

FCLCA NEWSLETTER

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The governor downsizes, California mobilizes

The annual budget dance has returned to Sacramento, with Democrats pledging to protect vital programs and Republicans vowing not to approve any tax increases. Republican lawmakers claim that voters' overwhelming rejection of Proposition 1A in the May 2009 Special Election was a referendum on taxes. The measure would have amended the state constitution to limit state spending and extended the temporary tax increases passed by the Legislature in February 2009.

Because Proposition 1A linked the extension of tax increases to a constitutional spending limit, it is difficult to ascertain any meaningful conclusion from the voters on taxes or spending. Only 28.4 percent of registered voters voted in the special election. A recent Field Poll found that 50 percent of California voters believe that the budget deficit should be closed either entirely by spending cuts (31 percent) or mostly by spending cuts (19 percent.)

Naturally, polling results are trumpeted by those whose ideological positions they support. According to FCLCA's reading of that same Field Poll, 57 percent of California voters think some combination of taxes and spending cuts are necessary because only 35 percent said that the budget should be closed *only* with spending cuts (31 percent) or *only* with tax increases (4 percent) and 8 percent had no opinion. The term "tax increase" is loosely used as a generic term by opponents as if all tax increases are the same. Moreover, polls seldom confront voters with the difficult choices that lawmakers must make. While the electorate may



oppose tax increases in the abstract, they might be inclined to support them if asked to choose between laying off school teachers and increasing the corporate income tax rate. Last February's budget compromise included an increase in the regressive state sales tax instead of enacting targeted tax increases or closing corporate tax loopholes. Given the lack of specificity, voters who responded negatively to pollsters on taxes may have assumed that they would bear any new tax increases. Nevertheless, in politics

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***“The Friends Committee
on Legislation of California
(FCLCA), guided by Quaker
values, advocates for
California state laws that
are just, compassionate
and respectful of the
inherent worth of
every person.”***

perception is everything, and the conventional wisdom among Republican lawmakers is that the special election was a referendum against tax increases.

**The anatomy of
a stalemate**

After the February budget compromise, Republicans removed Senate Minority Leader Dave Cogdill (R-Modesto) and Assembly Minority Leader Mike Villines (R-Clovis) from their leadership posts. A recall campaign was launched against Assembly Member Anthony Adams (R-Hesperia) for voting for the compromise. Though the recall effort failed, Adams has decided not to seek re-election.

The adamancy of Republican lawmakers in opposition to new revenues is reinforced by California’s unusual two-thirds super-majority requirement of both houses to pass a budget and to raise taxes. Only two other states, Rhode Island and Arkansas, require two-thirds to pass a budget, and California is the only state to require two-thirds legislative approval both to pass a budget and to raise taxes. Super-majority requirements create stalemates if the minority party chooses to be obstinate. In recent budget cycles, the impasse has persisted until the state is on the verge of running out of cash. The longer the stalemate, the more that Democrats come under additional pressure to accede to Republican demands from those constituents and service providers whose payments are withheld until the budget is signed.

*“Public opposition
to the draconian
cuts in services
and dismantling
of public education
is rising.”*



Classmates, not Cellmates. Over 2,000 students and faculty protest budget cuts and tuition hikes at the Capitol on March 4, 2010.

In July of 2008, State Controller John Chiang defied an order by the Schwarzenegger administration to reduce state workers’ pay to the federal minimum wage of \$6.55 per hour until the 2008-2009 budget impasse was resolved. This ruling was overturned in Superior Court in March of 2009, but did not come into play last year because the 2009-2010 budget was passed in February of 2009. It could come into play again if there is a budget impasse this summer, and Democrats could feel the added pressure to reach agreement if Governor Schwarzenegger, a staunch adversary of public employee unions, opts to use state workers as leverage in budget negotiations.

**Lower impact cuts have
already been made**

According to the Legislative Analyst’s Office, the February

2009-2010 budget agreement and subsequent July revision combined for \$32.5 billion in spending cuts. California has lost more than 1 million jobs over the last two years, and the state's unemployment rate stands at 12.4 percent. The state's poverty rate increased from 12.2 percent in 2006 to 14.6 percent in 2008 (US Census Bureau, California Budget Project). According to the California Budget Project, the number of Californians receiving food stamp benefits has increased by more than 900,000 in two years and the number of Californians enrolled in Medi-Cal (the state's version of Medicaid) has increased by nearly 500,000.

