.com](mailto:ajtjim@mac.com)  
Direct inquiries regarding the Community College Council to Jim Mahler

**Southern Vice President** Joanne Waddell  
Los Angeles College Faculty Guild  
3356 Barham Blvd.  
Los Angeles, CA 90068

**Northern Vice President** Dean Murakami  
Los Rios College Federation of Teachers  
AFT Local 2279  
2126 K Street  
Sacramento, CA 95816

**Secretary** Kathy Holland  
Los Angeles College Guild, Local 1521,  
3356 Barham Blvd.,  
Los Angeles, CA 90068

**Editor:** Jim Miller  
**Layout** Design Action Collective

### EDITORIAL SUBMISSIONS

Direct editorial submissions to:  
Editor, *Community College Perspective*  
California Federation of Teachers  
2001 Center Street, Suite 600  
Berkeley, CA 94704

**Telephone** 510-523-5238  
**Fax** 510-523-5262  
**Email** [Editor@cft.org](mailto:Editor@cft.org)  
**Web** [www.cft.org](http://www.cft.org)

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# Protecting Faculty and Community at College of Marin

According to Laurie Ordín, president of United Professors of Marin, in the recent negotiations of the union's current contract with Marin Community College, "UPM really pushed to get the wages and benefits raised for some of our most under-recognized members. Our Early Childhood Educators will be seeing a much-deserved raise. After all, what is more important than the work these members do, caring for and educating our littlest students? Our Community Education faculty will also be seeing more in their paychecks."

In order to achieve this goal, Ordín explains, "rather than a 3% raise across the board, everyone in each column will be getting the same dollar amount. After all, 3% of \$50,000 is \$1,500, but 3% of \$100,000 is \$3,000. Doesn't an apple or a pair of shoes for the children cost the same amount no matter where you are on the salary scale? So keeping the salary schedule 'square' seems like a proper thing to do."

John Erdmann, UPM Chief Negotiator, reports that only two articles of the contract have been settled and difficult discussions with the district may yet unfold over language in four others. "However, we negotiated hard to make sure the economic needs of all our members were addressed in this agreement. With the cost of living in the Bay Area as high as it is, we felt we had to resist accepting a straight percentage increase, which would have been a much easier route for our bargaining team to take."

Each year for three years, the District shall increase full and part-time faculty salary by a dollar amount equivalent to one

benefits will be based on earnings at the higher level. "This is an especially good agreement for our part-timers, who will receive a three-step increase on the salary schedule, an additional step on their scale, and save \$356 on their healthcare premiums."

Senior full-time faculty will also benefit by a new provision in the contract, allowing them to qualify for a resignation benefit of \$60,000, for those full-time faculty members who have reached step 24 and have worked at the college for at least 20 years.

The tentative agreement on these issues was signed on December 13 after a marathon bargaining session. UPM and the District must still reach agreement on leaves, transfers and assignments, evaluations, and workload before negotiations are concluded, so the economic advancements won't take effect until both UPM membership and the college Board of Trustees ratify the entire contract.

In addition to negotiating new provisions for the contract, the union has a record of enforcing the existing agreement. A



PHOTO CREDIT: MATTHEW HARDY

United Professors of Marin's Grievance Officer Marco Gonzalez and Chief Negotiator John Erdmann

the Academic Senate, but that avenue yielded little response from the District. Then he went to the union, whose attorney said that the surveillance was a clear change in working conditions and therefore a mandatory subject of bargaining. The union filed a cease and desist order in court, and the cameras were turned off. Shortly thereafter, Erdmann and District negotiators sat down, and after several months of bargaining, reached an agreement about how the cameras would be used. The result was a memorandum of understanding signed in March of last year.

In its key sections, the MOU states that surveillance devices "shall only be placed in areas logically related to their approved purposes." Those purposes are tightly defined as protecting District property and complying with legal requirements that it cooperate in an investigation of a formal complaint pursuant to state law. "Electronic surveillance systems and/or devices shall be prohibited in places where unit members typically engage in their professional responsibilities, and/or have a reasonable expectation of privacy," the agreement states. Prohibited places include classrooms, labs, faculty offices, libraries, restrooms and break rooms. Signs also have to warn of the presence of the cameras.

"Our union's legal counsel believes this agreement provides some of the best surveillance protections for faculty in California," Erdmann says, and it is now used as a template for other schools that are grappling with this invasive technology.

The union at College of Marin historically hasn't limited its concerns solely to wages and working conditions and was actually founded in the upsurge of protests on campuses nationally against the war in Vietnam. Even before the union won negotiating rights, faculty members active in it informally organized themselves to try to deal with the concerns of students, particularly the anti-war activists, in a constructive manner. The union's website history recalls that "the dialogue between students and faculty continued, and the College of Marin suffered none of the major disruptions that plagued other campuses."

Then, in 1978, it won an election as the faculty's bargaining agent. CFT's then-President Raoul Teilhet wrote to Paul Christensen, UPM president at the time. "Your CB election victory constitutes the first Bay Area community college election for the AFT," Teilhet announced proudly.

