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Education: Vote “No” to Proposition 6

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On November 8, 2011, we will be asked to amend our Texas Constitution. Known as Propositions, we will have 10 amendments to consider. Adding amendments to our constitution is nothing new. As a matter of fact, 467 amendments have been approved since our constitution’s adoption in 1876.

As Texas voters, we have not always approved the amendments presented by our legislature. To date, we have defeated a total of 176. Proposition 6 is one amendment we need to add to the defeated column.

Proposition 6 involves the state having the ability to withdraw additional dollars from an existing investment fund maintained for public education. Within the language of the amendment on the election ballot, you will find the following words: “... *to provide additional funding for public education...*”

Without knowing the details in this amendment, this single phrase could convince caring citizens to mistakenly vote in favor of Proposition 6. To do so will NOT produce additional dollars for public schools during the next two years.

The 82nd Legislative Special Session had legislators searching for cuts in creative ways. Senate Bill 2 was crafted with anticipation of Proposition 6 successfully passing. A provision within Senate Bill 2 states if Proposition 6 passes, \$300 million will be made available for public schools during the 2012-13 biennium.

Unfortunately, SB2 also states public schools will lose \$300 million from the state’s general revenue during the same two year period. In other words, \$300 million generated from Prop 6 simply fills a hole in the exact amount of \$300 million created by Senate Bill 2.

In summary, caring citizens voting in favor of Proposition 6 will create a net gain totaling “zero” in additional public school dollars for the next two years.

Even more important is the following point. After the first two years, there is no guarantee that legislators will use the educational dollars from Prop 6 specifically for public education. Creating additional funds for education without protecting how they are to be used in the future is dangerous. Legislators can be tempted to use those dollars elsewhere in future state budgets. Proposition 6 does not protect future educational dollars.

Also, the method of making available funds for public schools under Proposition 6 creates more concerns than it provides security. At the top of the list, Prop 6 uncomfortably opens the door to spend dollars today that are normally sent to the Permanent School Fund (PSF) to be invested.

The PSF is an existing endowment that, from its investments, makes funds available each year to support education. Proposition 6 changes the constitutional language for certain funds to be spent now instead of being invested in the PSF. This jeopardizes the original constitutional intent of protecting the PSF and using growth from its investments to support education for future generations.

Proposition 6 is a short term band-aid at best. The current broken system of funding schools still exist. The long term effects from Proposition 6 are not clearly defined to justify amending the proven language in our current Texas Constitution.

Voting "No" to Proposition 6 insures the Permanent School Fund will be available to support public education now and in the future without additional bureaucracy. Exercise your right to vote and Make Education a Priority. Vote "No" to Proposition 6.



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