More children are enrolled in Healthy Families (health insurance for children in households with incomes up to 250 percent of the federal poverty level) despite a temporary enrollment freeze last summer, and the number of families receiving CalWORKS (California's version of "welfare to work") has increased by more than 86,000 in two years.

At the same time, income inequality in the United States is at its highest level since 1917 and surpasses levels during the 1928 peak of the stock market bubble, says University of California economist Paul Saenz. According to the California Budget Project, the average adjusted gross income of the top 1 percent of Californians more than doubled between 1995 and 2007.

It is in this context that the Legislature began considering the governor's proposals to close the current \$19 billion gap.

How the governor closes the gap

The governor's plan relies heavily on the federal government (\$7 billion in federal funds, \$1

billion in flexibility on how federal funds are spent), deep cuts to public education, health and human services and various fund shifts, including several that were rejected by voters in the May 2009 Special Election.

Governor Schwarzenegger proposes to reduce funding for K-14 public education by \$2.4 billion. Undergraduate fees at the University of California (UC) would increase by 23 percent and 10 percent for the California State University (CSU), in this the 50-year anniversary of the state's master plan for higher education that held the promise of a free college education for every Californian that qualifies. When adjusted for inflation, UC and CSU fees have more than tripled since 1990, according to the California Postsecondary Education Commission.

The governor also proposes further reductions to Medi-Cal including the elimination of most medical benefits to newly-qualified legal immigrants, the elimination of Adult Day Health Care for 37,000 Californians and reducing eligibility for Healthy Families. (In September a U.S. District Judge blocked plans to reduce Adult Day Health Care from five to the three days. In February the same judge issued a preliminary injunction halting eligibility reductions.) Governor Schwarzenegger also proposes to eliminate In Home Supportive Services (IHSS) except for those

recipients with the most severe impairments and proposes further reductions to CalWORKS grants and Supplemental Security Income-State Supplementary Payment grants (cash benefits for the elderly, blind and disabled). State employee compensation would also be reduced.

If the federal government does not come through – and nobody



Save Public Education is the cry at "Educate the State" actions and rallies across California on March 4, 2010.

believes it will – then additional cuts will be triggered, including the complete elimination of IHSS, CalWORKS, and Healthy Families. Many of the program cuts would also result in the loss of billions in federal matching funds. So, while the state is turning to the federal government for additional federal funds, it would also leave billions of federal dollars on the table. In addition to the human hardship, 340,000 IHSS providers would lose their jobs. Meanwhile, the governor proposes to spend \$500 million to train 140,000 workers and help create 100,000 new jobs, which would be funded, in part, by borrowing from the State Disability Insurance Fund.

The governor's budget requests that the Legislature place measures on the June 10 ballot asking voters to approve divert-

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ing \$550 million in Proposition 10 funds for early childhood development programs (“First Five”) and \$452 million from the Mental Health Services Act (Proposition 63) to the General Fund even though voters re-



One thousand supporters of single-payer health care reform rally at the Capitol for SB 810 (Mark Leno D-San Francisco) on January 11, 2010.

jected similar proposals in the May 2009 Special Election by two-thirds margins. The funds would be diverted to Department of Developmental Services and Department of Social Services programs serving children and Department of Mental Health programs. Governor Schwarzenegger has also proposed that 77 local jurisdictions install automated speed enforcement cameras to identify speeders and raise \$338 million, of which \$297 million would be used to fund trial courts. If Californians want to enjoy their state parks, the State Lands Commission will have to approve offshore oil drilling off the coast of Santa Barbara. The funds raised from the oil lease would be used to fund state parks.

The governor’s budget also proposes to place a constitu-

tional amendment on the ballot to require California to spend no more than 7 percent of General Fund dollars on corrections and not less than 10 percent on public universities. While FCLCA and like-minded advocates have derided the state for spending more for prisons than our universities, this is yet another formula for locking state spending into the state constitution, reducing legislative discretion and making it easier to privatize prisons. The Legislature already has the discretion to reduce

prison spending and increase spending for higher education.