UPM's social concerns continued this past year, as the college, like all others, faced the threats from the Trump administration to deport undocumented immigrants, including students who qualified for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. The union worked with the district on a statement by College President David Wayne Coon, reaffirming the College's commitment "on allowing those in pursuit of higher education to do so without fear of being arrested, deported, or rounded up simply for pursuing an education and a better life." The District announced it would not release student information without a

warrant or cooperate with the government in creating a registry of people, such as Muslims, based on religion, national origin, race or sexual orientation. District police will not "detain, question, or arrest any individual solely on the basis of suspected undocumented immigration status."

Writing to her members, union president Laurie Ordín confessed "sometimes I feel like we are living in a parallel universe, but then I realize that much of what I think of as new is not new at all. There are nasty things that have been percolating but there have also been efforts to try to keep these things under control. Now it seems that percolation has turned into a rolling boil ... The rise of white nationalism, animosity toward immigrants, racial and ethnic minorities, and LGBTQI people has us terribly worried about many of our students and colleagues. International relationships over arms, trade, and environmental concerns are among the things that can keep us awake at night ... A more socially supportive mindset won't just magically become the prevailing philosophy. We must talk about it and advocate for it. ... UPM is in the midst (but hopefully nearing the end) of contract negotiations with the District and I think we are walking the walk when it comes to taking care of our community."

ccc

—By David Bacon

## After all, what is more important than the work these members do, caring for and educating our littlest students?

step on the salary schedule, with a one-time, lump sum payment retroactive to July 1st, 2017. Historically at College of Marin, ESL and IEP instructors were paid only 80% of the salaries paid to other part-timers. In the agreement, noncredit ESL and IEP faculty will be increased incrementally from 80% to 95% in three steps, reaching that level on January 1, 2019. They will also get a retroactive lump sum payment on January 1 of this year. The Child Study Center salary schedule will increase by approximately 7.2%.

The District will increase the health benefit contribution maximum from \$1,784.79 to \$1,900 per month for full-time faculty, and from \$1,544 to \$1,900 for part-time faculty. Part-time faculty reaching retirement age will benefit by an increase of the step cap from step 15 to step 16, meaning that their retirement

new grievance officer, Marco Gonzalez, is playing an active role on campus. His goal is to bring problems to the District before they reach a crisis level and thus avoid the grievance process whenever possible.

Erdmann preceded Gonzalez in that position. He began as a part-time librarian at College of Marin in 2007, becoming a full-timer in 2012, and brought with him a particular concern for academic freedom and the protection of privacy. Two years ago, he began noticing that the district was installing surveillance cameras across the campus. "They told us this was to monitor and prevent possible theft of equipment," he recalls, "but given their location the cameras clearly had no relation to that, and in fact, we felt their potential purpose was to monitor behavior."

Erdmann took his concerns to

# The Fully Online College Proposal is a Very Bad Idea

Last fall, Governor Jerry Brown, with the support of California Community College Chancellor Eloy Ortiz Oakley, put forth a proposal to create a statewide community college that offers only online courses. This is, for a variety of reasons, a very bad idea.

The advocates for a new fully online college claim that it is not meant as competition for the programs that already exist in our schools. This new college, they argue, is aimed at serving a population not being reached by community colleges at present—working adults, 48% of whom are in Spanish speaking households.

The problem with this proposal, however, is that the underlying assumptions it is based on are deeply flawed. As opposed to what the proponents of this new fully online college say, this initiative is, in fact, duplicative of what the community college system already provides to our students, a large percentage of whom are working adults and people of color. Indeed, students from anywhere in California can currently take classes at any college in the state through the State Chancellor's Office's Online Education Initiative (OEI). This current system is already 100% online, including counseling and tutorial services.

There is also very little evidence that students are breaking down the barricades to rush to more online classes. Hence, the argument that there is pent up demand during a period of declining enrollments is suspect. As CFT President Josh Pechthalt recently noted in the

courses. Funding a “new” initiative based on helping a student demographic which is least likely to succeed makes no sense from either a pedagogical or policy viewpoint, and is at odds with the important student equity work currently underway in our colleges.

Indeed, after assessing much of the recent data on the success rates of online education for underprepared students and students of color in particular, some scholars are beginning to come to rather disturbing conclusions about online education and its effectiveness for students of color. In “Online and the Color Line” on the *Remaking the University* site, Christopher Newfield observes of the new online push for California's community colleges that:

*Online continues to deliver a significant drop in success rates in basic skills courses . . . In addition, online makes the racial disparity of in-person courses somewhat worse. The success rates of “Underrepresented Minority Students,” to use the standard classification, are poor . . . One reasonable policy conclusion would be quite the opposite of Brown's and Oakley's--Black and Latinx “basic skills” students should never be placed in online courses. White and Asian students should use them sparingly.*

More specifically, Newfield

**The problem with this proposal, however, is that the underlying assumptions it is based on are deeply flawed.**

*Los Angeles Times*, “It’s a misnomer to think that people can’t get over to a college. For those who can’t, colleges already offer online opportunities. To create a whole independent college that does just online courses seems counterproductive. I’m not opposed to online education, but schools already offer that stuff.”

