

## Pink Slips Abound

### South Bay United Teachers

Numbers of RIFs (Reductions-in-Force or lay-offs) by SBUT chapter

Centinela Valley Union High School District	79
Manhattan Beach Unified School District	44
Palos Verdes Peninsula Unified School District	75
Redondo Beach Unified School District	20*
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>218</b>

*\*This number has not been approved by the School Board.*

Even with the current state budget crisis, teacher layoffs should be a last resort in any school district. School districts should be targeting budget cuts away from the classroom and those education professionals who work directly with students.

Laying off teachers will increase class sizes and not provide our students with the quality education they deserve. Before laying off any teachers, school districts should be reducing reserves and administrative costs.

Many school administrators are overreacting to the March 15 notice deadline. Districts often grossly overestimate or deliberately inflate the need for reduction-in-force (RIFs) notices, causing unnecessary chaos.

In some cases, school administrators and school boards are using the budget crisis to try to gain an unfair advantage at local bargaining tables. Administrators are using the layoff notices in an attempt to scare teachers into taking pay cuts or reducing health care benefits.

Your chapter, South Bay United Teachers and CTA will fight all layoff notices and is providing support for any teacher who receives a layoff notice. Teachers who get a reduction-in-force notice are entitled to a hearing before an administrative law judge where the district must prove that it had legal grounds for the layoff.

In order to protect your rights to COBRA (continued health care coverage after separation from the District) don't resign your position. The recent federal stimulus package provides for employers picking up 65% of the premiums for nine months. There has been no assurance that that provision will be available to those who resign.

What can you do to help your colleagues? See your site rep and please support your chapter's activities on PINK FRIDAY!

See the notes on getting ready for RIFs on page 3.

What is PINK FRIDAY? See page 4, and visit the website: [www.pinkfriday09.org](http://www.pinkfriday09.org)

# Reforming Healthcare in America: The Obama Administration's Plan

*Last fall we reviewed SB 840-the Single Payer health plan legislation that State Senator Sheila Kuehl (D-Santa Monica) has sponsored for several years now. That bill, if ever made law, would only be in effect in California. Now that President Barack Obama has taken office, we will see whether his pledge to reform healthcare throughout the United States can be fulfilled. Since about half of all bankruptcies are related to healthcare expenses, national healthcare reform is something that could greatly impact all of our lives. Here's an outline of what his plan entails. (Paraphrased from information posted on the official White House website: [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov))*

The Obama-Biden plan seeks to solve the dilemma of healthcare reform causing a spike in taxes while giving the insurance companies a free ride. They've proposed a plan that they believe strengthens employer coverage, makes insurance companies accountable and ensures patient choice of doctor and care without government interference.

The administration's goal is to provide affordable, accessible health care for all Americans, build on the existing health care system, and use existing providers, doctors, and plans. Under the Obama-Biden plan, they believe patients will be able to make health care decisions with their doctors, instead of being blocked by insurance company bureaucrats.

The current plan proposes that if you like your current health insurance, nothing changes, except your costs will go down by as much as \$2,500 per year. If you don't have health insurance, you will have a choice of new, affordable health insurance options.

**President Obama has vowed to make health insurance work for people and businesses -- not just insurance and drug companies. The plan's major points:**

- Require insurance companies to cover pre-existing conditions so all Americans regardless of their health status or history can get comprehensive benefits at fair and stable premiums.
- Create a new Small Business Health Tax Credit to help small businesses provide affordable health insurance to their employees.
- Lower costs for businesses by covering a portion of the catastrophic health costs they pay in return for lower premiums for employees.
- Prevent insurers from overcharging doctors for their malpractice insurance and invest in proven strategies to reduce preventable medical errors.
- Make employer contributions more fair by requiring large employers that do not offer coverage or make a meaningful contribution to the cost of

quality health coverage for their employees to contribute a percentage of payroll toward the costs of their employees' health care.

- Establish a National Health Insurance Exchange with a range of private insurance options as well as a new public plan based on benefits available to members of Congress that will allow individuals and small businesses to buy affordable health coverage.
- Ensure everyone who needs it will receive a tax credit for their premiums.

**The President's plan aims to reduce costs and save a typical American family up to \$2,500 as reforms phase in by:**

- Lowering drug costs by allowing the importation of safe medicines from other developed countries, increasing the use of generic drugs in public programs, and taking on drug companies that block cheaper generic medicines from the market.
- Requiring hospitals to collect and report health care cost and quality data.
- Reducing the costs of catastrophic illnesses for employers and their employees.
- Reforming the insurance market to increase competition by taking on anticompetitive activity that drives up prices without improving quality of care.

The Obama-Biden plan promotes public health. It requires coverage of preventive services, including cancer screenings, and increase state and local preparedness for terrorist attacks and natural disasters.

The President intends to pay for his \$50 - \$65 billion health care reform effort by rolling back the Bush tax cuts for Americans earning more than \$250,000 per year and retaining the estate tax at its 2009 level.

**A RIF is a Reduction  
in Force**

by a school district due to lack of funds. In other words, educators who receive RIF notices are given pink slips telling them they will be laid off.

