

civic engagement: building electoral power for change

Every Vote Every Time: We are the Change

Over a two month period leading up to the June 2010 primary, CAUSE had conversations with over 30,000 new and infrequent voters in Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. In these conversations CAUSE phone bankers engaged voters in discussions about the California budget crisis, its origins and its devastating impact on working families, seniors, students and communities of color, through cuts in essential public services. In the process, voters were encouraged to take a stand for budget reform by voting. Facilitated by our rapid-dial phone bank system, our phone bank operators and neighborhood door-knocking teams will continue year-round to engage voters in communities throughout the region in important conversations about reforming the California budget process to protect services and create jobs. Join CAUSE's Civic Engagement Project in our mission to raise voter participation by providing the policy information people need to make informed voting choices to protect their communities.

To get involved and help "Get Out the Vote" in the fall election, [click here](#).

CAUSE is working hard to talk to voters who are registered but who often don't vote, or who registered very recently. In primary elections in our area, often only 30%-40% of the registered voters actually vote, and in general elections, sometimes only 50%-60% of the registered voters participate. The people who aren't voting are mostly younger or poorer, with a full time job or full-time responsibilities. Many people don't believe voting will make a difference in their lives, haven't gotten the information they need to be confident about their voting choices, or just don't have the time to participate. Unfortunately, that means that important choices about things like education funding, better transportation, better healthcare services, access to college, are made by older and wealthier people.

The result: this year, the Governor of the state of California is trying to cut millions of dollars out of the Ventura and Santa Barbara school systems, eliminate the CalWORKS program for unemployed job seekers, and eliminate in-home services for the elderly. These cuts disproportionately impact poor and working people, and California's small businesses. The Governor has NOT proposed asking California's wealthiest citizens and largest corporations to delay their own tax breaks, or to pay their fair share to support essential services.

We are building a network of volunteers to vote, and to encourage their friends and neighbors to vote. It's the only way to save our schools, our neighborhoods, our jobs, our opportunities for a safe, prosperous and healthy future. It's the only way to make sure that government serves all of us, not just the wealthiest individuals or largest corporations. We are part of an alliance of organizations throughout the state, called the California Alliance which is determined to engage half a million less frequent voters to help stick up for California's schools and infrastructure, and to demand fairness in the budget process. These voters will be a "tipping point" for change in California, so that government serves all of us, not just the wealthiest and most powerful.