It is also highly questionable whether or not an entirely online college is the best thing for the intended student population. While the program is being sold in terms of access and serving underprepared students, the great irony is that there is a growing body of evidence to suggest that these students don’t do well in online

argues that the unexamined technophilia of Governor Brown and Chancellor Oakley is deeply misguided and likely to harm precisely the community college students it is supposed to be helping:

*State leaders are wrong to continue to push online as a categorical good. This current push depends on aggregating data in a way that conceals how online disadvantages African American and Latinx students. Online education is currently an engine of racial inequality, and no good higher ed policy can be created by ignoring that fact.*

*Online should never be used to excuse state budgets that are too small to support the established features of educational quality. These features include the presence*



PHOTO CREDIT: ANDERSEN ROSS

*of fully-qualified teachers working with classes that are small enough to allow individual feedback. Online that approaches face-to-face quality is actually a “hybrid” that relies*

*on structured personal contact. We know of no hybrid online courses that will save universities money. States should never budget by assuming the opposite.*

*In short, university officials, including faculty senates, should loudly oppose officials who let online reinforce the color line. The FLOW program should restart the discussion*

## From CFT Rejection of Fully Online Community Colleges

**The process that led to this problematic proposal lacked stakeholder participation and transparency.** The workgroup which was formed to develop the options for carrying out this proposal lacked representation from a broad cross-section of stakeholders. All participants were handpicked by the Chancellor rather than selected by the various stakeholder organizations as has been customary. Furthermore, based on our discussions with some members of this workgroup, we understand that the workgroup's recommendations were not even brought forward, but were replaced by the recommendations of the out-of-state consultants who are driving this project.

For the above reasons, we soundly reject the Governor's proposal for a fully online college. It is noteworthy that both the UC and CSU systems have also independently reached this same conclusion.

If the Governor is truly interested in increasing the success rate of our community college students, then he should include additional funding in his next budget for community colleges earmarked to allow the system to hire more full-time faculty and classified staff, as there is ample documented evidence that doing so would increase both the retention and success rates of our students.

about the higher ed practices and investments that would actually reduce racial disparities in attainment, rather than cover them up.

In addition to critiques like these, it appears this initiative is going in the direction of “correspondence courses” from decades ago: use formulaic lesson plans created by private instructional designers and then “test” the students as they progress to grant access to the next module. Teaching, not testing, must remain the central mission of our community college system.

And this testing rather than teaching contrast is one of the reasons why the students these courses are intended for don’t do well in them. Educator Mike Rose, who has written extensively about addressing the difficulties working-class students confront at the college level recalls, “I would regularly encounter students from courses like general chemistry who would labor night after night, highlighter in hand, memorizing facts and formulas—and would then fail a test. The test required students to think through a problem and apply what they had learned to solving it. Demonstrating what they had memorized was suddenly not working.”

For Rose, it is not an easy, formulaic online course that holds the answer but “interactions of consequence” and personal inter-

are concentrated in lower-performing students -- the same ones who are often a key demographic for recruitment to online courses and online universities, since they might not fit in with the traditional college path.

So perhaps it is not such a great idea to move in this direction if the stated goal is to help working folks.

It also appears that this new “online college” would fall outside of accreditation and perhaps even outside of current collective bargaining statutes. What credibility would such a college or degree/certificate have? Again, it seems as though this proposal is more of a mechanism to enrich private investors, or at best wishful thinking that quality education can be done online on the cheap, rather than about actually meaningfully educating our students.

Thus, however well-intended, rushing to pour \$120 million into a new online college that doesn’t serve the intended student demographic as well as face-to-face teaching does when we may soon be in a new funding crisis as a result of the federal tax plan seems unwise at best.

This concern is not just shared by those of us in CFT but also by management. As the *Los Angeles Times* reports of the financial worries evoked by this plan, “That’s not just a worry of the union leader



PHOTO CREDIT: CHONLACHAI

**When one considers that, empty assurances aside, this new fully online college will surely siphon students and funding away from traditional community colleges while not serving them well, it is hard not to see this bright new shiny object as a dangerous chimera.**

ventions of the sort that online college cannot provide.

Thus, for working students, fully online college is simply not the answer. As *Inside Higher Ed* notes of a recent Brookings study on this question:

*One of the target demographics for online courses is students who have stopped out of college and need a more flexible course load. But it seems as though online courses have a stop-out problem of their own: students who took an online course were nine percentage points more likely to drop out the following semester, compared to their in-person peers. For those who do re-enroll, the study found that taking an online course reduces the number of credit hours taken in future semesters.*

The study found that the negative associations with online courses

who’s concerned about jobs. It’s shared quietly by many college heads who fear losing student revenue. But they aren’t speaking out yet because they’re leery of tangling with the governor and chancellor.”

