

Letter: No votes on Props. 30 and 38 are bad for Californians

To the community,

California schools are in trouble. For the past four years, the state has been cutting and “deferring” payments to school districts, requiring the local school districts to operate with fewer and fewer funds. Schools all over California have cut expenses by every means possible to keep their doors open.

Lake Tahoe Unified School District alone, a small district when compared to other California communities, has experienced nearly \$4 million in state cuts, but has managed to protect most of its programs and small class sizes by reducing costs in every “non-teaching” department.

The superintendent, for example, also fills the roles of assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Human Resources director, and principal of the magnet school.

Many California schools have already been forced to increase class size, reduce the number of days of teaching, and cut sports and arts programs.

The state’s newest school budget calls for another \$1.6 million cut to South Lake Tahoe if Proposition 30 fails ... a cut that the district can no longer absorb without drastic consequences. To make ends meet, the district may have to reduce the school year by 12 class days in addition to cuts in other areas. We cannot let this happen.

Propositions 30 and 38 have been put before the voters to stop these continued budget cuts and restore funding to schools. Neither proposition replaces the funds that have already been

cut. Both are designed to stop the bleeding. These two propositions address the increased taxes in different ways.

Prop. 30 imposes a four-year statewide one-quarter cent sales tax increase plus an additional income tax on individual earnings above \$250,000. Prop. 38 imposes a 12-year income tax increase for all persons earning more than \$7,316 per year ... basically, everyone paying income tax.

Each of these propositions will generate about \$6 billion annually for schools K-12. Prop. 30 also generates additional funding for community and state colleges, and funding for fire and police protection. Prop. 38 adds a provision for early childhood development, but does not provide funding for colleges or fire and police safety.

Hopefully, as least one of the propositions will pass, and if both pass, the proposition with the greatest vote will take effect. But, having both measures on the ballot has the potential of splitting the "yes" vote and allowing the "no" vote to beat down both measures.

If you agree that we cannot allow any more cuts to education, then I urge you to vote "yes" on both propositions, and do not vote against either. An alternative is to vote "yes" on the proposition you prefer, and simply not vote on the other. But most important is that you do not mark a "not" on either proposal.

There are many voters who automatically vote "no" on any tax measure and will vote "no" on both propositions. We cannot afford to split the "yes" vote between the two propositions. If the majority of voters support education, but split the vote between the two propositions, the "no" voters will win and our children and future generations will lose.

Barry Keil, South Lake Tahoe