

# SBUT ANNOUNCER

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Greetings Members and Happy Holidays!

We hope that you spend the season experiencing the joy and happiness that you and your family deserve.

## Election Results

Congratulations to Centinela Valley Secondary Teachers Association and Manhattan Beach Unified Teachers Associations. Both of their districts' bond measures passed. With the teachers unions' support, Measure CV passed with 70% and Manhattan Beach's Measure BB won with 61%.

## School Board News

Manhattan Beach school board member, Bill Eisen was recalled and will be replaced by Joyce Fahey. Redondo Beach has 3 seats up for election in March 2009.

## Care About Health Care? Part 2

In the last issue of the *SBUT Announcer*, we started a series of reports about Health Care. The following is part two of an article about SB 840, a bill recently vetoed by the Governor. It's author, State Senator Sheila Kuehl (D-Santa Monica) has said that she will bring the bill back next year. We feel that it is important that members are informed about this and other proposals designed to provide relief from the burden of skyrocketing health care costs. Healthcareforall.org was the source for this material. For more information visit that site or for video of Senator Kuehl, go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FyXrsutwho&NR=1>. There are several clips on Youtube of the senator discussing why we need a single payer system in California.

### Access

Canada, our neighbor to the north, has a single payer system which has been highly

touted by healthcare advocates. You may have heard that they experience a greater amount of wait time to see a doctor because everyone has access. Proponents of SB 840 reason that Canada spends about 1/3 as much as we do per capita on health care and uses waiting lists to manage limited resources. California spends more than enough to avoid waiting lists, although we will have to plan our resource use carefully.

Supporters believe that under SB 840 (Kuehl), care will be affordable for every Californian, and health system planning will be done by a public, representative Health Policy Board. Care will only be "managed" in the sense that the care you get will be based on the sound medical judgment of your doctor.

There's lots of talk lately about "socialism" and concerns that it is creeping into Ameri-

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## More Budget Cuts Proposed

Lawmakers are telling school district officials to brace for even deeper cuts to education and at this moment, the State is already projecting a \$28 billion deficit over the next twenty months. This is due in large part to shortfalls in property tax income which in turn is due to the staggering amount of foreclosures throughout the

state and nation. This shortfall, along with unemployment at 8.2% in California, has legislators concerned that the figure will grow even higher. The Governor, who came into office cutting the vehicle tax, is now proposing that that tax be raised along with an increase to the state sales tax and other "luxury taxes" on greens fees, liquor, etc. It's

widely accepted now that cuts alone will not get California back on its feet. Assembly Speaker Karen Bass has led the charge for a state bailout similar to the bank bailout that we saw a few weeks ago. She and other leaders believe that at least 50% of the State's deficit must be addressed with federal dollars.

## AFL-CIO/SBUT Chapter Affiliation Opportunity

The AFL-CIO (American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations) has entered into a Unity Partnership with NEA. Because of this partnership, NEA affiliates, including

your chapter, are now eligible to join as well. The SBUT Board of Directors and your chapter leaders are investigating the feasibility of this partnership and whether or not it is worth pursuing for

our members. Check out this site for more information: <http://www.aflcio.org/aboutus/jointheaflcio/nea.cfm> and share your thoughts about this with your chapter leaders.

can government. So is this socialized medicine? Kuehl and supporters say that this is definitely not socialized medicine where the government owns all the health care facilities and trains and employs the health care workforce. This is a private health care system that is publicly administered and financed. This is not government-run health care, but a publicly administered finance system that will put medical decision making back in the hands of medical professionals and their patients, unlike today when doctors have to get permission to order a test or a treatment from an insurance administrator with little or no medical training.

SB 840 has provisions to protect the health care system from some of the problems that governments face. Strong conflict of interest rules, prohibitions on partisan activity and connections to for profit insurance and pharmaceutical companies have been incorporated. Health system officers are protected from special interests and the entire health care system is exempted from oversight by other government agencies that might slow things down and make bureaucracies unresponsive.

Part of what makes a government program unpopular is inadequate funding, complex eligibility rules, means testing, periodic eligibility lapses, poor provider participation, low provider reimbursement and the stigma of being "on welfare." Proponents of SB840 believe that a publicly administered consolidated insurance system will not have these problems.

The program will have a commissioner who will be elected. This provides a measure of accountability and the leadership system has checks and balances. The Commissioner is the chief administrative officer. A physician is the Chief Medical Officer. The Consumer Advocate represents consumer interests. All meetings are open. All documents, except privacy-protected documents, are public. All system officers may be impeached for malfeasance of office.

### Benefits

A major benefit of this plan is full pharmaceutical benefit without a co-pay. Controlling prescription drug costs is

one of the goals for legislators. They believe that by using the state's purchasing power for 35 million Californians, it can win large discounts on the costs of pharmaceuticals. Californians will then be paying what the Europeans, Scandinavians, Australians and Canadians pay for the same pharmaceuticals and, at those prices, pharmaceuticals are affordable. There are 10 million Californians who now have no prescription drug benefits but who will have them under SB 840. This expansion of the market offsets losses from lower prices. So drug companies should not suffer any losses by lowering their prices to Californians. Furthermore, pharmaceutical companies don't use profits to pay for research, so even if their profits were to drop from lower drug prices, it won't affect research.