Despite that fear, there are many folks who share our concerns about this hasty course of action. Perhaps this is why both the UC and CSU systems have also independently reached the conclusion that these programs are not effective. One need look no further than the recent failed Massive Open Online Course (MOOCs) experiment to see how similar ventures have fared in California. But apparently what didn’t work at the CSUs is still good enough for the community colleges.


Another part of the problem

with the folks driving this initiative is that they have lacked transparency from the beginning and have not taken input from a wide range of educators. Indeed, the workgroup that came up with this proposal was handpicked by the Chancellor and even their recommendations were replaced with those of out of state consultants. This lack of faith in the collective knowledge and experience of California’s community college educators is dismaying and, ultimately, not conducive of an intellectually open, rigorous discussion and decision-making process. What we have here instead is a blueprint for bargain basement higher education that is destined to do more harm than good.

At a time when we still have yet to come close to addressing the shortage of full-time professors and full-time staff at our community colleges and other revenue related issues continue to plague us, creating an entirely new bureaucracy makes no sense at all. When one considers that, empty assurances aside, this new fully online college will surely siphon students and funding away from traditional community colleges while not serving them well, it is hard not to see this bright new shiny object as a dangerous chimera.

Think of all of the things that

many of us have struggled to fund for many years from more full-time hires, part-time faculty office hours, free college for all, and a litany of other student programs and other basic needs for which there is never enough money. Imagine what good could be done with the \$120 million that is slated for this ill-conceived initiative. It’s a shame that rather than spending

his final bit of political capital on advocating for something like Proposition 13 reform that would solve a host of education ills, the Governor has instead decided to bet a part of his legacy on this very bad idea. 

—by Jim Miller

## Top 5 Problems with the Fully Online College Proposal

1. It is duplicative of already existing Community College programs
2. It will divert resources away from existing Community College programs
3. It is pedagogically flawed and will hurt our students
4. It lacks transparency and accountability
5. It may serve as a way to funnel tax payer dollars to private interests



## Legislative Update

Bryan Ha, CFT Legislative Advocate

The Governor is required to introduce a budget to the Legislature on or before January 10th of each year. On January 10, 2018, Governor Brown released his final budget proposal of his long, illustrious career. According to the Department of Finance, the outlook for K-14 education is positive for the 2018-19 fiscal year. Once again, the Governor's budget proposes a cautious approach to spending that acknowledges both federal and state economic volatility and uncertainty. The Governor sent a clear message to colleges that he wants to link funding to student outcomes and expand online education.

More specifically, the Governor makes two problematic, high-profile expenditures in the 2018-19 budget: 1) a new fully **online college** targeting working Californians with no degree or credentials; and 2) a new **outcomes-focused funding formula**. CFT is vehemently opposed to these two proposals.

Governor Brown proposed creating an **online-only community college** to great fanfare. But with online programs already in place in our community college system, the proposal is coming under fire for being too expensive, unnecessary, and counterproductive. Instead of

spending an initial \$100 million and then \$20 million a year on a duplicative program that may further increase the achievement gap in our community colleges, the Governor and the legislature should focus instead on investing in proven programs that already work. Perhaps the worst thing about this new initiative is that it will hurt the very students it is designed to help.

CFT also opposes the Governor's proposal to create a **new funding formula** for general purpose apportionments that encourages access for underrepresented students, provides additional funding in recognition of the need to give additional

support to low-income students, and focuses on colleges' progress on improving student success metrics.

The proposed formula incorporates the following four core components: 1) A Base Grant - each district would receive a base grant based on enrollment; 2) A Supplemental Grant - each district would receive a supplemental grant based on the number of low-income students that the district enrolls; 3) A Student Success Incentive Grant - each district would receive additional funding for the number of students who meet the metrics of the number of degrees and certificates granted and the number of students who complete a degree or certificate in 3 years or less; 4) Hold Harmless Provision - during the first year of implementation, each district would be held harmless to the level of funding that the district received in 2017-18.


While the CFT obviously supports more access to underrepresented students, we have

significant concerns with component number 3, the Student Success Incentive Grant. This provision is merely another attempt to impose performance-based funding and it creates a chilling effect. If this part of the proposal is implemented, districts will be forced to grant additional degrees and certificates in order to secure funding.

Once again, the process that led to this proposal lacked significant stakeholder participation and transparency. No faculty or classified staff were invited to participate in the workgroup that came up with this proposal and, consequently, faculty and staff concerns continue to be ignored by this body. Thus, CFT opposes the Governor's proposal to allocate \$175 million transitioning to a new funding formula with any type of performance-based funding mechanism included.

Groups representing faculty and classified staff are the ones who work with students on a daily basis and have a clear

understanding of the factors that lead to student success. If the Governor is truly interested in increasing the success rate of our community college students, then he should include additional funding in the budget for community colleges earmarked to allow the system to target the specific needs of underrepresented students, instead of implementing an expensive and unproven new program. For example, there is ample evidence that hiring more full-time faculty and classified staff would increase both the retention and success rates of our students.

