



California Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages

A PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR THOSE CONCERNED WITH TEACHING OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE OR DIALECT AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION

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June 11, 2009

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Hon. Noreen Evans, Chair
Budget Conference Committee
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Assembly Member Evans:

I am writing on behalf of the California Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (CATESOL) to urge the conference committee to support full funding for the Economic Impact Aid program.

CATESOL's members teach English as a second language (ESL) in K-12, adult education and higher education institutions. The organization works to improve the professional development for ESL teachers and to ensure that EL students receive the highest quality public education. It is in this capacity that our members urge you to protect the funds that are targeted directly for English language learners.

We are sending this letter because we are concerned that, given the enormity of the budget shortfall, there is a growing assault on these funds. During your earlier proceedings, the Legislative Analyst made a proposal regarding Economic Impact Aid and Class Size Reduction. Additionally, we are aware that there are efforts to move the EIA program into the flexibility tier established as a part of SB 3x 4 in February.

CATESOL understands that dramatic cuts are being contemplated for K-12 education. However, Economic Impact Aid should not be a program that is moved out of Tier I. These funds are already flexible at the local level and are designed to flow to our youngest and most vulnerable children. A very high percentage of these students are also English language learners.

We would like to point out that the Governor, in his may Revision to the budget, did not propose to reduce funding for EIA. We would like to complement and support this position. EIA funds pay overwhelmingly for people--teachers, aides, and other classroom personnel who provide direct classroom services to these poor and EL children. The real effect of a reduction of EIA funds is massive lay-offs of specialized teachers and aides who focus on the children who need their help the most.

CATESOL cannot support disproportionately destroying programs for our youngest children, economically disadvantaged youth, and English learners. Other options should be considered such as shortening the school year and furlough days for regular classroom teachers. Such an action is preferable to the massive lay-offs of teachers and aides serving our most vulnerable children.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,

Belinda Braunstein
President, CATESOL

cc: Budget Conference Committee members