

# ADVOCACY INSIDER

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## UPCOMING BALLOT MEASURES

California State PTA supports two state ballot measures:

- **ON THE MARCH 3, 2020 BALLOT: Public Preschool, K-12, and College Health & Safety Bond Act of 2020** - This measure, which was passed by the legislature and signed by the governor, authorizes the state to issue \$15 billion in bonds for the construction and modernization of school facilities. It will raise \$9 billion for the K-12 system, providing funds for seismic mitigation, lead testing in school water systems and renovation of aging classrooms, and \$2 billion for each of the three higher education segments (UC, CSU, and Community Colleges). [Click here](#) for detailed information about the school facility bond ballot measure.
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- **ON THE NOVEMBER 3, 2020 BALLOT: California Schools & Local Communities Funding Act** - This initiative would require that commercial and industrial real estate property be taxed on current market value, raising as much as \$11.5 billion in additional funding for schools and other local governments. A revised version of the initiative is being circulated for signature collection to place it on the November 2020 ballot. [Click here](#) for detailed information about this initiative.
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**BALLOT MEASURE CONFUSION:** The school facility bond ballot measure is also known as Proposition 13, an unlucky numbering that is causing a lot of confusion among voters. For a handy infographic that explains the differences between the ballot measures, [click here](#).

## CAMPAIGN RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF SCHOOL RESOURCES

There are strict restrictions against using school district resources for political activity. This includes, for example,

advocating for a ballot measure on school property and communicating advocacy information using school resources such as school email, websites, or copiers.

You may gather signatures OFF school property and hold PTA meetings OFF school property for advocacy. You may use your PTA website and PTA email to distribute information to your members. You may collect signatures at a PTA meeting that is off school property.

**If you want to use a school facility for advocacy, you must contact your school district for rules and permit requirements regarding political activity on school property.**

## WASHINGTON BUDGET UPDATES

The White House released its proposal for the 2021 fiscal year budget last week. Overall, the budget allocates \$66.6 billion for the Department of Education, 7.8% or \$5.6 billion less than the previous year.

Among proposed changes is a push to restructure the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA) into a block grant of \$19.4 billion, consolidating major programs and amounting to \$4.8 billion less than what Congress approved for 2020.

The proposed budget would also invest an additional \$100 million in funding in special needs, which would bring Trump's proposed Individuals with Disabilities Education Act funding to \$13 billion, less than the \$13.9 billion Congress approved for 2020.

Among priorities the White House highlighted in its budget were Education Freedom Scholarships, which the President called on Congress to pass in his recent State of the Union address. The program would give \$5 billion in annual federal tax credits to businesses and individuals who voluntarily donate to organizations providing private school scholarships.

While Education Secretary Betsy DeVos said the initiative is meant to expand educational freedom for families, many are worried it will siphon away public dollars to private schools.

**PTA opposes this proposal as it would redirect \$5 billion per year of federal taxpayer dollars to fund private school voucher programs. PTA advocates for the improvement of, and investments in public education for all children and to guarantee public funds are not diverted to any private school choice proposal or voucher system.**

The budget proposal also includes a renewed emphasis on career and technical education, with a proposed increase of \$680 million for Perkins V, which would bring its total funding to \$2 billion. The proposal builds on the President's call during his State of the Union speech to ensure every high school has access to a high-quality vocational program.

Additional programs that would be impacted under the proposed budget include the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which would see a \$182 billion cut over the next decade. PTA has been closely monitoring recent regulatory activity related to SNAP. This fall the California State PTA joined many other state PTAs and National PTA in submitting comments expressing concerns about the U.S. Department of Agriculture's proposed rule to revise SNAP and the potential for benefits to be eliminated for millions of families which could jeopardize children's access to free school breakfast and lunch.

Congress is expected to decide between now and September on the final budget.

For National PTA's response to the President's proposed budget, [click here](#).



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