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Skinner to Host CA Budget Challenge in Orinda

By Andrea A. Firth



Assemblymember Nancy Skinner hosting a Budget Challenge Seminar last year. Photo provided

"Help me balance the state's budget," reads a line in bold print at the center of the homepage for the website of District 14

Assemblymember Nancy Skinner. A tough task to tackle for the most seasoned California politician, Skinner and legislators across the State have been working with the nonpartisan organization Next 10 to provide voters with a mechanism to do just that-it's called the California Budget Challenge. Voters are asked to weigh in on how much the state spends on schools, prisons, the environment, and other programs, and how to pay for it all.

On Thursday, May 27th, Skinner and Next 10 will host the California Budget Challenge in the Orinda Library Auditorium starting at 6:00 p. m. The Budget Challenge is an interactive presentation in which participants vote, using instant-response clickers, on some of the possible choices being considered to balance the state budget and reduce the starting deficit of \$18.4 billion. Results of the audience vote are displayed immediately on screen, and throughout the evening participants will be able to ask questions and share their viewpoints. Rather than listening to a political speech about the state's financial crisis, attendees actively provide feedback on how they believe the budget should be allocated. Individuals who cannot attend the Next 10 event can take the Budget Challenge online.

Next 10 has facilitated over 30 events across the state and over 13,000 users have gone online to take the Budget Challenge. Skinner held three events in her District last year, in Emeryville, Oakland, and Pleasant Hill, and she has three scheduled for this month Richmond, Albany, and Orinda. The event will begin with Skinner giving a welcome as well as an overview of the current budget situation in Sacramento.

"I am concerned about how our economic crisis is affecting families, businesses, folks looking for work, and those that depend on State services," states Skinner. "I appreciate my constituents help as the decisions I have to make to balance the State's budget will not be easy."

The California Budget Challenge will be held on Thursday, May 27th from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. in the Library Auditorium, 26 Orinda Way, Orinda. For more information or to take the Budget Challenge online go to <http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/a14/>.

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