



PRESS RELEASE

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*NEW study reviews the political effectiveness of California's public sector unions
Is the public sector union supported tax-hike, Proposition 30, destined to pass?
Who can compete with the anti-Proposition 32 campaigns being waged by CA unions?*

BATTLEGROUND CALIFORNIA: HOW UNIONS WILL FARE IN NOVEMBER'S BALLOT MEASURE BRAWL

October 14, 2012: California's public sector unions have far more success defeating ballot initiatives than promoting their passage, a new report from the Manhattan Institute finds. In so doing, they have managed to stymie reforms that might well have improved the performance of California's public institutions and reduced the severity of the fiscal crisis that the state now faces.

What does this analysis foreshadow for the election this November? The vote on the tax increase is likely to be very close, and the unions will probably be able to defeat the paycheck-protection measure for a third time.

On Sunday, October 14, 2012, the Manhattan Institute's Center for State and Local Leadership released a new report, [*The Nays Have It: When Public Sector Unions Win in California*](#), by senior fellow Daniel DiSalvo. Reviewing 30 years of data, DiSalvo finds that voters ratified less than half of the measures public sector unions supported while **75 percent of the measures the unions opposed were defeated**. What implications do the new report's findings have on November's key ballot measures, Proposition 30 and Proposition 32? Here are some of the hard numbers:

- In 2005, the unions and their allies spent **\$54 million to defeat Proposition 75 (another version of paycheck protection)** compared to the measly \$5.8 million spent by the measure's supporters
- Over the last 30 years, voters have enacted **only six out of 21** tax-related initiatives (all but one either reduced the tax burden or made it more difficult to raise taxes)
- When teacher tenure reform was attempted in 2005, the CTA alone spent **\$57 million, mortgaging its Sacramento headquarters**, to fight this and other education reform measures

The data revealed that claims that public-sector unions are regularly outspent by business interests (however defined) in California's direct-democracy process *are a myth*. Furthermore, while other groups move up and down the donor rankings, depending presumably on the issues at stake in a given election year, public sector unions remain consistently at the top of the heap.

The unions' influence in the legislature combined with their record of success in the Golden State's direct democracy process makes for a powerful one-two punch. The results have pushed the state's finances to the edge of a cliff.

REPORT GRAPHS OF NOTE:

- [Public-Sector Unions and Ballot Initiatives, 1980–2010](#)
- [15 Most Important Measures for Public-Sector Unions, 1980–2010](#)
- [Proposition 30: Brown's Tax Plan](#)
- [Public Sector Union Contributions to California Legislative Candidates](#)
- [Public Sector Unions Spending in California by Party \(2000-2010\)](#)

To speak with the author or obtain a copy of the report please contact Ray Niemiec at 646-839-3335 or by email at rniemiec@manhattan-institute.org

Daniel DiSalvo is a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute's Center for State and Local Leadership and an assistant professor of political science at The City College of New York. He received his doctorate in politics from the University of Virginia and is a regular contributor on PublicSectorInc.org a project of the Manhattan Institute. His work focuses on American political parties, elections, labor unions, state government, and public policy. He has written on these topics for both scholarly and popular publications, including *National Affairs*, *The Public Interest*, *The Weekly Standard*, *Commentary*, the *New York Daily News*, the *New York Post*, *The Forum: A Journal of Applied Research in Contemporary Politics*, *The Tocqueville Review*, *Congress & the Presidency*, and *The Journal of Policy History*.

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