

Education proposal would challenge Brown on the ballot

By Torey Van Oot, Sacramento Bee

When Molly Munger's name surfaced last year as a potential partner on efforts to provide more funding for schools, California State PTA President Carol Kocivar had to turn to Google to find out who she was.

While Munger is a longtime champion for civil rights and education policy issues, the 63-year-old attorney was a virtual unknown in California political circles.

That changed the moment she submitted a \$10 billion tax proposal for the ballot.

Munger's proposed initiative to raise state income taxes for all but the poorest Californians to fund schools and early childhood development programs – and the personal cash she has pledged to spend to put it on the ballot – makes her a major player in the 2012 ballot wars and a thorn in Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown's side.

Her measure, one of at least three tax proposals that could qualify for November's ballot, is seen as a threat to the one Brown is pushing. His would generate nearly \$7 billion in budget relief by raising income taxes on high earners and enacting a half-cent increase in the sales tax.

Brown and his allies have called for proponents of rival tax initiatives to drop their efforts, arguing that a ballot featuring multiple tax hikes will lead voters to reject them all.

The argument hasn't moved Munger, a Democrat and Pasadena resident, who says her polling shows a tax hike earmarked for

schools can win even with other tax measures on the ballot.

“We think the governor doesn’t have as good of an idea this year as we do,” Munger told reporters this week. “And that’s part of democracy, to put that out in the marketplace of ideas and let the voters decide.”

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