While we have made great strides during the past few years, there is much more to be done to make public education serve all of our students. The CFT looks forward to continuing to work with the Governor on the range of issues we face in public education. If you have any questions, please contact Bryan Ha, CFT Legislative Advocate at [bha@cft.org](mailto:bha@cft.org). 

## Book Review: Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America

Nancy MacLean's *Democracy in Chains: The Deep History of the Radical Right's Stealth Plan for America* is the single most important new book for progressive unionists to read if they want to understand how we got to the dark moment of the present.

MacLean takes us to the roots of the current crisis via an intellectual history of James McGill Buchanan, the thinker whose work, more than anyone else's,

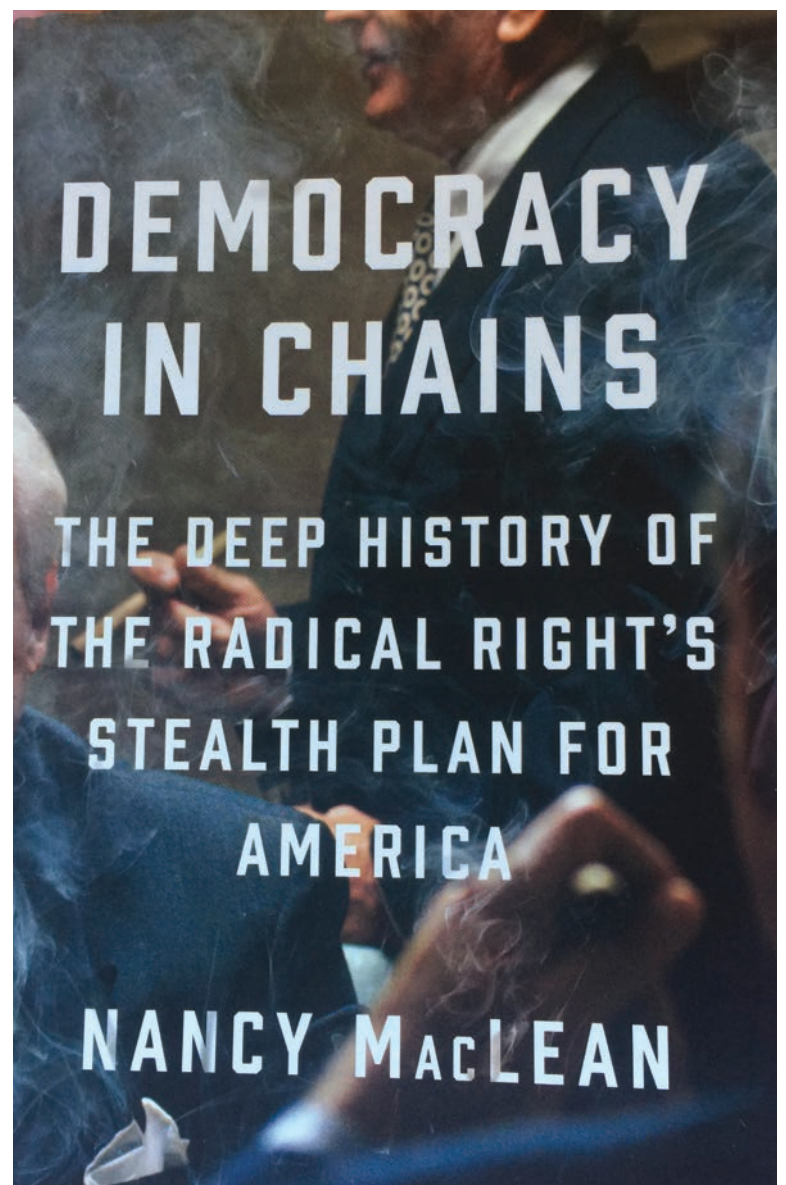
informs the machinations of the Kochtopus, that shadowy network of interlinked billionaire-funded right-wing think tanks that is driving American politics.

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If you want to know the central ideas behind the "dark money" that Jane Mayer's recent book addresses and the philosophical origins of the right-wing think tank movement that brought us the *Janus vs AFSMCE* case presently before the Supreme Court that will make it possible to gut public sector unions, MacLean's text is the key. In it we learn that Buchanan is the intellectual godfather of an intentionally dishonest, stealth movement by the right to "save capitalism from democracy—permanently."

MacLean's study of Buchanan's work and history gives us a disturbing view of "the germ of today's billionaires' bid to shackle democracy" and deliver

Continued on page 7



## PROPOSITION 13 REFORM

# It's Time to End the Corporate Loophole in Proposition 13 and Make It Fair

California's schools have been chronically underfunded for decades. California's teachers are asked to move mountains and make miracles happen, yet our schools are not given the resources that they receive in nearly every other state.