**GETTING READY FOR EDUCATOR RIFs  
5 STEPS TO TAKE NOW**

- 1** **If your district asks you to sign a statement verifying your seniority date and credentials, BE CAREFUL.**  
Make sure the information is 100% correct before you sign. If you sign and the information is not accurate (for example, the statement credits you with too little seniority or some, but not all, of your credentials), the district can use the statement against you in the RIF hearing to undermine your seniority and credential claims. RIF hearing officers also often restrict individuals from contesting incorrect credential or seniority information at the RIF hearing, especially when the individuals already have had an opportunity to set the record straight.
- 2** **Make sure that ALL of your credentials and certifications are on file with the school district, especially certifications to teach English language learners.**  
If you hold a credential or certification, but it is not on file with the district by March 15, you will not be credited with that credential or certification in the RIF hearing. If you need to check on your credentials, look them up on the CTC website at <http://www.ctc.ca.gov/lookup.html>.
- 3** **Check your personnel file. Copy any documents from the file that you will need to prove your first day of paid service with the district as a probationary employee.** Remember, your first in-service day may count, even if it was not mandatory, as long as you were paid for the day. Collect the documents now that will let you prove that date if need be in the RIF hearings.
- 4** **If you are an agency fee payer, join CTA so that you will be represented by CTA in any RIF hearings that occur in your district.** CTA provides representation to all members in RIF hearings, but does not provide representation to agency fee payers in RIF hearings.
- 5** **Contact your CTA staff person immediately if you receive a layoff notice.** There are very short and strict timelines that begin to run from the date any teacher receives a layoff notice. It is very important that you contact CTA right away once you receive a layoff notice, so that CTA can help ensure that all of the statutory deadlines will be met.

**Thanks for taking the time to review this material. A little time now preparing for possible RIFs in your district could make all the difference later.**



## What is Pink Friday?

On Friday, March 13, California teachers, education support personnel, parents, and community members will Stand Up for Education. Pink Friday, so named because of the thousands of "pink slip" layoff notices that are being issued to teachers by this deadline, is an opportunity to show lawmakers that students and schools need and deserve much better.

**What can I do?** On Pink Friday, supporters of education will wear pink, rally, march, protest, leaflet, and participate in other activities to raise awareness of the crisis facing our schools. **Where can I get more info?** CTA has launched a new website, [www.pinkfriday09.org](http://www.pinkfriday09.org), where people can post details of their events and participate in discussions around the cuts that are affecting their schools. Watch for information from your reps on activities in your local chapter.

### Where We Stand

California's students and schools are hurting. The \$3.5 billion in cuts made last year led to larger class sizes, more than 10,000 layoffs of teachers and education support professionals, and the further elimination of vital parts of the curriculum--programs like art, music, and career technical education. Some schools have even closed their libraries.

The recently passed state budget just makes things worse. It cuts education by a magnitude unlike any we have seen in our state's history, slashing more than \$11 billion from schools, college and universities.

The current budget battle is not over. There will be measures on the ballot on May 19 that will impact the future of California education. Perhaps one of the most crucial measures is Proposition 1B, which when passed, will pay back more than \$9 billion of the money owed to schools and colleges. Pink Friday is an opportunity for us to make sure the public understands the impact of these cuts, and how important it is for this state to begin supporting its schools. It is also an opportunity to urge local districts to keep cuts as far as possible from students, teachers, and the education support professionals who keep our schools running and our students safe.

### NEW DISCOUNTS FOR SBUT MEMBERS!

We are now registered with **Employee Savings Tickets**, another option for discounted entertainment!



Check out your options by visiting the website ([www.employeesavingstickets.com](http://www.employeesavingstickets.com)) and entering our access code, ETF72G.

You can purchase tickets online, but the least expensive way is to visit their office in Torrance: 21311 Hawthorne Boulevard, Suite 101. You will need your CTA card & a driver's license.

You of course can also get discounts through the CTA-sponsored vendor [www.tsaspecialservices.com](http://www.tsaspecialservices.com), but must order over the phone. Check out both places to see what has the best deal for you.

And here it is...your SBUT drawing opportunity! Call or email the office by March 23 for a chance at one of three \$25 Target gift cards!

### TAX FILING INFORMATION

From the IRS website: **Topic 458 - Educator Expense Deduction**

If you are an eligible educator, you can deduct up to \$250 of your unreimbursed expenses [otherwise deductible trade or business expenses] you paid or incurred for books, supplies, computer equipment (including related software and services), other equipment, and supplementary materials that you use in the classroom. For courses in health and physical education, expenses for supplies are qualified expenses only if they are related to athletics. You can deduct these expenses even if you do not itemize deductions on Form 1040, Schedule A. This deduction is for expenses paid or incurred during the tax year. Previously, these expenses were deductible only as a miscellaneous itemized deduction subject to the 2% of adjusted gross income limit. The deduction is claimed on either line 23 of [Form 1040 \(PDF\)](#) or line 16 of [Form 1040A \(PDF\)](#).

For additional information regarding personal credits and any alternative minimum tax (AMT), refer to [Publication 17, Your Federal Income Tax](#) or check with your tax advisor.

**DON'T FORGET!** If you itemize your deductions, be sure to include your union dues on line 21 of Schedule A.