

“Basic Aid”: A Possibility That Could Reduce Our District’s Budget Woes

By John Kirk, CSM,
AFT 1493 Chief Grievance Officer

Is our district a “basic aid” district? If so, what are the financial implications?

Technically, “basic aid” is a term specific to K-12 districts. The proper term for a community college is a “self-supporting” district.

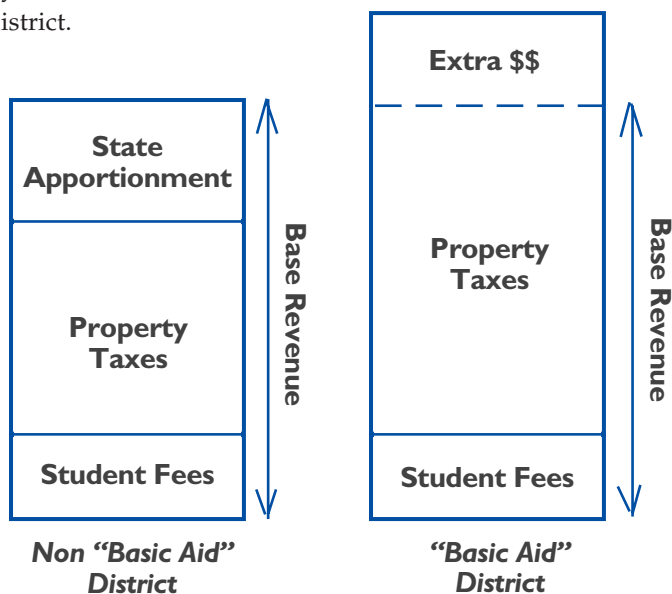
Currently, there are only three community college districts in the state which are self-supporting (Marin, South Orange and Mira Costa). There is a high probability that our district will be the fourth self-supporting community college district in the state beginning in the next fiscal year.

A district becomes self-supporting automatically when its share of local property taxes plus student fees exceeds its base revenue as determined by state formula. “Self-supporting” is another way of saying that the district does not receive any state apportionment money. Most districts are not self-supporting since they receive state apportionment funds to bring their revenue up to the base general revenue (student fees + local property taxes + state apportionment = base revenue).

District could receive an additional \$5-10 million

The advantages of a self-supporting district are that it gets to keep the property tax money which accumulates above the base general revenue, and its revenue does not depend on enrollment. If

we do become self-supporting next year, the district estimates that our revenue will be \$5 to \$10 million above our base revenue limit. That estimate is based on a number of assumptions which may or may not materialize - e.g., assessed valuation in county rises by 5% next year, the governor does not penalize “basic



aid” districts by taking back the extra revenue, etc. But if the estimate turns out to be accurate, then the financial impact for our district of the statewide cuts in community college funding will be less than the \$10 million worst case scenario which the administration is imposing on the three colleges.

On the political front, the governor’s budget proposal treats community colleges and K-12 basic

aid districts differently. The governor has proposed to take away the excess property taxes from the sixty K-12 basic aid districts which would have a devastating effect on many local school districts (including San Mateo and Sequoia high school districts). Recently the Assembly Budget Subcommit-

tee on Education Finance rejected the governor’s proposal. For the community college basic aid districts, the governor proposed to take away \$10 million from the extra or excess property taxes received by those districts. The Senate Budget Subcommittee rejected the governor’s proposal and is developing a proposal of its own. Chancellor Ron

Galatolo and Vice Chancellor Jim Keller recently made a trip to Sacramento to testify before the Senate Budget Subcommittee to attempt to convince the committee members to minimize any cuts to basic aid districts like our own which currently receives less than the state average revenue per student. The next critical stage in this budget battle will occur in mid-May when the governor’s revised budget is published. □

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PRESIDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

District Should Consider More Than Worst-Case Budget Options; Faculty Must Have Real Input in Decisions

by Katharine Harer and Joaquin Rivera,
AFT 1493 Co-Presidents



With only a couple weeks left before the summer break, many of us are looking forward to a chance to renew and refresh ourselves from a busy and particularly stressful semester. The state budget news changes every day and most people who "know" agree that we won't have an approved budget until at least the beginning of September, and possibly later. That was the timeline last year and, of course, this time around the picture is far worse.