The state would be prohibited from releasing prisoners early to achieve reductions in corrections spending, and the costs of operating the 40,000 new prison beds authorized under AB 900 (Solorio, D., Santa Ana) would be exempted from the spending restriction. While the costs of new prison beds is exorbitant (and unnecessary were the Legislature willing to make less use of incarceration)

tion), the construction costs are funded by proceeds from lease-revenue bonds and will have less of an annual impact on the state’s General Fund than the \$1.3 billion in added operational costs, a figure that is likely to rise. The governor and Legislature shortsightedly slashed funding for prison programming by 40 percent (\$250 million) and will eliminate 600 to 800 education positions.

Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) has made significant campaign contributions in recent years to the state Democratic and Republican parties and committees backing or opposing ballot measures (“Private Prison Company Finds Gold in California,” *Capitol Weekly*, January 28, 2010). To reduce prison overcrowding, the state started involuntary transfers of prisoners in 2007 to five facilities in Arizona, Mississippi and



Champions of single-payer health care in the California legislature, Mark Leno (D-San Francisco) and former Senator Sheila Kuehl address the rally organized by California Health Professional Student Alliance.

Oklahoma, all operated by CCA under a no-bid contract. Today, there are over 8,000 California prisoners serving sentences in out-of-state prisons, which makes personal visits from family members extremely difficult.

CDCR recently amended its contract with CCA to provide beds for 10,468 prisoners in its out-of-state prisons.

Time to mobilize

These proposed budget cuts come at a time of increased demand for government services due to the weak economy and unprecedented income inequality in the United States. Many of the cuts are really cost-shifts and the savings are illusory. For example, reducing funding for IHSS will result in an untold number of elderly and infirm being placed in nursing homes. Reducing funding for Medi-Cal and Healthy Families means more expensive emergency room treatment. In addition to the human hardship, reducing



government spending in hard economic times also threatens economic recovery. Disinvesting in our public universities and restricting access by increasing fees could have a long-term detrimental impact on the state's economy.

In November 2008, Californians and the nation voted overwhelmingly to change direction. The inability of government to be responsive to the needs of the electorate threatens the very fabric of our political institutions. Or it could strengthen them. Political leadership will have to come from the governed, and public opposition to the draconian cuts in services and dismantling of public education

(Continued on back page)

FCLCA On the Move

YES! I want my voice heard in Sacramento.

NAME _____

YOUR EMAIL (Important: to send you FCLCA alerts and updates) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP _____ PHONE _____

I'd like to become a Monthly Sustainer of FCLCA.

TO: FCLCA (for lobbying, not tax-deductible) FCL Education Fund (tax-deductible)
 Amount: \$100 \$50 \$35 \$20 Other _____ (\$10 min.)

Method of payment:

- Automatic withdrawal from my bank account (FCLCA will send you an authorization form to fill out.)
- Charge my credit card – my information is below.

I'd like to make a gift of: \$125 \$100 \$75 \$50 \$35 Other _____

TO: FCLCA (for lobbying, not tax-deductible) FCL Education Fund (tax-deductible)

- I'd like to sponsor a prisoner's subscription. \$35 Other _____

Method of payment:

- Check enclosed
- Charge my credit card – my information is below.

CREDIT CARD INFORMATION: VISA MASTERCARD

Account Number _____ Expiration Date _____

Name on Account _____ Signature _____

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FCLCA's Action Network grows by 60% – Thanks to you!

Thanks to all of you who have sent us your email or signed on at fclca.org to become members of our Action Network community.

Over 45 of you took action in response to our latest Action Alert and asked your state Senators to vote **“yes” on the single-payer health care bill, SB 810.**

The bill has passed the Senate and now moves on to the Assembly. Stay tuned for FCLCA Action Alerts as the bill moves forward.

Not yet signed up? JOIN US.

It's easy. Go to fclca.org and enter your email or send Kevan your email directly (kevan@fclca.org) and we'll put you on the Network.

As a member of FCLCA's Action Network, you'll receive our Action Alerts, our online newsletter and links to actions and campaigns you should know about. You'll get the key information you need to write your legislators and even a letter to the editor (see below).

Already signed up? Please forward our messages to your friends and ask them to **join the Network.** [FCLCA](#)



FCLCA's Laurel Gord – My love affair with the *L.A. Times* letter section

My love affair with the *Los Angeles Times* letter section started out, as I guess all love affairs must, with a rush of excitement.

