

**LOWERING THE 2/3 VOTE REQUIREMENT
ON SCHOOL AND LIBRARY BONDS**

*Adopted by Convention Delegates May 1999
Reviewed by Board of Managers March 2013*

- WHEREAS, Free and public educational systems, including schools and libraries, are the cornerstone of democracy; and
- WHEREAS, Delegates to the annual California State PTA convention adopted in 1968 a resolution calling for lowering of the 66-2/3 vote requirement for school and library bonds; and
- WHEREAS, The school facilities crisis, a critical PTA issue for many years, is becoming even more severe as an increasing number of aging school buildings need repair and modernization, additional classroom space is needed for reduced class size, and new facilities are needed in growing communities; and
- WHEREAS, Local communities must be given the ability to do adequate planning and to generate the necessary funds for school facilities and libraries; and
- WHEREAS, Local bond campaigns are time consuming and expensive to conduct, but are currently very difficult to pass because of the required 2/3 vote requirement; and
- WHEREAS, Educational bond financing is one of the few remaining areas where the will of a minority of voters may defeat the majority of voters; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts support legislation and ballot measures to lower the requirement of a 2/3 vote presently required to pass school and library bond measures.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The inadequacy of school facilities, a growing crisis of major proportions in many California communities, has long been a high priority issue for PTA at all levels. Research evidence and common sense indicate that adequate school facilities and the availability of public libraries contribute positively to both school achievement and the overall quality of community life.

PTA recognizes that the school facilities crisis cannot be fully addressed by an occasional state school bond measure or minor adjustments to the state school facilities program. Even when state school bond funds are available, local communities must provide up to 50% in matching funds. Local general obligation bonds are the major source of local matching funds, but the requirement for a two-thirds majority vote for approval of local bond measures makes it extremely difficult to mount a successful local school bond campaign. It often requires two or more attempts to achieve the required two-thirds majority vote for approval of a local bond measure. These campaigns are costly and time consuming and inevitably drain money away from educational programs. Local communities must be given the power to work efficiently toward meeting their own school facilities needs through adequate planning, and by allowing a majority of voters in local districts to make the decisions on their own local bond measures.

California is one of only four states in the nation that still requires more than a simple majority vote for passage of local school and library bond measures. Thirty-one years ago in 1968, delegates to the annual California State PTA convention adopted a resolution calling for lowering the two-thirds vote requirement for approval of school and library bonds. More recently, PTA convention delegates adopted another resolution, “School Facilities Crisis” (1990), which included a declaration of support for reducing the two-thirds vote requirement for approval of local school bonds to a simple majority. This continues to be a critically important PTA issue.