Some Encouraging Budget Possibilities

The good news is that our efforts to educate the legislators and the public about the inequity of the cuts to community colleges initially proposed by the Governor are paying off. The "March in March" to Sacramento attended by well over 10,000 students, faculty, staff and family members, including over 600 from our district, the regional protests in Sacramento, Los Angeles, San Diego and elsewhere, the letter and post-card campaigns, advocacy efforts locally and in Sacramento, and some excellent press coverage have brought community colleges to the fore in the discussions in Sacramento. Many insiders say that in the end, the cuts will not be as punishing as the governor originally proposed.

There is also a very good possi-

bility that our district will become a "basic aid" district, one of four districts in the state that could receive a considerable extra boost of funding. (See article on page 1 for more details on "basic aid".)

Thus, as dire as the news and the initial predictions were, there is a good chance that the reductions to our district may not reach the \$10 million level, the figure the District is using as the basis for cuts in staffing and programs for next year.

Budget Planning Needs to Try to Avoid Downward Spirals

Given that fact, the AFT and many other faculty members have begun to ask this question: Why aren't we preparing a Plan B, one that would be based on a less-pessimistic budget possibility? State Academic Senate President, Hoke Simpson, recently counseled faculty that it is "reckless" to make plans for a worst-case scenario without also planning for a less extreme budget reduction. Once programs are cut, transferred or put into suspension, it is difficult and sometimes impossible to reinstate them; once staff are let go or given reduced loads, they are often lost to the district forever; and these kinds of changes can result in low morale, a general state of insecurity and distrust, and permanent damage to the college community. Moreover, the reputation of the district, or an individual college, may suffer in the eyes of community members who counted on being part of a discontinued or transferred program or who had built strong connections with instructors who are no longer teaching those courses. These are complex questions that impinge on

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Presidents' Perspectives

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personnel and human issues as well as on enrollment figures. (For more thoughts on this issue, see the Opinion article on page 6.)

Faculty Must Have More Say in Budget Decisions

The AFT is also very concerned about the *processes* used at each of the colleges to come up with recommendations for reductions. We understand that there are three committees in place at each college that have been working on this. At one of the colleges, the committee's work was regarded as "confidential" and, as a result, the staff of the four programs earmarked for suspension or "hiatus" were not consulted ahead of time and they were notified of the loss of their programs too late to have any involvement in the process. One member stepped off of the committee because of the secretive nature of the process.

There are also problems with staffing and seniority issues that are coming up, and the union is looking into these. In one instance, a program was earmarked to be moved from one campus to another without consulting the new "home" college or the faculty member in charge of it. These are just a few examples of the problems that have surfaced; if you know of things we should be aware of, please contact the union. For all of these reasons, we would like to see a careful evaluation by faculty and staff of the processes used at each college so that improvements can be considered for the future. We need to ensure that real shared governance—including true faculty involvement—is in place in all of the important decision-making regarding our district, college, and departmental budgets. A program discontinuance policy developed by a subcommittee of Skyline's Curriculum Committee that has been endorsed by the Academic Senates at all three colleges and by the AFT Executive

For the latest community college budget information, check out aft1493.org

AFT 1493's award-winning website, at aft1493.org, is regularly updated with the most current and extensive information and links related to the state community college budget situation.

You'll also find lots of other useful information on our site, including contract and salary information and links to a wide range websites of interest to community college faculty.

Committee is an excellent step in this direction. (For details on this proposed policy, see Connie Beringer's article on page 4.)

No Lay-Offs Policy Can Help Build Cooperative Solutions

We do want to commend the District for its "no lay-offs" policy. This is the correct way to approach the problems facing our colleges. This decision helps to motivate all of us to work together to come up with budget solutions that we can live with. There are many possible ways to approach a budget deficit. We would like to reiterate an option employed in the Los Angeles community college district—that administrators take one- to two-week unpaid furloughs as a source of savings. A few faculty members have proposed that we give back our 3% raise for the coming year. The union feels that it is inappropriate to consider that at this time, especially when the budget picture for our district may

New Free Internet and E-Mail Service Available to All District Employees

A new FREE Internet service is now available to all District employees. This new service provides all District employees with Internet access similar to that of PacBell, Earthlink, Juno, etc. To learn more about the service or to sign up for an account, visit this web site:

[<http://www.smccd.net/accounts/helpcenter/dialup/>](http://www.smccd.net/accounts/helpcenter/dialup/)

- Jim Petromilli, Director
Centers for Teaching
and Learning

improve due to the basic aid designation or changes in the amount of cuts from Sacramento. As we continue to look for creative solutions, we will find that there are other ways to save money that don't necessitate taking it out of the pockets of faculty members who are still three-quarters of the way down the list on the Bay 10 salary comparisons.

