

Teachers take their cause to lawmakers in Sacramento

Publisher's note: *Teachers from Lake Tahoe Unified School District are in Sacramento this week. The union pays for subs in the classroom.*

By Jon Ortiz and David Siders, Sacramento Bee

The state's largest teachers union revved up its faithful Monday to lean on state lawmakers to extend current tax rates – and eventually increase them.

The daylong rally by the California Teachers Association kicked off a week of budget lobbying, press events and teach-ins by the union. Their plans and those of anti-war protesters this week prompted stepped-up Capitol security over concerns that some activists might stage Wisconsin-style sit-ins at the Capitol or commit other acts of civil disobedience.

Although law enforcement officials said the crowds were generally peaceful, they arrested about 65 protesters after warning them to leave the Capitol rotunda after the building closed at 6 p.m. They were charged with misdemeanor trespassing.

"We're not just here to lobby. We're here to raise some hell," Betty Olson-Jones, president of the Oakland Education Association, said as the arrests began.

About 1,000 teachers, parents, school support workers and religious leaders began in the morning, urging lawmakers to immediately pass a tax extension to avoid deeper cuts to education budgets around the state. After that, they want a tax hike put before voters.

Read the whole story