Before I ever became involved with FCLCA, I responded to a plea from Move-On.org to write a letter to a local paper concerning a Supreme Court nomination.

I followed the instructions to read the paper, write my letter in response to an actual article and keep it short and to the point. But still, knowing that the *Times* receives hundreds of letters on any given topic, I tried to not get my hopes up.

When I got the call from “Jill from the letter section of the *Times*,” telling me that my letter was being considered for publication, I was thrilled, but not as thrilled as when I actually saw my name in print. After that rush of emotion, I was not deterred by well-meaning friends who warned me that the letter page was a fickle Romeo who could not be counted on in the future.

Since that time, when I take the time to read the paper in the morning, I do it with an eye toward letter writing opportunities.

I limit myself to issues that I feel I know the most about and that are FCLCA priorities, such as criminal justice reform, and more recently budgeting issues.

Since the *Times* keeps some track of how often they publish a letter from the same person, I don't want to spread myself too thin.

I don't spend hours wordsmithing my letters because I've found that I'm just as likely to get published with the letter that I dash off before running off somewhere as the one that I spend time on to make brilliantly, unassailably eloquent. I have a publication rate (about 50%, but who's keeping track?) that is much better than my letter writing ability.

My involvement with FCLCA has given me an insider understanding of important issues that face California and has allowed me to present a point of view that is often missing from the discourse, but is valued all the same.

And you know what – it's still a thrill when I get that call or email, and then see my name in print. Why don't you give it a try? [FCLCA](#)



SPEAK UP – WRITE NOW! TIPS FOR WRITING A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Did you know...

- *That writing a letter to the editor is one of the most effective ways you can expand your lobbying efforts after you contact your legislators?*
- *That legislative staff regularly monitor the newspapers to see if their legislator's name is mentioned?*
- *That the Sacramento Bee is the newspaper most widely read by legislators after their home district papers?*
- *That the Los Angeles Times reaches over 650,000 people a day and the San Francisco Chronicle over 250,000?*
- *That almost 75% of newspaper readers aged 65 and over read the editorial pages and that they are the group most likely to vote in an election?*

HERE'S HOW....

- Sign up for FCLCA's Action Network at felca.org for more information on current issues and "talking points."
- Check with your local papers to see their specific guidelines for letters to the editor. They may limit the number of words they will publish.
- Respond to a specific news story, editorial or letter that appeared recently.
- Keep your letter short (100-200 words) and focused on one issue.
 - ◆ Here's one model: In the first paragraph, state your main point and why the issue is important to you. Discuss the impact of the issue on your local community. You can use the second paragraph to mention facts, quotes or statistics. In the last paragraph, restate your point and make your recommendation.
- Mention your legislators by name and state specific legislative actions you would like them to take if appropriate.
- Send letters to weekly community papers too. Try neighborhood papers, specialized magazines, the ethnic press, religious publications and college alumni magazines.
- Include your contact information – name, telephone, email and address – so that the paper can contact you about publishing the letter.
- Let FCLCA know if you have a letter published. Send us an email to kevan@felca.org and a clipping to FCLCA at 1225 8th St., Suite 220, Sacramento, CA 95814. [FCLCA](#)

Palo Alto Friends Meeting presents
A Benefit Concert for Friends Committee on Legislation of California

"Les Nations et une Apotheose"

17th and 18th Century Music from six nations

Sunday, April 25, 2010 at 8:00 p.m.

Palo Alto Friends Meeting House • 957 Colorado Avenue, Palo Alto

Donation \$25 adults; \$10 ages 4-16

More information, Eric Sabelman, 650-207-0311, esabelman@aol.com

For directions visit www.pafm.org



Why I Give *An interview with Christine Thomas*

Christine Thomas is a tireless advocate for the abolition of the death penalty. As a paralegal in the capital habeas unit of the Federal Defenders office, she works with state cases that have exhausted all appeals in the state court, and meets regularly with prisoners on California’s Death Row.

She also serves as a delegate to the California Democratic Party’s platform committee. She tells us that she is “trying to move the largest branch of the country’s largest political party to forgo its current policy of silence and to get ahead of the curve” by publicly opposing the death penalty.

We’re proud to have Christine as an FCLCA sustainer.

What inspired you to become involved with FCLCA?