A huge reason for this is that a large loophole in Proposition 13 allows commercial properties – and the millionaires, billionaires, and corporations that own them – to avoid paying \$11 billion per year in property taxes.

That's where the California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act of 2018 comes in.

This act would raise billions for local schools by assessing commercial property at fair market value, instead of allowing commercial properties to pay

the Proposition 13 loophole is one of the most glaring examples.

Though Prop. 13 was sold as a benefit to homeowners and everyday Californians, this loophole has gutted our public services while benefiting only a tiny number of corporations. 77% of the money from this loophole goes to properties worth more than \$5 million.

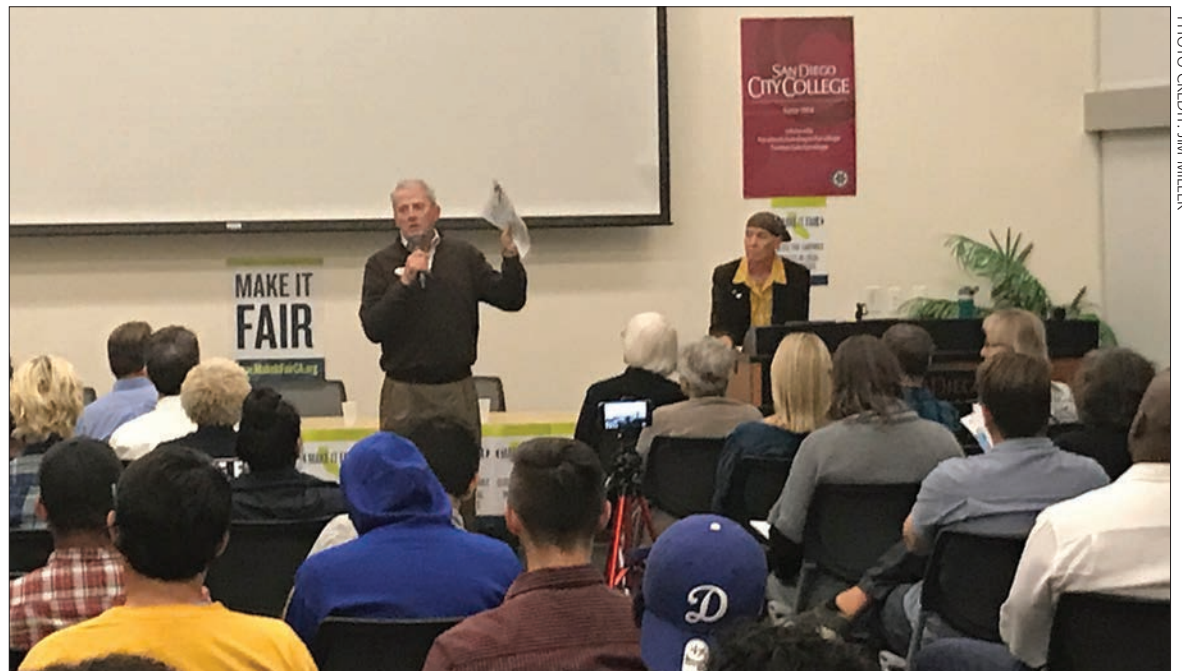
As education professionals know all too well, the most dramatic ramification of the

**Though Prop. 13 was sold as a benefit to homeowners and everyday Californians, this loophole has gutted our public services while benefiting only a tiny number of corporations.**

artificially low property taxes. At the same time, all protections for homeowners and renters would be preserved, and small businesses would be allowed to better compete.

Though Democrats and Republicans do not agree on everything, we all know that many of California's tax policies are complicated, laden with loopholes, and outdated – and

Prop. 13 loophole has been the decline in our education system. When Proposition 13 passed in 1978, California ranked 14th in the nation in spending per student. This investment in our children had tremendous effects, with California driving American growth and becoming the world's 6th largest economy. However, through decades of disinvestment, driven in large



San Diego Community College District Board of Trustee Member Bernie Rhinerson at a Make It Fair townhall at San Diego City College

part by the billions that commercial properties have been able to keep out of the system, our children have paid the price. Today, California ranks 41st in the nation in spending per student, with *U.S. News & World Report* noting that we rank 42nd in the nation for pre-K through 12th grade education quality.

To make matters worse, higher education has deteriorated thanks to this corporate loophole as well. Community colleges rely on local property taxes just as K-12 schools do, and they have faced a serious squeeze. Education is a pipeline, and when our pre-kindergartens, kindergartens, elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools are starved of funds, fewer students will have the opportunity for a higher education, with those who do make it being less prepared.

In light of this reality, educators across the state are asking, “why are we sacrificing our children and future to fund corporate billionaires?” Proposition 13 was sold as a means to keep the elderly in their homes, not to pad the offshore bank accounts of billionaires, big oil,

and Wall Street executives.