Finally, please try to attend and let students know about the May 9th march and rally in San Francisco, a regional protest against budget cuts to community colleges being organized by the Bay 10 districts to bring further attention to our cause. The AFT is working with our Associated Student groups to motivate students to attend, and the union is organizing transportation and providing lunches. Please call the AFT at x6491 for details. This time our local will have its own banner that you can walk behind—the San Mateo Community College District will be represented! □

Proposed Program Discontinuance Policy, Endorsed by Academic Senates & AFT, Awaits Board Approval

By Connie Beringer, Skyline College Academic Senate President

In accordance with Title 5, Section 51022, "College districts are required by current regulation and statute to develop a process for program discontinuance and minimum criteria for the discontinuance of occupational programs." To date, the SMCCCD has not adopted a coherent policy of program discontinuance. With draconian budget cuts looming, the three colleges in the District have been asked to look for potential programs to cut for cost-savings. Some programs at each college have already been identified.

Without a coherent policy in place, one which has been developed collegially by all affected parties, the danger of inconsistent, unfair, and inequitable program cuts exists.

A sub-committee of Skyline's Curriculum Committee began its work on formulating a program discontinuance policy last semester as the prospect of severe budget cuts became apparent, and has since come forward with a policy which has been well thought out, widely distributed, and approved by the following groups: curriculum committees/Academic Senate Governing Councils of all three colleges; the District Curriculum Committee, the District Academic Senate, and the AFT Executive Committee.

In addition, the documents have been endorsed by two college presidents, all vice presidents of instruction, and at least one vice president of student services, and discussions are continuing.

The District Academic Senate Governing Council has discussed the proposed document with Chancellor Galatolo, who has invited faculty to the May 14 Board study session to further look at the issue.

The issue of program discontinuance is a complex one requiring the effective participation of several groups in arriving at a policy with the Board. "Because program discontinuance is a curricular, student success, and educational issue, the Board should consult collegially with the Academic Senate in establishing policies and procedures for program discontinuance," states the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges in its 1998 paper, "Program Discontinuance: A Faculty Perspective" (3).

In accordance with Title 5, Section 51023.7 (5), students have the right to effective participation in policies and procedures that will have a significant effect on them. The balance of a college's curriculum is key to student issues of program completion, student equity, and access.

Because discontinuing a program may involve collec-

tive bargaining issues, the involvement of the AFT is critical. Some collective bargaining issues which may arise are adequate notification to affected faculty, availability of retraining for displaced faculty, and Faculty Service Area issues.

The actual study to evaluate a program for improvement or discontinuance takes the following, among other considerations, into account:

- Negative effects on students
- College curriculum balance
- Resources
- District impact
- Community needs

If you have not yet seen the documents (one describes the process; the other is the program evaluation instrument itself), please see your local Senate officers or reps for a copy.

It is the faculty expectation that the proposed policy will win Board approval before the end of this semester so that a faculty-driven, student-centered process is in place to implement program elimination.

The Chancellor and the Board have an opportunity now to adopt a consistent program discontinuance policy which could be a model in the State, as few Districts have developed such policies. □

Senate's Role & Responsibility to Be Set by Delineation of Authority Agreement

The District Academic Senate has been working on a "delineation of authority" agreement with the District that specifies the Senate's role and responsibility in academic and professional matters. The agreement, between the District Governing Board and the Senate, is required by the Education Code and would be consistent with regulations on faculty involvement in participatory governance. A study session with the board on this matter has been set for May 14, with the goal of opening a collegial conversation leading to Board action on the Academic Senate's role and responsibilities.