I already knew that Dale Richter and Jim Lindburg do an awesome job of building connections at the capitol and that their credibility goes a long way in building real success. But when Dale shared one of your newsletters listing all of the legislation FCLCA had been involved in, what was pending, and FCLCA’s positions on it, I just knew I wanted to support this work.

The issues you were working on, and your positions were all positions I personally and morally support. FCLCA also has chosen some of the toughest – and not always popular – problems in California and with our laws to tackle. FCLCA is presenting and working for alternatives to endless incarceration that honor the humanity of all citizens and their human rights. I wanted to be a part of that effort.

What do you think FCLCA has to offer people like you who are not Quakers?

As you say, I’m not a Quaker. However, my personal beliefs on issues of human dignity, being your brother’s keeper, and protecting and supporting human rights and opportunity for all citizens fall right in line with the values of FCLCA.

When you can’t always be everywhere, it is good to know that you are supporting an organization that is doing the work you

believe in, and is talking to our lawmakers, attending the hearings and providing the information they need to hear.

You’ve recently become a sustainer of FCLCA – you give regularly every month – why?

Because I’ve seen FCLCA’s efforts and I’ve seen them work. Basically, you get a lot of bang for your buck!

How have your experiences shaped your views on the death penalty and our criminal justice system?

I grew up in Wisconsin, which does not have the death penalty, and I worked there in trial level public defender services. That’s where I first witnessed the

direct connection between poverty, hopelessness and lack of opportunity and those who ended up in the system.

In 1996 when I arrived in California, with a dedication to public defender work, I was shocked at the sentencing structures and policies Californians have supported, largely by initiative. The more I talked to people, the more I realized they had well-meaning intent, and we all shared a common desire for public safety, but they had no idea how these policies truly played out and how they affected people. It was never my desire to be in the spotlight on this topic, but when I started sharing what I knew, people genuinely wanted to know.

There’s a great statement I’ve heard from one of the fearless leaders in this fight, Ellen Eggers, “You never hear anyone say, the more I know about the death penalty, the more I support it.”

Under the death penalty statute now in effect – where you have 22 special circumstances, five of which do not include being the actual killer, and 87 percent of California’s first degree murders are “death eligible” and could be prosecuted as death cases – there is no possible way that the death penalty is ever reserved for the worst of the worst. It is often applied in sensational crimes, dependent on who is the victim, and can even be influenced by whether the DA is running for office that year, along with many other abhorrent qualifiers that have nothing to do with the crime itself.



If you are willing to start with the State killing someone, it is no wonder we will take someone's entire life – "Life Without Possibility of Parole" or 25, 35, etc. years to life for things like stealing pizza, a leather jacket, etc. Those sentences do not reflect a value of human life.

So what are the alternatives?

Rehabilitation, policies that support deterrence, and investment in our young people are shining examples of belief and respect for humanity. Yet we've almost eliminated those programs and opportunities.

What we have now is failed policy – we have over two decades of this policy and it has led to higher incarceration rates and the highest recidivism rates in the country. *If our intent was to increase incarceration, our current policies would be highly successful.* We parole 300 people a week in neighborhoods like Watts, a neighborhood without jobs, and housing, healthcare or any basic opportunity. No wonder they end up back in prison.

When you look at our criminal justice system, it fails to take into account the conditions many of our children face. How does a child who is born with teenage, gang-affiliated parents without jobs, learn how to stay out of the system? Incarceration becomes an expected way of life. Current statistics show that 60-65 percent of children with one parent incarcerated will end up in prison themselves. Children who live in the custody of Child Protective Services end up incarcerated at a rate of over 70 percent.

We desperately need to change where we invest our money and our energy. The death penalty spends millions and millions of dollars to execute a handful of people, when statewide over 30 percent of homicides are unsolved and in our major cities that figure is 50 percent. More than 1,000 murders go unsolved every year in California.

We need to be smart on crime and invest our scarce resources in preventing victims.

On March 26, 2010, you'll be honored with an award for your work to abolish the death penalty at the Capitol Awards Banquet here in Sacramento. This is a benefit dinner put on jointly by FCL Education Fund and Death Penalty Focus. What does being recognized with this award mean to you?

