



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 10, 2012

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**Fate of CA Budget in Hands of Voters: Should Voters Approve Tax Hikes?  
Or, Are Slate of Proposed Spending Cuts the Way to Go?**

*Updated online tool allows voters to tell lawmakers how they'd balance the budget*

(San Francisco) The Governor has signed the state's budget, but the final word on this year's budget actually lies with the voters—not lawmakers this year. Voters will decide through a November ballot initiative whether to raise \$8.5 billion through increases to the state's income tax for California's highest earners and the sales tax. If that initiative fails at the polls, it will trigger cuts to schools and other programs to fill the gap.

[Next 10's](http://www.budgetchallenge.org) online California Budget Challenge ([www.budgetchallenge.org](http://www.budgetchallenge.org)) has just been updated so that Californians can tell state leaders in advance of the November election how they feel this final budget question should be answered. Users can learn about and choose from all the different tax proposals that will be on the November ballot, along with some other initiatives that could also impact the budget. The Challenge, an online nonpartisan budget simulator that allows users to create their own California budget, lets users share their results via interactive social networking features or email. Users can connect with top state leaders using these interactive features.

"California voters rarely have this much power when it comes to shaping the future of our state," Noel Perry, founder of the nonpartisan group, Next 10. "Voters often find themselves on the outside looking in when it comes to the budget debate. But, this year, voters will cast the deciding votes on the budget."

Since it first launched eight years ago, more than 300,000 Californians have visited [www.budgetchallenge.org](http://www.budgetchallenge.org) to "take the Challenge" -- in college classrooms, at civic group events, and in the privacy of their own homes. This update gives users the most up-to-date facts and figures and lets users determine how they would have solved the \$15.7 billion deficit lawmakers had to tackle.

**Bloggers:**

**Need a colorful graphic/button to link to the new California Budget Challenge online?** Contact Roxanna Smith at 323.466.2491

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Media interviews with Noel Perry of Next 10 may be arranged by contacting Cater Communications at 323.466.2491



*Next 10 is an independent, nonpartisan organization focused on innovation and the intersection of the economy, the environment, and quality of life issues for all Californians. Next 10 funds research by leading experts on complex state issues.*