



Prop. 1D would pummel children

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By REBECCA O'ROURKE

It's tough luck for anyone who happens to be a child these days. The Legislature is counting on voters to help balance the state budget by suspending funding for health and education programs for our youngest children.

Prop. 1D, one of the budget measures on the May 19 ballot, proposes redirecting more than \$1.6 billion in tobacco tax funds over several years to help reduce the state deficit. In 1998, Californians voted for Prop. 10, the tobacco tax measure, which established First 5.

First 5 has been one of our state's most progressive programs, providing communities with innovative services that are giving at-risk children a fighting chance at a healthy, productive life. Some claim that if Prop. 1D passes, the state will continue to fund various statewide children's programs. So why divert the funds if legislators plan to keep supporting programs in our county? Wouldn't it be best to leave local agencies in control of funds supporting the specific needs of San Bernardino County?

It makes no sense to lose years of careful work in order to redirect a limited amount of money from the First 5 programs. A few hundred million dollars a year won't make a dent in addressing California's \$42 billion deficit. It is too great a sacrifice for such a small contribution toward solving the state's fiscal problems.

Don't be fooled by the ballot description written by Sacramento politicians. Prop. 1D takes money from local medical, health and education experts and puts it in the hands of Sacramento politicians. Stand up for children and families in your community voting no on Prop. 1D.

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