The Advocate will provide a full report in the first fall issue. □

Union-Senate Committee Develops Proposed Revisions to Faculty Hiring Policies

By Kate Motoyama, CSM

State law provides for “joint agreement” between the academic senate and the governing board in matters pertaining to faculty hiring policies [California Education Code, Section 87360(b)]. Our district worked collegially through a Trust Committee with senate, union, and administrator representatives to craft current, board-approved faculty hiring policies. With the passage of Proposition 209, an anti-affirmative action ballot initiative, and the Third District Court of Appeal’s 2001 ruling [Connerly v. State Personnel Board] that struck down community college statutes addressing affirmative action in employment, faculty hiring policies were revised to ensure that district practices reflect commitment to equal employment opportunity.

A faculty task force, consisting of 3 senate and 3 union appointees, worked over the course of this academic year to come up with recommended revisions to faculty hiring policies. The appointees reported regularly to the academic senate governing councils and union’s executive committee, seeking faculty broad input on proposed revisions. The changes, which strengthen the voice of faculty as discipline experts on search and screening committees, are summarized below:

- Whenever possible, Screening Committee membership is diverse, including, but not limited to, both gender and ethnicity in order to broaden perspectives and to better represent the District commitment to equal opportunity.
- The screening committee chair will always be a faculty member. Later in the process, the faculty chair or designee will participate in reference checks and site visits. The screening committee will have a majority of faculty and at least one discipline expert, preferably more. Screening committee members must include tenured faculty and may include fourth, third, and second year contract experts in the discipline or in a related discipline.
- Screening committee members are encouraged to engage in a full, frank, and complete discussion about each candidate, including sharing first hand information about the candidate that relate to his or her ability to serve as a faculty member.
- Screening committee members will protect and respect confidentiality. The process itself may be discussed among screening committee members or reported to the Academic Senate. The Academic Senate is expected to take action if there are violations of process.
- Screening committee members shall determine, either

in advance or at the end of the interview process, whether candidates should be forwarded ranked or unranked. It may decide to forward one or several candidates.

- Screening committee members are invited to sit in on final interviews with candidates.
- The college president will utilize and communicate a timeline for interviewing all finalists and for making a decision so that candidates will be less likely to accept positions elsewhere or drop out of the process.
- If the screening committee has ranked finalists and the President selects a lower-ranked finalist, the committee must be invited to discuss the issue collaboratively prior to any action being taken. If the screening committee does not rank finalists and the President rejects all finalists, the committee must be invited to discuss the issue collaboratively prior to any action being taken.

In fully exercising the principle of “joint agreement” between the faculty senate and governing board in matters pertaining to faculty hiring policies, the 3 senates and the faculty union’s executive committee have recently endorsed the proposed revisions to faculty hiring policies. The revisions were forwarded to the district on April 11, 2003, so that faculty task force representatives could meet with the administrator and classified task force and receive advice from legal counsel. We have not heard back from the district about a meeting date, so it appears as if our work will carry over into the next academic year. Ultimately, the faculty representatives will carry the recommended revisions to faculty hiring policies with the expectation of opening a conversation, and reaching agreement, with the board or its designee. □

Campus Equity Week to Be Held October 27 - 31

From October 27 through 31, 2003, there will be a week of coordinated activities on campuses in the United States, Canada and Mexico. **Campus Equity Week** – designed to educate our campus communities, the public and policymakers – will focus attention on issues of fairness and quality of education.

Teacher’s working conditions are students’ learning conditions; equal work deserves equal pay. □

Worst-Case Budget Planning is Reckless; District Must Take Shared Governance Seriously in Budget Decisions

by Dan Kaplan, AFT 1493 Executive Secretary

Summer session cancelled at Cañada, CSM proposes putting 4 programs on "hiatus" and the transfer of 4 other programs. Part-time faculty lose jobs as class sections continue to be reduced throughout the district. As dire budget news has come down from the state, our district has begun operating on a worst-case scenario assumption that it will need to cut \$10 million from next year's budget.

Opinion

Although we are certainly facing significant state cuts, it is quite possible that the legislature will make substantial improvements to community college funding before the next state budget is passed. Many believe that the governor's "May Revise" will be much better for community colleges as compared to the governor's original January 10 budget proposal. The huge Sacramento march and rally and the extensive advocacy campaigns that have protested the proposed cuts to community colleges have certainly gotten the attention of both legislators and the governor. Additionally, it is likely that the District will become a "basic aid" —or self-supporting—district in the next fiscal year. If this happens, the District's budget could gain an extra \$5-10 million next year.

