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2012 Election Season: What?s at Stake for CA's Queer Youth?

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It seems everyone in the California education world has taken a position on three propositions that will impact education funding: Proposition 30, Proposition 32, and Proposition 38. Next Tuesday, voters -- who, for the most part, have been out of school for some time -- will decide the fate of these propositions.

So what do people in the school system **today** have to say about these propositions? I turned to young people who are members of our GSA Network Statewide Advocacy Council and asked: should GSA students should take a position on the ballot propositions?

Jack Davis*: I think we should! And if we teens, some voters, support and endorse it, other young people will be more likely to listen and spread the word because it's not adults or political ads telling them.*

Sarah Harker: I've been talking to teachers about the*se bills and they actually prefer 30 to 38. I am totally for endorsing all of them, however 30 will, from a purely economic standpoint, be better for the schools over all.*

Anna Sturla: I support Proposition*s 30 and 38 because I think that for too long we've been paying lip service to our desire for better schools, but we have not been willing to actually dig in our heels and fight to cut funding. With both propositions, California voters get a chance to take power in their own hands and save our educational system. Will it mean that we all have to pay a little more? Yes. But I think California's future is worth it. As for Proposition 32, I'm a little more on the fence. I respect each worker's right to decide which candidate or cause her/his/their money supports. However, I think unions should be allowed to collectively defend the rights of the workers they represent.*

Calen Valencia*: I fully support Prop. 30 because, although it's another tax added to the people, it?s toward something progressive and well worth it. When a student at my school asked our congressman what his plans were to better our school funding, he twisted it around to say that he was implying our school had bad teachers. The student then made a comment that they weren?t bad teachers, just underpaid and over-worked. This proves that not only are teachers paying the price, the students are too. And little to no funding in such a big state like California means very few resources go to average students like me. It means bigger classrooms, and less one-on-one support for students struggling like myself. This proposition is supported by well-meaning people and groups like Governor Jerry Brown (Sponsor), CTA, CFT, CA Police Chiefs Association, League of Women Voters, as well as the CA Democratic Party and 35 newspapers.*

Of those youth on the Statewide Advocacy Council polled, only 5% said they engaged in voter registration efforts, with 2% currently engaged in proposition campaigns. And none of the youth polled said teachers had taken a leave of absence to help out with the election.

Meanwhile, $6 billion in additional education cuts are on the table.

Just like people died for the LGBT movement, and for the right to equal schools free of discrimination, people fought for the right to vote.

Calen Valencia*: I've educated and encouraged people of age that were skeptical about voting.*

Like Calen and other SAC members, let?s encourage registered people to educate themselves about the propositions and vote this election. And encourage others who can?t vote to educate themselves, have an opinion, and help registered voters get to the polls.

GSA Network has taken a stance on these propositions. See our statement[1] for more information.

To take action, GSA youth leaders should exercise grassroots organizing power this weekend!

1. Go to: www.battlegroundca.com [2] and sign up to knock on doors or make calls to urge voters to pass Prop. 30
2. Vote and/or help your parents find their voting place at: http://yesonprop30.yourvoterguide.com/ [3] and encourage them to vote Yes on Prop. 30 and No on Prop. 32
3. Ask your parents to take another registered voter with them to the polls!

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Links:
[1] http://www.gsanetwork.org/news/gsa-network-endorses-prop-30/103112
[2] http://www.battlegroundca.com
[3] http://yesonprop30.yourvoterguide.com/