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NEW FISCAL YEAR = UPDATED ONLINE BUDGET BALANCING GAME

Next 10 CA Budget Challenge lets users decide how the 2014-15 budget is spent, including programs for preschool, higher education, eliminating debt & expanding the rainy day fund

SAN FRANCISCO – As California’s fiscal year begins, Next 10 (www.Next10.org) is releasing its newly updated version of the California Budget Challenge (www.budgetchallenge.org), which reflects the past months of hearings and political debate in the Capitol by including the major budget choices lawmakers recently faced.

Governor Jerry Brown signed California’s \$156.3 billion budget on June 20th for the 2014-15 fiscal year, which begins today. Unlike in years past when the state was grappling with a budget crisis, this year’s budget is balanced with a reserve. There were still important decisions to be made – including about how quickly to pay off the state’s \$28 billion budget debt and what level of funding to provide state programs, especially those cut the most during recessionary times.

The nonpartisan online California Budget Challenge gives users a flavor for some of the tough choices lawmakers considered while crafting the state budget, including:

- Funding the high-speed rail project
- Phasing in transitional kindergarten for low-income students
- Increasing CalWORKs grants
- Creating a rainy day fund for the state

“After many years California has turned the tide in terms of deficits. However, the state still has budget debt to pay off along with substantial unfunded liabilities to consider when it comes to setting long term priorities,” said F. Noel Perry, founder of the nonpartisan Next 10.

The online tool, used by more than 350,000 Californians, guides users through dozens of spending and revenue policy choices. Users can engage directly with lawmakers about their budget priorities by clicking the “Take Action” button on any policy option.

Bloggers:

Need a colorful graphic/button to link to the new California Budget Challenge online? Contact Roxanna Smith at 415.453.0430.

Media interviews with Noel Perry and Sarah Henry of Next 10 may be arranged by



contacting Cater Communications at 415.453.0430 (main office).

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.