If you are already on Medicare and living in California, under SB 840 (Kuehl), you'll get benefits that Medicare doesn't cover, such as full prescription drug coverage and dental coverage. For at least the first two years there will be no co payments or deductibles for ANY services. Seniors will spend less than they do now for health care.

The health insurance landscape will look very different in California if SB840 passes. Private companies like Kaiser Permanente will no longer sell health insurance policies, however, all licensed, accredited providers (like Kaiser) will still exist and may still provide health care services. They may be chosen by patients through the system.

### Health Care Quality

Supporters of SB 840 believe that it will stimulate innovation in several ways. SB 840 will expand health markets, by freeing up private dollars that now pay for care for the uninsured and by creating a well-funded state budget for research and development. Partnerships for Health will provide health care grants to communities for innovative programs. Pharmaceutical companies will have the incentive to redirect the 40% of their research budget now spent on "copy cat" drugs and instead invest it in much needed research on treatments for diseases such as multiple sclerosis and breast cancer.

Medical errors should be reduced, Kuehl believes, by eliminating many of the causes of errors such as understaffing, lack of readily accessible medical infor-

mation, and lack of coordination of medical services. Your primary care provider will be responsible for coordinating the care you need.

The nursing shortage, although it cannot be solved overnight, will be alleviated by a well-managed single insurer system that would have funds to invest in nursing education, the lack of which is at the heart of the problem.

Under SB840, a hospital would only be closed if providers and patients choose not to use it or if the hospital fails to be accredited under California law. The Commissioner can hold back funds if a hospital fails to meet quality of care standards.

In the next issue—a look at President-elect Obama's Healthcare plan.

### SBUT TUTORING PROGRAM

Don't forget the tutoring program available to members who wish to provide private tutoring. Check out the website ([www.sbuto.org](http://www.sbuto.org)) and click on the tutoring icon in the lower left corner. If you are not currently listed and would like to be, print out a form, complete and return it to the SBUT office.

### Social Security Offsets Update

NEA continues to push for repeal of the Government Pension Offsets (GPO) and Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP). These two provisions unfairly penalize our members for public service by slashing Social Security benefits that they have earned.

Several advances were made in the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress. Unprecedented hearings were held in both the House and Senate. NEA brought member lobbyists to D.C. and held press conferences. The current legislation will be moot after the end of this Congress and will have to be reintroduced. Plans are underway for the reintroduction early in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress. Success will depend on the new Administration.

The 2008 NEA Representative Assembly passed three New Business Items supporting repeal. As a result, NEA will allocate increased funding for research, media, and the hiring of a consultant. It is vital that members watch for updates and calls to action.

## Contract Corner

Your contract has a section that lists the members of your bargaining unit. It's called, "Recognition" and can be found in the first or second article of the agreement. The bargaining unit is the group that is represented in negotiations and to whom the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) applies—whether or not that individual has become a member of the Union. If you are not a member of the Union, and are a member of the bar-

gaining unit, you are an agency fee payer. Check our website at [www.sbut.org](http://www.sbut.org) and go to the "Membership" link for more information. Membership is not automatic so check your status to be sure.

Bargaining unit members cannot evaluate, discipline or be privy to the confidential personnel information of other bargaining unit members. Even if a bargaining unit member is acting

as an "administrative designee" if s/he is still being paid from one of the CVSTA, MBUTA, PVFA or RBTA negotiated salary schedules, that person is still a bargaining unit member and the aforementioned activities are prohibited.

If there is a question about this at your site, let a rep know right away.

## FEE PAYER OR MEMBER?

*This is repeat information for most of you, but it bears review since it is not unusual for someone who is a fee payer to think they are a chapter member.*

When you are hired by a local school district as a certificated educator, you become part of the local "bargaining unit" which means you are covered by the contract negotiated by the teachers' union. You do not have to join the union as a member, but you do have to pay a "representation fee" or "agency fee" which covers the cost of bargaining on your behalf.

The difference in cost of an "Agency fee payer" and a "Member" is the cost of those things not directly related to collective bargaining. This includes the economic benefits and legal consultation services on non-contract employment matters as well as the liability insurance protection. (Keep in mind that things like accusations by parents are not part of your contract, so if those issues arise, you will have to provide your own legal representation. And even though your school district carries liability insurance, the primary objective of that coverage is

to protect the district, not necessarily the individual teacher).

The collective influence of members is essential in gaining and maintaining desirable terms and conditions of employment as well as influencing the educational environment. While members and fee payers all contribute to the costs of collective bargaining for your individual district contract, **only members** contribute financially to the efforts to improve education and the teaching profession beyond the local district. Issues that are influenced by the legislature-- retirement benefits, class size, safety issues, teacher rights, to name a few, are issues constantly being supported and defended on your behalf. Your dues dollars make it possible to fight the good fight.