"Worst-case" planning jeopardizes curriculum and programs

With all of these possibilities and uncertainties still in play, why would the District construct all of its planning options on only a "worst-case" budget scenario? State Academic Senate President, Hoke Simpson, recently cautioned that it is "reckless" for districts to make their planning for the next fiscal year based solely on "worst case" scenarios. "Worst-case" planning jeopardizes the integrity of colleges' curriculum and programs. Programs that are dropped from the schedule for a couple of semesters will be very hard to bring back. The quality of entire academic programs is put at risk.

Why not a "best-case" scenario as well?

Why not also construct a "best-case" scenario, one based on the District becoming self-supporting and having an additional \$10 million in its possession? If this were to come to pass, then the District's finances would essentially remain status quo when comparing next year's budget with

this year's. It would also make sense to construct a budget that is mid-way between the "worst case" and "best case" scenarios.

Because the District does not seem to have constructed these alternative budget scenarios, what will happen if the District does receive more money than it is now planning in its budget assumptions? Will all four programs now being put on "hiatus" at CSM be brought back? How? These programs will not appear in the Fall schedule of classes. Is there some criteria that has been developed that will be used to determine which programs will be brought back if there isn't enough money in the next budget to bring back all four CSM programs?

Is our district's governance really shared?

Many faculty have recently expressed the view that decisions being made about how to deal with the proposed cuts to the district budget are not employing any real form of shared governance. In many cases, administration has drawn up the agenda that will be discussed, has identified what programs it wants to eliminate, and has then asked the various constituencies for agreement with these plans that appear to have already been made elsewhere.

For shared governance to actually be real requires an active and engaged faculty that is willing and able to get involved in the decision making process on all levels. Shared governance is about changing the relationship of forces between administrators and faculty and classified employees. Shared governance is, in other words, about political power and who has the ability to use this power. Power is not simply about having information communicated from one group to another. It is about how that information is then used, and by whom. Clearly, the decisions about how to cope with the impending cuts to the District's next budget have been made by the only group that has power at this time in this District. And that group does not currently consist of faculty or classified employees. For real shared governance has yet to really become part of the institutional culture in the SMCCCD. The current budget crisis makes this fact abundantly clear for all who have their eyes open to see. □



State Academic Senate Highlights Threats to Public Higher Education

The 2003 Spring Plenary Session of the State Academic Senate was held May 1-3 at the nearby SFO Westin Hotel. The Educational Policies Committee organized three linked breakout sessions on the current threats facing public higher education. All three of the sessions were moderated by Linda Collins, Chair of the Educational Policies Committee.

Corporatization of Public Higher Education

The first breakout session was on "The Corporatization of Public Higher Education". The presenters were Bob Grill of the College of Alameda and AFT Local 1493 Executive Secretary Dan Kaplan. The discussion focused on the corporate model that is now being aggressively promoted throughout public higher education. The session also explored the developing struggles against the privatization of higher education both in the U.S. and internationally.

Increased Use of Contingent Faculty

The second breakout session was on "'Unbundling' The Faculty Role". The presenters were Marcus Harvey of the American Association of University Professors, Alisa Messer of City College of San Francisco, Bernie Seybolt Day of Foothill College, and Chris Storer of DeAnza College. This session focused on the increased use of contingent faculty without tenure or due process protections, and the current wave of class cancellations and faculty layoffs. These trends bring into stark relief the instability of our colleges and the teaching profession itself.

Closing The Door On Open Access

The third breakout session was on "Closing The Door On Open Access". The presenters were Lacy Barnes Mileham of Reedley College and Tracie Marquez, President of the California Student Association of Community Colleges. This session focused on the future of open access to affordable, high-quality higher education for all in California. This was the vision of the 1960 California Master Plan which now appears to be increasingly under attack. The discussion also addressed possible collective responses to this assault on the opportunities of our students.

The quality of the presentations and the discussion that followed at all three of these breakout sessions was outstanding. The crisis now facing public higher education around the state and the nation is not widely known nor well understood and these sessions were one step in the process of increasing public awareness and attempting to address these critical issues. □

CSM AFT Members Meet to Share Concerns, Ideas, Apples

by Madeleine Murphy, CSM

What did you think of the budget process? Do you know what "parity" means, and why it matters? Do you completely understand the terms of your contract? Have you wanted to field suggestions to the AFT leadership, but are not sure how to do so or whether you will get a response? What do you think of "shared governance?" And my god, can anyone make sense of how load is calculated?

