



California Family Resource Association

Strong Families. Strong Communities.

Sample Op-Ed

Just 9 short months ago Californians voted down Proposition 1D to transfer funds from First 5 (Proposition 10) to fill State budget holes. The newest budget proposal proposes, once again, to ask the voters to shift 50% the tobacco tax revenues out of the First 5 Commission and into various State programs also facing budget shortages. The problem: much of the First 5 funds work to prevent children and families from needing the exact services they are proposing to use the money for.

First 5 funds support children and families:

- \$60.2 million is going to hospitals and community clinics that serve low income children and provide pediatric services unavailable anywhere else. More than \$10 million is going to oral health services.
- \$48.8 million is going directly to county public health and social service departments to deliver critical services, including nurse home visiting for at-risk families, child abuse prevention, and support for children with special needs.
- \$133 million is going to school districts and county offices of education for preschool and other early education programs targeted to children at greatest risk of academic failure – programs that are helping to close the academic achievement gap by closing the school readiness gap.

One benefit of the First 5 structure is the use of local Commissions. Every county has their own commission, designed to make local decisions and set priorities based upon the specific needs of the individual community. This structure ensures that money trickles down into neighborhoods, funding local programs that enrich our county and serve our local families. Programs locally include (insert information about your county here).

First 5 funds have already been used to assist the budget gaps. In 2009 the First 5 State Commission directed \$81.4 million to backfill Healthy Families, ensuring coverage for 200,000 infants and children. In our county, First 5 has...(please fill in how your local commission stepped in to ease budget cuts and maintain vital local programs).

Rather than taking money away from local control and placing it into the State Budget coughers, legislators should respect the voters and continue to maintain First 5 funds to help local children and families get through this crisis.

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