

Steve Westly *California State Controller*



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STATE CONTROLLER STEVE WESTLY OPPOSES CUTS TO BASIC AID SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Sacramento, April 8, 2003 – California State Controller Steve Westly today announced his opposition to proposals to capture local property tax revenues from Basic Aid school districts. The Controller, who issues school funding, sent a letter to Governor Gray Davis outlining his concerns.

Controller Westly wrote:

“I respectfully oppose your proposal to capture property taxes from local communities to reduce the State’s budget deficit.

“The proposal is not a reduction of state funding to Basic Aid school districts, it is a *capturing* of local property tax revenues. I strongly believe that the State should not remove funding it does not provide.

“As a graduate of a Basic Aid school that serves a racially and economically diverse population (62 per cent non-Caucasian), I feel strongly that Basic Aid schools should not be disproportionately hit. While districts in high-assessed property value areas are thought of as ‘wealthy’, the students who attend their schools do not necessarily fit this stereotype and would be the most adversely affected by your proposal.

“The proposal would cut 20 to 50 per cent of individual Basic Aid districts’ budget funding overnight. I ask that you strike this provision from the State budget before the May Revision to protect Basic Aid school districts and our children’s education.”

The Governor has proposed cutting \$126 million from Basic Aid school districts, which keep the money from local property taxes and receive only the constitutionally guaranteed minimum funding of \$120 per student. Of California’s nearly 1,000 school districts, more than 50 are Basic Aid districts.

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