



Watsonville/Aptos Adult Education News and Views

El problema no es quien tiene la razon, sino entender la realidad. - Jorge Luis Borges



Vol.4 No. 24

The "Lift Every Voice" Issue

March 21, 2005



*Maribel with
Assemblymember Simon Salinas*

Adult Ed. Student, Maribel Ramirez Visits Sacramento, Talks to Legislators



*Maribel with
Assemblymember John Laird*

Last Monday, on the annual California Council for Adult Education Leg Day, over one hundred adult schools were represented in Sacramento by students, teachers, classified staff, and administrators. The purpose of the annual Leg Day is to go to Sacramento to advocate for specific legislation affecting adult education. This year there are four bills that are part of the "adult education reform package" that we had the pleasure of talking to legislators about. Watsonville/Aptos was well represented by Maribel Ramirez, who has been an ESL student, VESL Healthcare student and now studies in the VESL Office Careers program. Cathy Jo Diaz and Bob also went with her. We had the opportunity to meet with Assemblymembers Simon Salinas and John Laird, and talked to staff assistants in other offices. The first-person accounts of Maribel and Cathy Jo will appear in subsequent issues of News and Views, as well as specific information about what constitutes the "adult education reform package", four bills introduced that are to our benefit. Of course another issue on everyone's minds in Sacramento and throughout the state was the Governor's proposed budget and potential package of "voter initiatives" that he plans to take forward at the general election in November. Both the budget and the potential propositions are pretty unfriendly to education in general and to adult ed. specifically. We'll have more information later in the year about how to respond collectively, powerfully, to these.

More immediately is the call for Californians to respond as a part of a coordinated national effort to express dismay and outrage over the proposed cut in adult education funding by the President in his proposed budget. The 66% cut would devastate adult education in California, but it would effectively eliminate it in many states. That's NO literacy, ESL, basic education, and high school diploma classes for adults in many states. What follows in this issue of News and View is the "talking points" and suggested actions from the CCAE. I want to make clear that students need to be presented information and given choices. We, much too often, are paternalistic and maternalistic about our students. They will make the choices...but let's certainly provide them good information. You know, at the Board meeting last week, only 7 of 120 teachers were there. Had not Frank and Winona brought their classes, there would have been no students. This was an important moment for adult education. Perhaps it wasn't dramatic enough. Letters and calls aren't dramatic. Just effective.

Talking Points from the California Council for Adult Education

These are Talking Points for you as you make the case for continued strong support for the education of the under-educated and limited English proficient adults. You don't have to cover each and everyone of them in your faxes and letters. Do add your personal experiences and stories- they are very powerful.

- The Administration's 2006 Budget cuts Adult Education by \$369 million, a 66% reduction. The proposal endorses the concept of leaving no child behind, at the same time it leaves millions of adult behind, including parents. No American should be left behind when it comes to access to education.
- The title of the press release accompanying the budget is titled, *President's FY 2006 Budget Focuses Resources on Students Who Need Them the Most*. But the budget proposal ignores the needs of dropouts and individuals with low levels of literacy that cannot access the K-012 system and have families who depend on them for support. Among these under-educated and limited English proficient adults are tens of thousands of young adults who have just recently found themselves unable to meet new high standards for high school graduation.
- The 2006 Budget proposal does not acknowledge the 30-year old factory worker with low levels of literacy and no high school diploma whose job has been abolished and who needs to improve his/her academic skills in order to get a new job.
- At the Budget briefing, it was stated that adult education may not be the best way to meet the needs of program participants. The budget document itself states there is "little or no evidence of effectiveness." Yet California data collection documents that in School Year 2003-2004, over 800,000 students were served in basic skills and high school equivalent programs, with the following outcomes: over 100,000 got a job or got a better job, over 60,000 achieved high school diplomas or GED Certificates, and over 60,000 acquired workforce readiness skills.
- The statement regarding the federal role does not address the fact that many participants are immigrants in need of English language skills. Meeting the needs of our nations' immigrants is a federal responsibility. California programs serve over 480,000 English as a Second Language students.
- There is no other system build to meet the many varying needs of adult education students and the public policy priorities that are served when their needs are met. Examples: a more highly trained and competitive workforce; intergenerational literacy and increased success of education reform efforts; increased voting and other forms of civic participation, decreased recidivism in corrections and more successful preventive health.
- During the budget briefing officials justified reducing federal funds for adult education services because "education is a state issue," not a federal issue. This makes

no sense in view of Administration initiatives to affect K-12 education. If adult education is not a federal issue, neither is K-12. Also, a significant number of adult education students served in these programs are limited English proficient. Immigration is a federal, not a state issue. While states contribute a significant amount to these programs the combination of state and federal funds provides a high quality model of federal/state cooperation.

President Bush's FY 2006 federal budget proposes to cut ABE grants to the states by 66%, effective in the federal fiscal year 2006, which would affect California in School Year 2007-2008.

