



# BRIDGING *the* GAP

A STRONG news statement

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## Let's Bring Democracy Back to California Budgets



Assemblywoman Nancy Skinner discusses her support for Proposition 25 at STRONG's *Fight for Democracy* event in September.  
PHOTOS BY Chris DeCarlo

**On November 2,  
vote YES on Prop 25**

This year California operated without a budget for 100 days. The state was nearly forced to issue IOU's to pay its debts, state workers providing important services to the most disadvantaged Californians were furloughed in the absence of a budget, and meanwhile those politicians in Sacramento who were more concerned with scoring political points than serving California continued to get paid. In the midst of the greatest recession of our times, budget negotiations stalled while the future of millions of Californians hung in the balance.

Proposition 25 would change this dysfunctional state of affairs. It would eliminate the 2/3 majority that is required to pass state budgets and stop salary and per-diem pay for legislators if they do not submit a budget proposal on time. Prop. 25, however, would not make it easier to

tax Californians. It would keep in place the 2/3 majority that is required to pass new taxes that was established by voters with Proposition 13 in 1978.

The budget crisis in California is not new. This year's record setting budget tardiness eclipses the previous record, set just in 2008, when the budget was finally submitted 3 months after its deadline. With the Great Recession dragging on, passing a budget that addresses the deficit without destroying California's commitment to the education and health of its citizens is not going to be an easy task. Unfortunately, the 2/3 voting requirement to pass the state budget has been shown to be an increasingly absurd obstacle to balancing the principles of California with its financial needs.

Arkansas, Rhode Island, and California are the only states that require a 2/3 majority to pass a budget every single year. In California, this means that passing the budget has lately come down to trying to

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## The fight for justice in transportation

STRONG joins Genesis California to demand that Oakland youth have access to public transportation

By Bette Ingraham MD

What do the following stories have in common?

In September 1951, little Linda Brown, a third grader in Topeka, Kansas could barely pronounce the word "segregation" let alone understand its meaning. She probably never thought much about why she had to walk six blocks from home just to get to the school bus stop and then ride over a mile to reach her all-black elementary school when another elementary school was only

seven blocks from her front door.

On December 1, 1955, Rosa Parks, forty-three, was placed in hand cuffs and arrested for disorderly conduct for refusing to give up her bus seat to a white passenger. Many historians believe that this single incident and the Montgomery Bus Boycott that followed, was the beginning of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States.

On August 26, 2010, while running an errand for his Mother, a gunshot to the back of the



COURTESY OF Berkeley Daily Planet

**Questions  
that will be  
answered  
in this issue**

**How** will some of the propositions on this years ballot impact you as a young person?

**How** do transportation issues relate to the fight for social justice?

**Who** will look out for young people as Governor:  
Jerry Brown or  
Meg Whatsherface?

TRANSPORTATION / FROM PAGE 1

## Access to transportation has a direct link to educational opportunities

head at close range ended the bright future of 13-year-old track star Jamon Clark, one week from his 14th birthday and only four days from becoming a freshman at Skyline High School.

What do these stories share in common? They all have to do with Education or Transportation or both in the fight for Civil Rights in America. Education and Transportation are the fraternal twins in the fight for equality in this country, inexorably linked together in the hope that all young people will have an even starting as United States citizens. They are still linked together as our last story points out today in 2010. It is too late for Jamon Clarke, whose promising life was tragically cut short just four days before he was to begin his freshman year at Skyline High School in the Oakland Hills.

The ECO Bus Pass is the most recent campaign of Genesis, a faith and values based organization dedicated to building an inclusive San Francisco Bay Area that supports all the youth in all of its diverse communities by bringing equality to those most vulnerable and marginalized in our region. Genesis and its allied organizations



Activist with Genesis California hold event to bring awareness to transportation needs of Oakland youth. COURTESY OF Genesis California

(Urban Habitat, BOSS, ACCE, and Public Advocates) won a landmark victory by filing a formal complaint with the Federal Transportation Agency (FTA) charging the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and BART with failure to meet the requirements of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Our efforts provided \$70 million dollars for much needed public transportation.

The ECO Bus Pass give every student sixth grade through twelfth grades—with a free bus pass irrespective of their families income. As long as the student is enrolled in school and is attending school

regularly—in other words is not truant—he or she can ride AC transit, BART, Muni—any transportation system in the San Francisco Bay Area—for FREE!

We must convince our public officials that you, our Youth are the most important and valuable resource in the San Francisco Bay Area. We ask you to join us in our fight for the ECO Bus Pass. Our official campaign kick-off is January 23, 2010. We ask you, the members of STRONG the future of this Democracy to join us in that fight!

For more information: Contact GENESIS at 510-290-6955 or website: [www.gensiscal.org](http://www.gensiscal.org).



## Words from Mr. Myrick

Our generation of voters is definitely being put to the test this year. Less than 24 months ago we were a critical force in electing a new President for the United States and beginning to put this nation on a more sustainable, responsible track that would allow our generation to share the same benefits that our parents enjoyed from this nation.

Unfortunately, as exciting as our success two years ago was, it can all be taken away if we don't remain vigilant and maintain the excitement from 2008 in this year's election.

Pundits are expecting the forces that we fought so hard in

2008 to make substantial gains this year. But this isn't because more of the American people are agreeing with those forces, it's because young voters are not expected to be a factor this year.

We must prove them wrong. This year's election is just as important as 2008 was. Here in California, we have the opportunity undo a mistake made by past generations. The creation of a two-thirds requirement to pass a budget in California puts the state in a permanent fiscal crisis where each year critical programs young people depend on are cutback more and more in order to stop the state from going bankrupt. Passing proposition 25 will put an end to that madness.