These questions – and more – were raised at an informal AFT membership meeting last Tuesday, April 29, at CSM. Co-chairs Teeka James and Yaping Li hosted a get-together in the Faculty Lounge. There was no specific agenda or goal. The purpose was to get faculty involved and informed, and to create yet another avenue of communication between faculty and AFT leadership. Dan Kaplan, John Kirk and Katherine Harer all attended, as well as an assortment of faculty – full-time and adjunct – from across the divisions.

Practical considerations were raised and discussed (faculty members on hiatus are still Union members; parity for adjunct faculty has all kinds of specific budget ramifications; load has long been a thorny point in negotiations). But the meeting also clearly gave members a chance to ask wider questions. What actually is *shared governance*, for instance? Does it have a definition, and should we try to assign one? Also, how should the Union leadership respond to members' suggestions? Should individual member suggestions automatically be put to a general vote, as with the recent proposal for faculty voluntarily to forego the 3% pay raise? Or will this make coherent negotiations and leadership impossible? And what are our concerns for the coming years? We talked about all these things and more, in between eating the apples Teeka and Yaping had brought.

Why hold such a meeting? The AFT already distributes *The Advocate*, holds elections and solicits input on what issues to raise in contract negotiations. But it's easy to lose touch. Numerous issues of *The Advocate* lie unread on desks beneath piles of work; the election ballot often presents faculty members with a choice between three or four virtual strangers. So the more opportunities members have to get together with union reps, to ask questions and raise concerns, the more ownership we can feel in our union. It felt good to have a meeting where we could just ask basic questions and exchange ideas on whatever concerned us. And frankly, it feels pretty good to sit back in a room full of teachers. "This is the only place I feel like I can speak up without being hurt," one of us said. Which is what your union should be. □

KEEP THE DOORS OPEN! MARCH ON MARKET IN MAY Friday, May 9 in San Francisco

*Join the rally and march to protest the unequal budget cuts
to California Community Colleges.*



11 am: Assemble at 5th & Mission (behind the Old Mint)

Directions:

Take BART or Muni to Powell St. Station

Drive to 5th & Mission Parking

For chartered bus or other info, call AFT at: 574-6491

11:15 am: March up Market St. to Civic Center Plaza

Noon - 1 pm: Rally at Civic Center Plaza

Support Needed for SB 921, California's Single-Payer Health Care Bill



On April 30, the California Senate Committee on Insurance passed SB 921, which would establish the California Health Care System, a single payer health insurance system to provide universal health coverage for all Californians.

The Crisis

- 7.3 million Californians have no health insurance. That number is rising because unemployment is up.
- Although the U.S. covers a smaller percentage of our population than most other countries, we pay much more for health care.
- Lack of insurance is the seventh leading cause of death in the U.S.
- The World Health Organization ranks the U.S. 37th in health care performance worldwide
- Most insured Californians do not have enough coverage and often have to pay out of pocket.
- Benefits packages and choices are shrinking
- High medical bills cause half of all personal bankruptcies in the U.S.
- Individuals with pre-existing conditions are often denied coverage.
- Employees often lose access to their provider when they change jobs.

The Solution

The **Health Care for All Californians** bill, S.B. 921, provides health care for all Californians — while bringing costs under control.

Health Care for All Californians creates a simple claims and payments system, with one clear set of rules, reducing administrative costs. Overhead costs consume 20 - 30% of health care costs now, but will be less than 5% under S.B. 921.

Health Care for All Californians increases consumer choice by allowing everyone to choose their care provider. Californians will no longer be stuck with a small list of "approved" doctors.

Health Care for All Californians will bring cost saving through bulk buying. A statewide fund will give California the power to negotiate reduced rates on the price of services, pharmaceuticals, and medical equipment.

Health Care for All Californians ensures that everyone can get primary care and preventive care. We save money when we can use our emergency rooms only for real emergencies.

Support the **Health Care for All Californians** campaign.

For more information call: (888) 442-4255

www.healthcareforall.org