I'm incredibly honored to be recognized in association with the work for social justice. I'm also acutely aware that there are many, many heroes and heroines who work every day to end capital punishment and for prison and sentencing reform. Those of us doing this work today stand on the shoulders of giants who have gone before us. In accepting this award, I hope to accept it in recognition of all of their work and their

efforts. Every single one of them deserves to be honored.

What does the work of FCLCA mean to prisoners who receive our newsletters and learn of our work?

The incredible work that FCLCA is doing provides hope to those human beings who are held behind prison walls.

What we have now is failed policy and it has led to higher incarceration rates and the highest recidivism rate in the country.

Last November I attended the yearly convention of the Campaign to End the Death Penalty at the University of Chicago. One of the speakers, Rodney Reed, had recently been released from Chicago's penitentiary. He was one of the numerous falsely convicted victims who were sentenced to death after giving false confessions in the police torture scandal in the Chicago Police Department. Governor Ryan had taken Mr. Reed off of death row, but it wasn't until 2009 that his innocence was recognized by the Courts and he was released. He told of being buried in the penitentiary.

He wrote to everyone and every organization that was supposed to care about what had happened to him and never received a response. The courts came back with denied, denied, denied on his legal petitions.

He thought no one cared, when one day he looked at the television, and he saw everyday people with picket signs – who didn't even know him – outside the Attorney General's Office, and he knew then who really cared about him. And when he was released, he knew who created the awareness about his case that made that happen.

The entire convention was incredibly eye-opening, even to me after spending over two decades in public defender work, as I looked around and saw person after person who had been released from death rows around the country, and heard their stories and I started to think, if there are this many innocent people on death row, how many other innocent people are there in prison, and no one is paying any attention?

We as a society tend to assume the system gets it right. It is our human nature to assume like a juror does when they see a defendant sitting at the table in their trials, "they must have done something to get there."

We have no idea how many mistakes the system makes, and how often convictions have political ties, as simple as prosecutors' offices receiving additional funding for getting convictions. It took a journalism class at Northwestern University to begin to uncover what was years of police torture and abuse that led to false confessions and convictions.

I recently heard Natasha Minsker, the ACLU Policy Director on the Death Penalty in Northern California make a great comparison, that in using the threat of

(Continued on page 11)

FCLCA takes a stand on Taxation, Budgeting and Fiscal Policy

FCLCA affirms that taxes are a necessary and useful means to a prosperous, just and humane society.

The Friends Committee on Legislation (FCLCA) recognizes that government provides a variety of essential services and that these services are funded mostly by tax revenues.



Many of these programs and services provide the essential human and social infrastructure to support a strong, healthy, and environmentally sustainable economy in which all areas and peoples of the state have an opportunity to participate.

Therefore, we believe that California's tax revenues should provide adequate funding of education, healthcare, public assistance, housing, and other human and social programs which are essential to make California a desirable place in which to live, work, and operate a business.

Because such programs contribute to overall economic prosperity and benefit society as a whole, individuals and businesses should share in the responsibility to pay for these programs through taxes. Tax debates should represent all sectors of society, not just those who work, own, or can best present their interests in the legislature.

Accordingly, FCLCA favors a taxation policy that encourages an equitable tax burden and progressive taxes (higher tax rates on those of greater means). To ensure fair public debate, FCLCA supports



fully transparent accounting of the costs and benefits of public policies and economic development on all sectors, communities and classes of people.



Human life rests on the natural environment; therefore, sound tax policies should help the prices of products and services to reflect the complete life-cycle costs for their use – including the costs to harvest, transport, process and replace natural resources, as well as mitigation of any negative impacts. Accounting for these costs must be transparent.

FCLCA supports measures to:

- **change the 2/3rds vote** that is needed to approve the annual budget or to raise taxes to a majority vote;
- **reduce the ability of propositions** to mandate spending from the general fund without allocating or creating specific sources of revenue;
- **progressively tax** all income;
- **expand sales tax exemptions** for necessities;
- **levy a sales tax** on certain discretionary services now exempt, such as personal services, professional services, amusement and entertainment, and business-to-business services.