IMMEDIATE ACTION BY MARCH 25

Because the President's budget also severely cuts other services and programs, there will be a huge outcry from other advocates. We must act immediately and in great numbers so that federal funds will not be lost. Our voice must be heard.

Time is short. We must act now to stop this proposal before it gains momentum.

OUR GOAL

There is great power in numbers. Our goal is to generate telephone calls, letters or faxes to each of our Congressional Representatives, and 750 telephone calls, letter, or faxes to each of our Senators in Washington, D.C.

Teachers can use this development as an opportunity to incorporate a civics lesson about how students' tax dollars are spent and how they can have a voice in those decisions.

This campaign is being organized nationally. **Let's show the country what California can do.**

REPORT YOU ACTIONS TO CCAE/ACSA/CAEAA

It is extremely important for us to know how many calls have been made, how many letters and faxes have been sent, and any feedback you receive from the Senators and Congressional Representatives.

Report the number of letters, phone calls, faxes, and emails to Bob by Friday, March 25

We know that we are asking you to do this urgent federal work quickly. We appreciate your diligence and dedication in making sure that the advocacy work is done. You will make a huge difference.

CALIFORNIA STRATEGY - Over 260 Adult Schools in California, almost 2 million adult school students annually. Don't you think we have the power to be heard?

When you call, you will likely talk to either an aide or someone answering the telephone who is keeping a tally of the calls they receive on this issue. You may only have time to identify yourself and state your position against the cuts, so be sure to do that first.

- Give your name and address
- Say that you are a constituent and a registered voter. (Note: if you are eligible to register and are not registered, please do so. Elected officials pay more attention to the opinions of registered voters.)
- Say you are calling because you are against the President's proposed cuts for adult education in the FY 2006 budget, and you want the adult education funding to be increased.
- If you have time, say why adult education is important to you.
- Student stories are very persuasive. They can talk about how adult education has made a difference in their lives, e.g., helped them get a job or a better job, become a taxpayer, obtain a high school credential, or obtain health insurance for themselves and their family.
- Teachers can talk about individual student stories or their own commitment and passion for adult education and why it's important to the community, the state and the country.
- Administrators can talk about how many individuals are served annually by their program the goals that students achieve, how the federal funds leverage state and local support, and the importance of adult education.

CALIFORNIA STRATEGIES - Write letters, faxes, and email

- Whenever possible, mail and fax your letter. The fax will get there immediately, and mailing your letter will increase the volume of letters that your Representative receives.
- Write “**Increase funding for adult education**” in the subject line of your letter or email. In the body of the letter, be sure to state first that you are against the proposed cut and want the adult education funding to be restored to its current level.
- Keep the letter to 1 page. Be clear and avoid jargon
- Remember to sign it and provide your address.

LESSON PLANS AND CURRICULA FOR ADVOCACY AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Government and Politics Resource Page

<http://abeged.com/gov/Govt&Politics.html>

Helping Your Students Talk to Legislators

<http://airi.org/esquare/civic/helpin.html>

People and Politics, A Civics Literacy Curriculum

<http://hub1.worlded.org/docs/politics/people.htm>

Your Government, Your Taxes, Your Choices

<http://mcae.net/curriculum/indes.html>

The Honorable Sam Farr:

Washington: 221 Longworth House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515
202-225-2861 FAX 202-225-6791

Salinas: 1100 West Alisal Street Salinas, CA 93901 831-424-2229
800-340-FARR FAX 831-424-7099

Santa Cruz: 701 Ocean Street Room 318 Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831-429-1976

Senator Barbara Boxer:

United States Senate
1700 Montgomery Street, Suite 240
San Francisco, CA 94111
(415) 403-0100
(415) 956-6701 fax

Senator Diane Feinstein:

United States Senate
One Post Street, Suite 2450
San Francisco, CA 94104
(415) 393-0707
Fax (415) 393-0710



WAAE Calendar

Report the number of letters, phone calls, faxes, and emails to Bob by Friday, March 25

Spring Vacation, Friday, March 25 - April 1



All School Sports Day - April 16

Watonsville High School Gym (confirmed now, sorry about the moving date)

Anticipated activities: **Basketball, Volleyball, Soccer, Salsa dancing, crafts**

Are there teachers who might want some extra duty hours to help?

ESL Awards Ceremonies, May 19, 20

Graduation, June 3

End-Of School All Staff Meeting,
Saturday, June 4, 10:00-12:00 (paid)

Summer School Dates: June 13 - July 27, 2005



March Birthdays

Silvia Austerlic	3/28
Nan Beltran	3/14
Lynne Cordova	3/16
Henry Day	3/17
Marilyn Files	3/3
Jon Landaw	3/2
Debbie Lerma	3/13
Veronica Marquez	3/3
Marjorie Martinez	3/23
Pamela Sexton	3/26
Phyllis Thompson	3/17
Edie Trotno	3/22
Katherine Wales	3/10

