



## Local Government Summit on State Governance and Fiscal Reform

### FAQ

#### **What is the purpose of the summit?**

The Summit's purpose is to reinvigorate California's system of governance and restore efficiency, transparency and accountability. Local government is closest to the people and that is why "Rebuilding California – From the Ground Up" begins with local governments.

Our goal is to develop reform measures and strategies that provide greater autonomy, flexibility and fiscal tools to local governments. Solutions are needed to address the state's chronic problems, including deficits, late budgets and an inability to deal with critical issues such as water, energy, education and health services. City, county and school officials are encouraged by the growing interest in reforming the state's governance and fiscal systems and we strongly support thoughtful and substantial reforms.

This should be done by restoring a greater degree of local control over programs, taxation and spending decisions. This summit will serve to explore reform measures and consider options that best meet the needs of our constituents.

#### **Why are local governments a good fit to lead this effort?**

Voters on May 19 stood up and told state lawmakers that even though they knew it would lead to more financial hardship for the state, they weren't going to vote for Propositions 1A-1E. So frustrated are voters that they'd rather see the system break down than go along with a "fix" that was presented by the state that they didn't trust and didn't believe in. Local governments on the other hand have retained voter trust and are an excellent starting point for the rebuilding that needs to take place in this state.

#### **Who is hosting the summit?**

The Cities Counties Schools (CCS) Partnership will host the summit. Established in 1997, the CCS Partnership is a joint effort of the League of California Cities, California State Association of Counties (CSAC) and California School Boards Association (CSBA). The Partnership promotes the development of public policies that build and preserve communities by encouraging local collaborative efforts among California's 480 cities, 58 counties and more than 1,000 school districts and county offices of education.

#### **Where will the summit happen?**

The summit is being held July 17-18 at the Hyatt Regency Sacramento.

#### **Who is attending?**

City council members, county supervisors and school board members. We anticipate 400 - 500 participants, representing California's 7,930 local elected officials.

### **What will be accomplished?**

Summit participants will explore a wide array of reform options and tackle the topics that most affect the state-local relationship. The summit will include both keynote speakers and a small-group breakout session where participants will consider these issues.

The summit is expected to discuss topics including:

- Consider Protection of Local Revenue Sources. The state should not be able to divert or borrow local tax revenues to fund state programs or state mandated services.
- Consider Changing Requirements for Approval of Local Taxes. Reform options should include approving local taxes with less than 2/3 vote and/or authorizing local elected governing bodies to approve increases in local taxes.
- Control of Measurable Outcomes in State Funding of Locally Delivered Services. When local agencies administer state programs and mandates with state funds, local agencies should be held accountable for the measurable outcomes and given extensive administrative flexibility over the means and methods chosen by local leaders to achieve those outcomes.
- Modernize State Budgeting. Consider instituting performance-based budgeting, requiring new funding for new mandates, requiring new funding sources for statewide ballot measures that impose new obligations on local agencies, changing the 2/3 vote to approve a state budget.
- Organization of the State Legislature. Consider reforming term limits for members of the legislature, such as extending the length of service, instituting open primaries, and/or shortening the legislative sessions to allow more time in districts.

### **What will the summit produce?**

We hope our input on the reform measures and options we consider will provide an outline for the next steps in reforming the state's governance and fiscal system. How reform will happen – whether by an initiative process, legislation or a Constitutional Convention – is not known at this point. But we want city, county and school officials to have a say in that process.

It took years for us to get where we are and it will take time to undo the state's dysfunction. We don't expect to have all the answers after just a day-and-a-half summit but we do expect to have some starting points to help us on the road to reform and restoring a greater degree of local control over services, taxation and spending decisions.

Cities, counties and schools have a long history of working across party lines. Our offices are elected through non-partisan races. We are seeking to reinstate our communities and constituents into the state governance process by bringing many of the decisions to the local level, where service needs and funding requirements can be determined best.

### **So what are some concrete next steps after the summit? What is the long-term plan?**

We will be carefully analyzing the information that comes from the summit to determine a plan of action for the changes local government deems most necessary. Each of the associations will decide how best to proceed in their jurisdictions and the CCS Partnership will develop an overall

plan. The partnership will continue to insist political figures take responsibility and fix our broken system. There will be an ongoing campaign to educate the public and build support for the changes we seek. We are calling that ongoing campaign “Rebuilding California – From the Ground Up.”

**Are Legislators participating in the summit?**

Legislators are aware of the summit and some have shown interest in our efforts. This summit is a forum for local elected officials, who likely will share ideas from the summit with their legislative delegations.

**Is this the first step in calling for a Constitutional Convention? Will you be calling for a Constitutional Convention?**

We hope to provide principles and a framework for matters that should be taken up at a Constitutional Convention. Summit participants will hear about and discuss the idea of a Constitutional Convention and other processes that can be used to make the necessary changes to bring balance to the state/local relationship.

**California Forward and Bay Area Council have been talking about reform and a convention for months; why not just join their efforts?**

While we respect the work both those groups are undertaking, local elected officials need to have a forum to voice what is best for our communities and the people we serve. City, county and school officials have direct contact with constituents every day – at board meetings, in the grocery store, at community events. We know what our constituents’ needs are, what services they most rely upon and the daily challenges they face.

Much of the discussions about reforming state government call for a reevaluation of the state-local relationship. It only makes sense for our 7,930 local elected leaders to be prominent in those discussions and to lead the way toward genuine reform.

**Has a summit like this ever taken place before?**

There has never been a California summit by and for local elected officials aimed at creating a framework for change in the state /local relationship and in how governance and finance work. This summit is an historic event and opportunity for local government and the communities it serves to make an impact on the future of California.

**Where can I get more information about the summit?**

The CCS Partnership Web site has information about the summit including how to register, an agenda and background information on topics that will be discussed July 17 and 18. The CCS Partnership Web site will be the source of information about summit results and action plans. Visit [www.ccspartnership.org](http://www.ccspartnership.org)