- **provide an income tax credit** for renters;
- **provide for regular reassessment** of commercial property, industrial property, and residences other than the owner's primary residence, and taxation of these properties at full market value;
- **ensure adequate taxation of multinational corporations** conducting business in California;
- **ensure taxation policies that promote local and small businesses**, and proportional representation of minority- and woman-owned businesses;
- **abolish government-sponsored gambling** and gambling as a way to raise revenues (see Policy Statement on gambling);
- **abolish tax subsidies to upper income taxpayers**;
- **disallow use of lease-revenue bonds for prisons**;
- **avoid use of deficit-financing bonds** to pay current (recurring) expenditures;
- **revise tax distribution** so that land use decisions are not based solely on the amount of sales tax revenue an establishment will generate (i.e. avoid "checkbook zoning");
- **establish a rainy-day fund** to moderate revenue volatility;
- **discourage making budget decisions by popular vote** (aka "ballot-box budgeting");
- **tax oil production** and other natural resources from their point of origin;
- **tax carbon** and other greenhouse gas emissions; and
- **institute taxation policies** which encourage the reduction of harmful greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, a right relationship with nature and other species, and the conservation, recycling and reuse of resources and goods. [FCLCA](#)



FCLCA Reflections on Giving (continued from page 9)

the death penalty to save money on a trial and get a plea to life without possibility of parole we are employing judicial waterboarding!

This is a practice that we know has led to numerous false confessions across our entire country and decades of incarceration of innocent prisoners. FCLCA's work and newsletter provides these prisoners, held under some of the most deprived conditions one can imagine, continued hope.

How would you advise our readers to become more active for change – even those who can't be fulltime activists?

It seems to me there is a great deal of misinformation and lack of information out there about the criminal justice system.

- Make a point of reading the actual reports and credible information about what is going on in corrections, and the death penalty.
- Read the California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice's reports on Wrongful Convictions and the Death Penalty and their recommendations. They are powerful.
- When the opportunity arises, talk about what you have learned.
- When you see an article in the newspaper that relates to the death penalty or corrections policy, write a letter to the editor and share the information you know in that letter when responding to the article. Learn the facts and write from your heart.


- Write your elected officials. Politicians cannot change what is going on without having the support of their voter base. They need to hear from all of us asking them to do the right thing when the opportunity arises, and thanking them when they do. It will give them the courage to vote their conscience and make a difference.
- Prisoners are not allowed to vote. It, perhaps, takes more courage for a politician to stand up for change of our failed corrections policies than on any other issue. Let them know you are watching and you care. Give them the political cover they need to make a stand. Thank them when they do.
- Then, support the tremendous work of FCLCA with your donations whenever you can. [FCLCA](#)

On Friday, March 26, 2010 the Friends Committee on Legislation Education Fund and Death Penalty Focus present the Capitol Awards Banquet in Sacramento, honoring Christine Thomas, Sister Catherine Connell, and the Alternatives to Violence Project for their dedicated commitment to criminal justice reform and the abolition of the death penalty.
www.deathpenalty.org/sactodinner

**FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON
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FCLCA Perspective (continued from page 5)

is rising. As the movement to save California builds, here are a few things you can do:

- Read FCLCA's "*Taxation, Budgeting and Fiscal Policy*" in this issue to see our proposals for an equitable tax and budget process. Contact your State Representatives and urge them to preserve our state's investments in education and to protect the safety net. (Find your state representative at fclca.org.) Tell them you support new revenues as part of the solution.
- FCLCA has endorsed The California Democracy Act to amend the California Constitution to say that "All legislative actions on revenue and budget must be determined by a majority vote." For the cost of a postage stamp, registered voters can download the petition at www.californiansfordemocracy.com, sign it and drop it in the mail. You can also sign up to volunteer in this grassroots effort to restore democratic rule to state government.
- Sign up for our Action Network at fclca.org to receive ongoing information on key legislation and actions you can take. **FCLCA**

– Jim Lindburg <JimL@fclca.org>

The Friends Committee on Legislation of California (FCLCA) includes Friends and like-minded persons, a majority of whom are appointed by Monthly Meetings of the Religious Society of Friends in California.

Expressions of views in this newsletter are guided by Statements of Policy prepared and approved by the FCLCA Committees. Seeking to follow the leadings of the Spirit, the FCLCA speaks for itself and for like-minded Friends. No organization can speak officially for the Religious Society of Friends.

While we strive above all for correctness and probity, we are quick to recognize that to err is human. We therefore solicit and welcome comments and corrections from our readers.

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Pages 1,2,3,4,5
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