Over the last twelve months since President Trump took office, California has led the resistance against the President and the Republicans' disastrous agenda. Whether it is enforcing environmental protections, providing affordable healthcare for all citizens, or protecting the basic human rights of immigrants and refugees, California has taken up the mantle of those opposed to the administration. With the Trump tax bill further enriching corporations and billionaires at the expense of all Californians, Californians are now finally ready to say enough is enough and close this loophole that benefits the very same people who are benefiting from the Trump tax giveaway.

Elected officials, teachers, small businesses, and everyday Californians are stepping up to reinvest in our children. The California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act of 2018 would eliminate the \$11 billion corporate handout and reinvest this money in local communities and schools across California. Currently, California spends \$2,000 per year less

than the national average on each student. By putting billions of dollars every year back into our communities and our classrooms, we will catch up with the rest of the country and ensure California succeeds in the 21st century economy.

Not surprisingly, special interests and multinational corporations signaled that they will spend countless millions to fight against this campaign to reinvest in our future. While billionaires may not care about the fate of public schools, public schools are the backbone of our society and our economy. By closing this loophole, we can begin the process of catching up with the rest of the country in school funding and give every child an opportunity to succeed.

This is the year that we can finally reform Proposition 13 once and for all.

For more information about the California Schools and Local Communities Funding Act of 2018, visit [SchoolFundingNow.com](http://SchoolFundingNow.com). [CCC](#)

— by Ian Duckles, VP AFT 1931

## Book Review: *Democracy in Chains* continued from page 6

a libertarian Utopia where “property rights supremacists would rather let people die than receive health care assistance or antismoking counsel from government.” She exposes an extremism in defense of “liberty” strictly defined as the freedom of the propertied elite from any form of “collective gangsterism.” It is a worldview so rigid that its adherents “would rather invite global ecological and social catastrophe than allow regulatory restrictions on economic liberty.”

Buchanan was a southerner whose great movement was born

out of the crucible of the battle to undermine what he and his fellow white confederates saw as the oppressive government overreach resulting from the *Brown vs Board of Education* decision by the Supreme Court. For them, the movements for labor rights, civil rights, ecological protections, and/or any other variety of government action which taxed anyone without universal consent to do public good was tyranny of the worst sort—a manifestation of “a modern version of mob attempts to take by force what the takers had no right to: the fruits of another person's efforts.”

This oppression of the rich through unjust taxation, which Buchanan defined as any form of taxation without 100% approval by all citizens, was what he spent his academic and political career fighting with all he had at his disposal. This perverse definition of “freedom” as protection of oligarchy was so sacrosanct that he felt what the United States ultimately needed was a “constitutional revolution” that would bring to us what the good people of Chile were gifted by the Pinochet junta—a constitution with “locks and bolts” preventing any real collective power over the

opulent minority.

Sadly, as horrifying as this all sounds, MacLean doesn't allow her readers to comfortably imagine that this program is something that is lurking in the dark margins of the American right. Indeed, Buchanan's history is simply “the missing chapter” that illuminates not the nature of the fringe but rather the current mainstream of American politics brought to us by Buchanan's most eager students, Charles Koch and his vast network of allies who have taken over the Republican Party, USA.

Of course, none of this was

ever on any ballot but that was by design. As MacLean ably documents, the stealth strategy of those following Buchanan's playbook is to never tell the truth. Hence, we are never offered a choice between utterly unregulated dog eat dog capitalism and democracy, instead, we are sold one disingenuously packaged “market reform” after another until the evil that is the public sector is small enough to, as Grover Norquist once said, “drown in a bathtub.” [CCC](#)

— by Jim Miller

# Local Action

## Los Rios

### Los Rios Prepares For JANUS

Like many public sector unions, the Los Rios College Federation of Teachers is preparing for a Supreme Court decision in the *Janus v. AFSCME* case, in which the court's new rightwing majority is likely to strike down agency fees. That would invalidate any union's contract provision requiring non-members to pay a fair share service fee for representation services.

Right now, unions are legally required to represent all workers, even those who decide not to join the union. Teachers and classified employees who don't want to belong to a union are obligated to contribute only the costs of the workplace representation they receive, an arrangement the Supreme Court upheld in the 1977 *Abod* case, which *Janus* seeks to overturn.

"In the short term, we think we'll be able to absorb the loss, which we estimate at 10-15% of our budget, or \$10-12,000 a month," according to Dean Murakami, Los Rios local president. "Over time, however, it could be that more of our members might drop, and it might become more difficult to recruit new ones."

That assessment is in line with the perspective of California Federation of Teachers President Josh Pechthalt, who told Capital and Main that "I think [*Janus*] is going to hurt, but it need not be the end of the world. Frankly, we're going to have to do the kind of organizing that we should have been doing all these many years. I think the labor movement got a little bit complacent."

To help jumpstart that organizing, the CFT initiated a program several years ago called "Building Power." "The CFT

Sacramento area district. Of the thousand full-time faculty, 970 belong to the union. Recruiting part-timers is more difficult because many instructors aren't on campus other than to teach one or two classes. Nevertheless, of the 1500 part-timers at Los Rios, 65% are union members.