When legislation & regulation are on the horizon, CTA and NEA are there to analyze and determine what it

means for public education. Supporting those things that are beneficial and opposing those things that are detrimental is a constant endeavor. When new legislation does get enacted, the state and national organizations step up to develop programs, trainings and procedures to ensure the smoothest transition possible.

Becoming a member provides you with some great benefits. But it also makes you part of the team that together works for the betterment of, not just your employment conditions, but public education as a whole.

You must be a bargaining unit member and **complete and return an enrollment form** in order to be a full member of your chapter. NOTE: If you are returning from a leave of absence, your membership may have lapsed. If you are unsure whether or not you are a member, e-mail or call the office.

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## MAINTAIN YOUR MEMBERSHIP WHILE ON AN UNPAID LEAVE OF ABSENCE

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Are you planning on taking a leave of absence due to maternity, illness or other personal reasons? If so, keep in mind the importance of maintaining your Association membership while on leave. Your dues are automatically deducted from your paycheck. However while on leave, if you are not paid, your deduction will stop and your membership will be suspended. Therefore, when taking a leave, remember to contact the SBUT office if you wish to continue your membership.

Maintaining your membership while you are on leave ensures your eligibility to participate in the following member benefits programs:

- **Death & Dismemberment Benefit Plan:** If you cease to be a member of CTA, you cease to be covered under this plan and all previous years of continuous membership are forfeited.

- **CTA Group Legal Services Program (GLSP):** CTA membership must be maintained throughout the entire time assistance is being provided.
- **BabyWise Program:** If you are on maternity leave and participate in the BabyWise program, CTA membership must be current.
- **Voluntary life and disability plan:** You may jeopardize your voluntary life and disability coverage underwritten by The Standard if membership ceases.
- **Auto and home insurance:** Policies offered by A+ Auto and Home Insurance Plus may result in a premium increase due to cancellation of your CTA membership.

If you have any questions regarding your membership, please contact SBUT or the CTA Membership Accounting Department at [membership@cta.org](mailto:membership@cta.org). For questions about your benefits, email [member\\_benefits@cta.org](mailto:member_benefits@cta.org).

# CTA Scholarship

*\$2500 for Members!*

*\$5000 for Members' Dependents!*

The California Teachers Association will again be awarding five \$2,500 scholarships to CTA members and twenty-five \$5,000 scholarships to dependent children of CTA members. Applications are available from the SBUT office (310-921-2500) or from the SBUT website: [www.sbut.org](http://www.sbut.org), "current news" link.

The deadline for submission is February 6, 2009. Transcripts and letters of recommendation are required, so start early.

## Eligibility

1. Be an active member of CTA or the dependent child of an active member, or the dependent child of a retired or deceased member.
2. Submit a complete application with official transcripts by the deadline of February 6, 2009.
3. Dependents: High school grade point average should reflect a 3.5 unweighted average. College coursework should reflect high academic achievement.  
Members: College coursework should demonstrate high academic achievement.

Applicants are notified via letter in May. In order to receive funds, scholarship recipients will be required to submit proof of registration for the summer or fall 2009 semester/quarter. See the application packet for further details.

## Need A Grant?



The NEA Foundation is accepting applications for \$2,000 and \$5,000 grants.

The NEA Foundation supports a variety of efforts by teachers, education support professionals, and higher education faculty and staff to improve student learning in the nation's public schools, colleges, and universities.

## Get details at

<http://www.neafoundation.org/grants.htm>

- **Learning & Leadership Grants**: provide opportunities for teachers, education support professionals, and higher education faculty and staff to engage in high-quality professional development and lead their colleagues in professional growth. The grant amount is \$2,000 for individuals and \$5,000 for groups engaged in collegial study. Next application deadlines are February 1, 2009 and June 1, 2009.
- **Student Achievement Grants**: provide \$5,000 to improve the academic achievement of students by engaging in critical thinking and problem solving that deepen knowledge of standards-based subject matter. The work should also improve students' habits of inquiry, self-directed learning, and critical reflection. (These grants replace the Foundation's Innovation Grants program, which has been discontinued.) Next application deadlines are February 1, 2009 and June 1, 2009.
- **NEA's Books Across America Library Books Awards**: In collaboration with the National Education Association, The NEA Foundation will make approximately 50 awards of \$1,000 each to public schools serving economically disadvantaged students to purchase books for school libraries.
- Call or e-mail the SBUT office by December 17th to be entered in a drawing for one of two \$25 Target gift cards!

## 2009 CTA César Chávez Memorial Education Awards Program



This program is designed to provide recognition for teams of students and teachers who demonstrate an understanding of the vision and guiding principles by which Cesar Chavez lived his life.

For the current school year, eligible projects must fit into the category of either **Written Essays** or **Visual Arts**. The top prize winners will receive recognition plus \$1000 for both students and CTA members. Group entries will share the award.

**Eligibility:** You must be a CTA member and submit a project with one (1) student or a group of no more than five (5) students. You must be employed at the same school or campus as the student is enrolled. Applications and projects must be postmarked by January 30, 2009.

TO RECEIVE AN INFORMATION PACKET, CONTACT THE SBUT OFFICE or check the SBUT website at [www.sbut.org](http://www.sbut.org), "current news" link.