

March (date) 2011

The Honorable Tom Harman
California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5094
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Harman,

I am a (teacher/parent/student) within Irvine Unified School District (IUSD) and am writing to express my concerns regarding the current state of education funding in California.

Funding for K-12 education in California **has already suffered more than \$18 billion in cuts during the past three years**—cuts so deep that State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson has declared a **state of financial emergency for K-12 education**. Across California, there have been thousands of teacher layoffs, significant increases in class size, and shortened school years. In many school districts, hours for libraries, guidance counseling, and art and music instruction have been reduced or eliminated completely.

Education has always been a top priority in Irvine. We are proud of the top quality education we provide which is often what attracts families to reside within our community. IUSD has weathered many financial “storms”, but can’t continue to make cuts without undermining the quality of education we have been so proud to provide.

Adequate school funding needs to remain a top priority if we are going to continue to nurture students who are able to compete in a global economy and to think critically and creatively in an effort to help solve the types of issues and crises we are currently facing. A strong public education - kindergarten through college is essential to California's future prosperity and a thriving economy.

I support California PTA’s call for a balanced approach to solving California’s \$26 billion deficit—one that includes spending cuts as well as additional revenues. I appreciate that the Governor is pursuing this kind of balanced solution and I applaud the Governor's efforts to limit further reduction of education funding. The Governor’s plan is a good first step, but it depends on VOTERS PASSING a measure to extend current temporary taxes that generate \$8 billion annually. As I write this, it is still uncertain if the legislature will vote to place this measure on a special election ballot. **I urge you to support putting the revenue measures on the ballot for June 2011. Let the voters decide whether or not to allow additional devastating cuts to our K-12 schools.** Please work together with your fellow State Senators, Assembly Members, and the Governor (putting party politics aside) in order to quickly stabilize California’s budget.

California leaders also need to work toward a long term solution that includes the **adequate and stable funding for education our children need and deserve**. Toward that end, we ask that you support:

AB 18 (Brownley) to produce a comprehensive plan for finance reform to support pupil achievement.

SCA 5 (Simitian) to lower the threshold for local school parcel taxes from the current two-thirds vote to a super majority of 55 percent, to allow local communities the option of passing local funding measures. Let the voters have a say in how important education is.

In closing, I would like to invite you to visit our school to speak with our principal, teachers and students, onsite to hear and see firsthand how funding issues impact learning. How can we schedule a meeting with you?

Sincerely,

YOUR NAME HERE
YOUR TITLE HERE
CONTACT INFO HERE