Unfortunately, those same

forces that thrive on the chaos of the current system are not only lying about Prop. 25 but they are trying to pass an initiative that will complicate the issue further by creating a new two-thirds requirement—Proposition 26. It is critical that Prop. 25 passes and that prop. 26 is defeated in November.

The Governor's race here in California is also very important. Meg Whitman has spent over \$114 million dollars trying to trick young people into thinking she's our candidate. This is wrong. The policies Meg Whitman supports would be devastating to young people. They would eliminate jobs, slow the state's transition into a sustainable energy economy and put public

education at risk.

Jerry Brown is the only gubernatorial candidate who will actually look out for the interests of young people. Meg Whitman talks about more funding for higher education, but because of her promise to reduce taxes on millionaires and billionaires the State will not have the revenue to actually do this. The way she talks about funding these policies is by eliminating programs that millions of young people and their families across the state depend on.

So don't stay home on November 2nd. This election is too important. In 2008 our generation came to the table as a political force. Now let's show the world that we intend to stay.

# Texas Oil Companies Attempting to Turn Back the Clock on Green Jobs

**On November 2,  
vote NO on Prop 23**

It's rare in the current political climate for landmark progressive legislation to pass with bipartisan support.

But that's exactly what happened in 2006, when Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger signed AB 32, a bill authored by Democrat Fran Pavley, signaling that California would become serious about the fight to curb the impacts of climate change and invest in the new growing green tech economy.

Since its passage AB 32 has been a huge success. Many clean energy companies have moved their operations to California.

In fact, 40% of all venture capitol invested in green energy has been here in California. This is particularly important since it has also



The Koch brothers, Charles and David, are Texas oil tycoons spending big bucks to get California to pass Proposition 23.

been shown that green energy has been the only sector of the economy to grow during the current recession.

Unfortunately a number of shortsighted oil companies have placed an initiative on the ballot this year to eliminate AB 32 in hopes that it will help their profits.

Led by the Koch brothers—a couple of oil tycoons from Texas—these oil industry giants are pushing Proposition 23 and falsely claiming that passage of their initiative will help job creation.

In truth, experts have said that close to 500,000

jobs could actually be lost if Proposition 23 is passed.

Also, because these oil giants are based in Texas, and not California, they have less concern over how our State will be impacted by climate change.

Unlike Texas, California is a coastal state, and while some on the far right may argue that climate change is not real, if those extremists are wrong (which most scientist think they are) we in California will suffer severely if we do not continue down the path that AB 32 put us on.

We don't have time to go backwards on this issue. We can't afford to lose those green jobs, and we can't afford to suffer the impacts of climate change.

Tell the Texas oil companies to stay the hell out of our elections. Vote no on Proposition 23.



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# Where They Stand

Which Governor will look out for the interest of young people?

## Jerry Brown



Jerry Brown has always been a friend of young people, when he was Governor in the 1970's he increased funding for the CalGrant by 50 PERCENT

Jerry Brown has opposed efforts to eliminate California's critical Global Warming Law, AB 32, which will be necessary to provide the high paying Clean Tech Jobs for young people and to preserve California for our generation.

Jerry Brown will support reasonable budget choices that will prevent the State from having to make drastic cuts to k-12 and higher education, and will avoid bankrupting the State of California.

## Meg Whitman



MegaBucks Whitman is proposing spending a little over \$5 billion dollars on a tax giveaway to herself and other millionaires and billionaires in California. In a State with a deficit about \$18 billion, this will guarantee that less money will be available for Public Schools and Higher Education.

Moneybags Whitman wants to reverse AB 32, eliminating millions of green jobs for young people and forcing our generation to have to clean up after the State's polluters.

Meg Whatthefeezy has spent over \$120 million in attempts to buy the State of California, anybody who thinks our State is for sale, cannot be trusted.

Meg "I made billions of dollars by putting Californians out of work" Whitman has pledged to increase spending for higher education, but she wants to do this by cutting critical social programs that families depend on thereby reducing the opportunity for many future generations to make it to college

**PROP 25 / FROM PAGE 1**

### A Yes vote on Prop 25 puts people before profits

convince one or two politicians to reach across the aisle and vote against their party's interests. This puts those politicians in positions of great bargaining power, and they are often given support for their pet projects and policies in order to guarantee their votes for the budget. It is ridiculous that the operations of the 8th largest economy in the world have been reduced to satisfying the whims of the few politicians that do not represent the interests of the majority of the state.

In fact, Proposition 25 will add an extra incentive for politicians to stop the foot dragging and back door budget deals. As it stands now, legislators do not get their regular salary while budget negotiations

are dragging on past the budget deadline; however they get back pay once the budget is passed. Prop 25 would change this, and stop per diem pay and back pay for legislators. Under Prop 25, every day that the budget is not submitted after its deadline is a day that no legislator will ever get paid.

Finally, there is nothing inherently democratic about the 2/3 majority. In fact, as it stands the 2/3 majority is being used by a small segment of politicians who represent very narrow interests to hijack the budget process. Once they do, they are able to inject their unsupported ideology and the wishes of their financial backers into important decisions that will affect generations of Californians. In this time of budget crisis, we have seen these narrow interests come to the fore with their twisted solutions that attack our state's

commitment to its education system, the environment, and the health and well being of its citizens.

It is not for nothing that Prop. 25 is opposed by those same financial interests that support Prop 26, which also seeks to use a 2/3 voting requirement to stop Californian communities from holding massive corporations accountable for the damages they cause. The California Chamber of Commerce, the oil giant Chevron, and alcohol and tobacco companies have been leading the charge against Prop 25. Are we really to believe that these companies are opposing Prop 25 in the interests of the average Californian?

A yes vote for Prop 25 is a vote for the future of California, and a Yes on 25 vote is a rejection of those corporations who would use the current budget crisis to further line their pockets.