



Greetings!

For advocates of local children and youth funds, it was a year of daring, learning and re-commitment.

DARING

After years of work, 4 coalitions in our state took the leap and successfully had children's fund measures placed on their local ballots. And a 5th group collected sufficient signatures to place a measure on a future ballot. Make no mistake, this was a big deal - the first time in 20 years that a new children's fund appeared on a local ballot in California. It took a lot of work, political and community engagement, and initiative to get that far. While the measures did not win in the end, in all cases they reflected excellent public policy and received significant and broad-based voter support - enough to add momentum to the goal of ultimately having a fund. The campaigns, run by dedicated coalitions of children's advocates, were unprecedented opportunities to educate the public.



LEARNING

The 5 campaigns tested many strategies and excelled at many things. The results are described in the column to the right. The analysis of what we learned is continuing, but some early lessons about improvements needed include:



- Community based organizations serving children and youth are the core of our campaigns. Yet, they are not prepared for the type of policy and political work required.
- Inadequate funds for a campaign posed a major barrier. As opposed to some other issues such as school bonds and road construction, we have not yet found any natural moneyed constituents who can fund campaigns at a high enough level.
- A 2/3 vote for children's funds is an overwhelming barrier for now, thus requiring the development of additional strategies for generating new revenue through measures only requiring a plurality.
- Sufficient time and resources must be spent building a broad base before attempting a ballot measure.
- Signature gathering cannot be done just through volunteers - funds for paid signature gatherers must be factored into the budget for this approach to work.
- There are powerful arguments against both set-asides and targeted funding streams that must be effectively refuted.

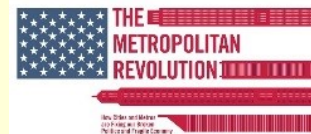
RE-COMMITMENT

A Funding the Next Generation post-election strategy meeting with campaign leaders, elected officials, consultants and advisers ended with hope and excitement about the future. GIVING UP IS SIMPLY NOT AN OPTION..



- All four campaigns are moving forward with a Plan B. Some ideas under consideration:
 - Identifying a city in the county that did pass the children's fund - and planning a city, rather than a county fund.
 - Creating an office of children and youth at the city and/or county level so there is an infrastructure to do the planning and preparation for a new fund to be on the ballot at a future time.
 - Starting legislatively with the creation of a fund within local budget constraints, prior to going back to the ballot. Both ideas are underway in Sacramento where an ordinance to establish a Department of Youth and a Children's Fund through a set-aside is pending.
 - Developing a strong partnership with the advocates of a related issue, such as parks, and considering a joint campaign and joint tax measure.

THE NEW LOCALISM



The country's most prominent think tank, the Brookings Institution, just started singing our song. Bruce Katz, Brookings Centennial Scholar, co-convened a meeting with Elizabeth Gaines, of the Forum for Youth Investment, on December 8 on the potential of local children's funds. Katz's seminal book, *The Metropolitan Revolution*, laid out the thesis that cities have become the hubs of innovative, ambitious and collaborative problem-solving. As one of the presenters at the meeting, I concurred that in the "era of Trump," this is more true than ever and must be applied to funding services for children, youth and their families. [Governing Magazine featured the meeting.](#)

Children's funding measures had success in some other parts of the country this election period. [Elizabeth Gaines did an excellent summary linked here.](#) Although most places are not saddled with California's very constraining tax and election laws, this is a big reason for hope.

FIVE CAMPAIGNS: WHAT HAPPENED?

Sacramento - A tax on medical marijuana dispensaries, placed on the ballot by the City Council in June, needed a 2/3 vote and received an excruciatingly close 65/8%.

ONE REASON WHY: Opponents, including the Sac Bee, successfully made the case that this was "ballot box budgeting" and therefore limited the flexibility of the City Council.

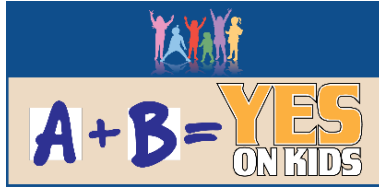
Napa - A sales tax, placed on the ballot in June by the Board of Supervisors, which would fund both children's services and the rebuilding of the county jail (destroyed in the earth quake) received 45% of the vote.

ONE REASON WHY: Weird juxtaposition of beneficiaries of tax revenues turned off some voters.

Solano - Two measures (A and B) were placed on the November ballot by the Solano Board of Supervisors - a general sales tax and an advisory measure to spend the tax on a Children's Fund. Both needed to pass with a majority vote - the tax received 46% Yes; the advisory measure received 59% Yes.

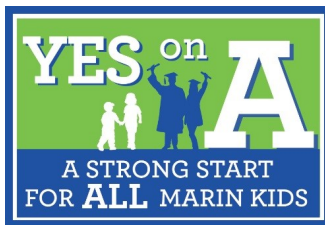
ONE REASON WHY: Two measures confused the voters,

- Engaging in vigorous budget advocacy with the county Board of Supervisors to increase annual funding for children and youth services, prior to returning to the ballot.
- The loose network of FUNDING THE NEXT GENERATION participants agreed to begin acting more as a unified force. A collective agenda for action was laid out, including:
 - Researching new revenue ideas, such as taxes on soda and the cultivation, manufacturing and/or selling of marijuana - with a focus on ideas that can be implemented with a plurality of voters, rather than 2/3.
 - Working with state legislators to create enabling regulations or legislation that would expand the options available to counties, including how measures can be placed on the ballot and incentives to local jurisdictions.
 - Training CBO's on their rights and responsibilities, and the skills involved in becoming more politically active - including endorsements, donating money, and working directly on issue campaigns.
 - Building alliances, such as those with labor, at a regional or statewide level so the alliances can benefit multiple communities and campaigns.
 - Working with community foundations to encourage financial support for local campaigns - because it's legal.



ONWARD:

Channeling the philosophy of the "The New Localism," we move forward - with multiple measures in the pipeline throughout the state, a determination to learn from the past, a willingness to keep trying, and a belief that we continue to be doing the right thing, in the right place, at the right time. Meanwhile, rest up over the holidays. Next year will take a lot of energy!



JOIN THE MOVEMENT: If you are interested in working on a funding measure in your city or county, contact me (see below).

If you want to learn more about Funding the Next Generation and explore your community's potential for a dedicated public funding stream for children, youth and families, contact:

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believing approval of the advisory measure was sufficient to get the fund - it's not, both were needed.

Marin - The Marin Board of Supervisors placed a special sales tax on the ballot to create a Children's Fund. The measure needed a 2/3 vote and received 63%.
 ONE REASON WHY: Very visible opposition from a campaign that was not legally registered (led by the local anti-tax association) confused voters with the untrue message that the measure would increase housing density.

Richmond - The Richmond Invest in Youth Coalition, led a successful signature drive gathering 9000 signatures for the Richmond Fund for Kids. Time ran out for November, but the measure qualifies for the June, 2018 ballot.
 ONE REASON WHY THE POSTPONEMENT: Signature gathering was much harder than anticipated.

Funding the Next Generation

The nation's first initiative to help communities develop local public funding streams for children, youth and families.

Project Sponsor

San Francisco State University
 School of Health and Social Sciences

Collaborating Partners

- California Child Care Resource and Referral Network
- California Network of Family Strengthening Networks
 - Children Now
 - 50 + 1 Strategies
- Center for Juvenile and Criminal Justice
- First 5 Association of California
 - FM3 Research
- Partnership for Children and Youth
 - Prevent Child Abuse California
- Public Administration Program S.F. State University
- Social Change Partners LLC
- The Children's Partnership
- Youth Leadership Institute

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