

# *Caltaxletter*

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## **TEACHERS' UNION LOOKS TO SPLIT-ROLL INITIATIVE**

The state's largest union representing school teachers has voted to explore an initiative campaign to raise taxes – perhaps including property taxes paid by businesses.

Meanwhile, the League of California Cities, meeting this week in Oakland, will discuss a potential initiative that would dedicate certain tax revenues to cities and counties, reported the *Sacramento Bee* (February 3).

And, according to an *Associated Press* report February 1, the California chapter of the American Planning Association, including representatives of nearly 5,000 urban, environmental and transportation planners, say they will fight to raise more money for their purposes. They would change Proposition 13 so local voters, by majority vote rather than two-thirds, can raise taxes or approve bonds for specific projects relating to parks, transit-oriented growth and farmland preservation.

The *Los Angeles Times* reported that statewide officials of the California Teachers Association voted in Los Angeles on February 2 to conduct focus groups and engage in more extensive polling to determine what kind of taxes to include in a proposal that would dedicate added revenue to schools.

A unanimous voice vote of more than 500 delegates authorized union leadership to begin "research and development of possible 2004 initiatives to enhance school funding," *The Times* reported.

John Hein, CTA political action director, said polling last month showed voters would be willing to increase education spending by boosting the sales tax, the corporate property tax or the upper brackets of the personal income tax. Residential property taxes would not be touched, Mr. Hein told *The Times*.

Meanwhile, *The Bee* reported that Oakland City Attorney John Russo, president of the association that represents 477 California cities, hopes to have specific initiative language ready for a board meeting in April in Sacramento. The newspaper reported renewed interest for an initiative asking voters to constitutionally earmark car taxes, portions of property taxes and sales tax revenues for local government.

Steven Szalay, head of the California State Association of Counties, told *The Bee* that his coalition of groups hopes the governor and Legislature will place structural and fiscal reforms on the 2004 ballot. If not, the coalition, which includes public safety organizations, will be prepared to conduct an initiative drive, Mr. Szalay said.