Key to this effort is a structure the union set up in which four activist teachers on each campus sit in on the orientation for newly hired faculty and make a presentation about the union. "Almost 100% join," Murakami says. "We've rarely had a problem."

The faculty recruiters personally contact those who don't join at orientation, and every part-timer is contacted at least three times. "The winning arguments start with questions," Murakami says. "Are your salary, benefits, and retirement of value to you? How about getting tenure? That's what we do - if we're not together, we can't negotiate a good deal for you." We also use the example of Proposition 30, explaining that the money from it went directly into salaries and benefits. Passing a ballot initiative is clearly something no one can do on their own."

While there are always a handful of people who believe in "every person for himself or herself," it's not a big number at Los Rios. "When people don't see a collective response as being valuable, or possible, they opt for individual answers," Pechthalt said. "We have to win people over to the fact that we're stronger when we stick together in a union."

Murakami says that personal one-on-one contact is indispensable, but that the local also does other things to increase its visibility. "People have to see us out there," he emphasizes. "We have to up our game." To that end, the union has organized workshops to help part-timers

get full-time jobs, to educate members about the union contract, and to help faculty get through performance reviews. The Los Rios Federation organized a daylong conference last month about a variety of issues, including the proposal for an



AFT 1931 members Jennifer Cost, Kelly Mayhew, and Jane Cranston with 37,000 of their closest friends at the San Diego Women's March

online college and creating a pathway to reach the 60% goal for part-timers.

"We're still very unsure," Murakami says. "It's unclear what the future holds for us. But we've prepared, and I know we'll be OK in our local here. I hope it's the same for other locals, and for our state federation." ☐

— By David Bacon

## San Diego

### San Diego's Women Get Organized

In San Diego's Women's March a year ago, union women were active and visible, but didn't march as a contingent. The demonstration was so large that they mostly didn't even see each other. This year there was a much larger organized labor presence, which the local labor council helped to build. "We must have turned out over a hundred of our members alone in addition to a lot of other union members in San Diego county," says Kelly Mayhew, City College Contract Vice President of the AFT Guild Local 1931 at the San Diego and Grossmont-Cuyamaca Community College Districts.

And while the county's chapter of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) is so new that it didn't have a chance to do organized outreach, its participation is evidence that union women are getting motivated and organized. "We used the March as a chance to hook up as labor activists," Mayhew says. "So many of our labor folks, women and men, felt angry, aghast and

even frightened at the administration in Washington, and what it means for the things we care about. The March was our way of showing that concern. As a union member, a woman, and a public school teacher, I am in the crosshairs of this administration."

It's no accident, therefore, that this is the time when San Diego's union women have decided to reorganize a CLUW chapter. "Starting in the fall, several of us began talking," Mayhew explains. "We've met four or five times, we've achieved the required 25 members, and we're now headed into elections for our formal chapter leadership in March."

Mayhew has been acting as interim president but doesn't plan to run for the permanent position, "but I will still be a very active member. It was important for me to help get this off the ground, and I look forward to passing the baton to the permanent president." She teaches English, Humanities, and Gender Studies and also co-chairs the CFT's Labor in the Schools committee, which over many years has developed nationally-recognized programs for teaching labor history to California's public school students.

The new CLUW chapter will concentrate on the broad issues that concern women in unions, and at work in general, including pay inequality, sexual harassment on the job, and political issues affecting women. Because San Diego is so close to the border with Mexico, she believes the chapter will also pay close attention to issues of immigration. "We want to find ways to educate people," she says, "so

we're even thinking of having a 'Women in Labor' film festival, with movies like *Salt of the Earth* and *Norma Rae*.

"We're talking about CLUW as an intersectional space. We want to be a resource for women unionists in San Diego who experience harassment or issues of inequality, a place where women can come to us first for help in navigating the ways of reporting. We want to create avenues for younger women, with mentoring help from older veterans, and nurture a new generation of leaders."

Not all of the motivating force behind helping to form CLUW has come from unions. "My non-union mom friends came to me after the presidential election asking 'what can we do?'" Mayhew recalls. "I know that I can be active because I have my union, which gives me a way to speak up and fight back. So we also want to make unions more visible in the broader women's movement. In the March we carried signs saying things like 'Labor Rights are Women's Rights!'"

"Many of us want to create a space to develop sisterhood across the lines of professions and unions. This kind of space can help us build coalitions and find a way forward." ☐

— By David Bacon

**Murakami says that personal one-on-one contact is indispensable, but that the local also does other things to increase its visibility. "People have to see us out there," he emphasizes. "We have to up our game."**

helped to fund an equal share of its cost," Murakami explains, "and we matched it, and together we paid for our members to go out and talk to non-union teachers on campus."

That program has had a big impact in the four-campus

get full-time jobs, to educate members about the union contract, and to help faculty get through performance reviews. The Los Rios Federation organized a daylong conference last month about a variety of issues, including the proposal for an