

Opinion: Prop. 30 is a good thing for LTCC

By Kindred Murillo

As the debate on how to vote on Proposition 30 has raged on, many of us have stayed in the background because it is hard to advocate to our family, friends, colleagues, and neighbors to vote yes on a proposition that has been described as “holding a gun to the voters’ head.” While it is unfortunate that automatic “trigger” cuts have become the preferred method of the Legislature for addressing our state’s budget woes, it also provides an opportunity for us as Californians to be clear on what we value by even more closely linking our voice to our vote.

It is for this reason that it is important to really understand what is at stake. If Proposition 30 fails, the reality is that California K-12 districts, community colleges, and university system will suffer further reductions that will have crippling effects on the education of our youth. These reductions would be on top of the past four years of continued cuts of more than \$800 million for the community college system alone. Most of our educational systems are operating at pre-2007-08 budget levels.



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Further reductions to education, particularly for community

colleges, threaten our ability to maintain access to higher education, and in particular access for small rural communities like ours. Small educational districts are already stretched to the maximum trying to provide a quality education to their local communities. Here at Lake Tahoe Community College we have had to cut classes and reduce staffing over the past four years. This next round of cuts to our budget will force us to cut critical services that will directly impact our students.

Until now we have kept many of the cuts away from services to students because of our commitment to access and student success. This next reduction of almost \$700,000 will begin eroding the critical educational and student support services of our local college that have been essential to not only access, but the success and achievement of our students.

Did you know Lake Tahoe Community College transfers more students to the University of California system than colleges two and three times our size? Did you know that last year we graduated the most students in the 38-year history of LTCC? Not only that, but we issued \$2.5 million in Pell grants to our students and gave out almost \$80,000 in scholarships last year. This is on top of our almost \$10 million payroll and multiple services provided to our local area. We are an integral part of the South Shore community and economy as well as the only public higher education institution in the basin.

Ensuring access to higher education is critical to our local economy and the well being of our local community. As you fill out your ballot, please consider the future of our local community, our state, and our nation; and the importance of educating our current and future generations.

A continued cycle of reductions to education means less opportunity for our children, grandchildren, and their children. This is why I am writing to urge your yes vote on Proposition 30. While I disagree with the way the budget

“trigger cuts” have been focused on education, I am more concerned with the harm to our students, our staff, and our community of further reductions to our K-12 and higher education systems.

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