



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Next 10's "California Budget Challenge" Turns 10

UC funding, social services, tax structure, infrastructure needs at center of budget debate

SAN FRANCISCO – 3.31.15 – Ten years ago, on April 5, 2005, [Next 10](#) launched the state's first-of-its-kind online California Budget Challenge (www.budgetchallenge.org), and challenged 10,000 Californians to balance the fiscal books for the largest state in America.

"The Budget Challenge has educated more than 500,000 Californians about issues critical to our government and its citizens. On our ten year anniversary, we are once again challenging 10,000 Californians to take the Budget Challenge this April," stated F. Noel Perry, businessman and founder of the nonpartisan nonprofit Next 10.

While a lot has changed in the ten years since the Challenge went live, the tool remains the most comprehensive online budget-balancing game available, putting Californians in the position of lawmakers crafting the state's budget.

"Policies that can have potentially billion dollar impacts on the state can seem removed from the everyday lives of my students. The nonpartisan Budget Challenge helps them understand the real-life impacts budget decisions have on everything from their college prospects to their future tax liabilities," stated Dawna Linsdell, economics teacher at Gunn High School in Palo Alto. Linsdell has used the Challenge as a teaching tool for the past eight years.

Budget Challenge users can log on and decide how to allocate California's \$113 billion General Fund budget, and make choices that affect us all – from how to fund our K-12 schools, to what level of social services to provide, to what tax structure is best.

The [California Budget Challenge](#) opens with a surplus of \$800 million for the 2015-16 fiscal year. Policy choices revolve around funding levels for state programs, and the long-term impacts of the decisions we make. The tool gives users the power to make the tough calls on budget choices that are now making headlines including:

- Funding levels for the UC system (which is calling for increased state funding to avoid tuition increases);
- Funding levels for human service programs (which saw deep cuts during the budget crisis that stemmed from the recession);
- Funding levels for our distressed roads and infrastructure;
- When and how funding should begin to resolve the hundreds of billions of dollars in unfunded state employee pension and healthcare costs;
- How to address the approaching expiration of Proposition 30.



The California Budget Challenge presents these choices and lets users tackle them head on. Users can connect directly to lawmakers, as well as friends and family and send them their version of the budget.

Take the Next 10 challenge and be one of 10,000 Californians to log into the updated [Budget Challenge](#) in April and decide what choices you think are best for the state's future. Once 10,000 new users take the Challenge, Next 10 will share the results – and you can see just how you compare to your fellow Californians.

About Next 10

Next 10 (www.Next10.org) is an independent, nonpartisan organization that educates, engages and empowers Californians to improve the state's future. With a focus on the intersection between the economy, the environment, and quality of life, Next 10 employs research from leading experts on complex state issues and creates a portfolio of nonpartisan educational materials to foster a deeper understanding of the critical issues affecting our state.

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