

Statement on the Governor's Announcement of a November Special Election

By Art Pulaski, Executive Secretary-Treasurer of the California Labor Federation

Arnold Schwarzenegger's decision to call his taxpayer-funded special election is bad for politics and bad for California. Schwarzenegger ran for office as a non-partisan, non-political reformer. In two years he has devolved into a Bush-lite conservative politician who breaks his promises and sells out working people to satisfy his special interest corporate donors.

The special interests who support the special election are the Governor's friends — pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies, energy companies and Wall Street brokers. They have helped him raise \$26 million in campaign contributions — more political money than any Governor in history. In exchange, the Governor vetoed legislation that would have reduced prescription drug costs, banned offshoring of U.S. jobs and prevented energy blackouts and price gouging.

Instead of working together to solve our State's problems, the Governor has chosen confrontation again. He has proven that he is unable to broker compromise solutions and is no longer trusted to keep his promises.

The special election will cost California taxpayers \$80 million. Our State could better spend the \$80 million dollars on hiring teachers, providing new textbooks for our schools, helping seniors afford their prescription drugs and hiring enough nurses to staff our hospitals.

The Governor's decision to move forward on this special election bullies our real life action heroes — nurses, teachers, firefighters and police officers — and the people they serve. He is declaring war on those who are the first to enter a burning building; those who teach our children; who care for our loved ones when they are injured or ill; and who risk their lives to keep our communities safe.

The Governor is out of touch with regular working people. He cannot even face the voters to tell them about the special election. He will be making the announcement from behind a desk, in the seclusion of his office, isolated from the protests of teachers, nurses and firefighters who have challenged his bullying.

We will fight this attack on our real life action heroes in our streets, on the airwaves, and at the ballot box. We will fight for the firefighters who risk their lives to save us. We will fight for the teachers who teach our kids. We will fight for the police officers walking the beat. We will fight for the nurses tending to the sick, injured and infirm. We will fight to win and we will never give in.

California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO
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