

★ ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF PROPOSITION 1E ★

When voters approved Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act, to provide community mental health services in California, it was one of my proudest achievements. Since the Mental Health Services Act was enacted in 2004, we have helped hundreds of thousands of people who have suffered from untreated and severe mental illness regain lives of meaning and dignity.

As the co-author of Proposition 63, I support diverting funds from the Mental Health Services Act only as a last resort to help balance the state budget this year. California faces an unprecedented \$42 billion budget deficit. Solving a budget crisis of this magnitude has been painful and difficult. Everyone has had to give something. But as a collective we must all share in the sacrifice to help put California back on track.

Proposition 1E will save the state's General Fund over \$225 million in 2009–10 and up to \$234 million in 2010–11 by redirecting funds from the Mental Health Services Act account to the state's Early and Periodic, Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) program for the next two years. Children served under the EPSDT program will continue to receive specialized care for their complex mental health needs.

While the services provided in the EPSDT program are consistent with the approach of Proposition 63, make no mistake about what we are doing here. We are diverting money from the Mental Health Services Act to help reduce the magnitude of cuts that would otherwise have occurred in other state funded programs.

When Proposition 63 was enacted in 2004, voters

overwhelmingly approved a 1% income tax on individuals with incomes over \$1 million. The success of Proposition 63 has saved the state hundreds of millions of dollars in unnecessary hospital and prison costs and reversed decades of neglect for people living with mental illness.

Nonetheless, delays in getting new programs started have resulted in \$2.5 billion sitting in state coffers. This is more than is needed to fund current services. While in the long run this money is probably best spent on Proposition 63 programs, we cannot afford to only do that right now. And although this shift will reduce the availability of services in the future, we need this funding now to avoid even deeper cuts in other vital state services.

This is a one-time redirection of funds at a time when we face an economic crisis like we have never seen before. This should not be a precedent for diverting Proposition 63 funds in the future. We need every dollar to end the neglect of people living with mental illness.

The focus now is on finishing our work to close the budget gap. By voting yes on Proposition 1E, California can continue to provide critical mental health services to vulnerable children. It's the right thing to do for those who need us most. *Please vote Yes on Proposition 1E.*

SENATE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE DARRELL STEINBERG
Co-Author, Proposition 63

★ REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT IN FAVOR OF PROPOSITION 1E ★

California's \$42 billion deficit is unprecedented. Closing a gap of this magnitude has resulted in difficult and painful choices for everyone.

While I respect the decisions that our legislative leaders have had to make, I don't agree that we should pass Proposition 1E to temporarily divert funds from Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act.

The amount of money this measure transfers to the state general fund is a small fraction of the state budget. On the other hand, the Mental Health Services Act, in many cases, provides the only meaningful source of help for our most vulnerable citizens.

Many children are benefiting from early intervention and treatment. It is bringing hope to families who have a member suffering from a severe mental illness.

Even more vital is the funding for prevention and early intervention that is providing opportunities to

avoid the failures of our past. This will save money for hospitals and healthcare, and in the end help balance the state budget.

We shouldn't take money from the Mental Health Services Act that was approved by the voters. These programs are helping hundreds of thousands of people living with mental illness in our community. To take away the funding would put this progress at risk.

We can end the tragedies of kids failing in school, prevent homelessness, and change lives for the better. Let's keep Proposition 63 funding in place, for our children and for our future.

Please vote NO on Proposition 1E.

LOU CORREA, State Senator

★ ARGUMENT AGAINST PROPOSITION 1E ★

Five years ago, California voters made the decision to invest in our public mental health system. Through the Mental Health Services Act, Proposition 63, Californians were clear in their commitment to expand community mental health services. Following forty years of neglecting the mentally ill, in 2004 voters turned a new page and passed Proposition 63 and thereby began to rebuild California's public mental health system. Even in this difficult time, we ought to respect the will of the people.

The Mental Health Services Act is changing lives. More than 200,000 people have received mental health services. Among those, nearly 20,000 children, youth, adults, and older adults are getting the proper help—medication, therapy, housing and transportation—for them to recover from severe mental illness. Nearly 40 percent of these individuals had at least one emergency room visit before they enrolled in the Mental Health Services Act program. After they participated in Mental Health Services Act programs, fewer than 10 percent visited the emergency room.

These Mental Health Services Act programs are saving the state valuable resources by reducing pressure on our overburdened jails and prisons. People who

have received Mental Health Services Act services are much more likely to receive treatment and not be incarcerated. Additionally, these programs have been shown to reduce homelessness, hospitalization, out-of-home placements, and school failures, further providing relief to strapped counties, school districts and hospitals.

Additionally, the Mental Health Services Act will reduce the need for future mental health services through early intervention and treatment. In California, 50,000 are children experiencing early symptoms of mental illness. The Mental Health Services Act emphasis on early intervention and treatment will help these children before their symptoms become debilitating.

Shifting Mental Health Services Act funds away from these programs will impede us from serving even more people. I recognize how difficult the current fiscal climate is. However, Mental Health Services Act programs are working and save the state money. We need to preserve programs that are effective and respect the will of the people. Please vote no on Proposition 1E.

LOU CORREA, State Senator

★ REBUTTAL TO ARGUMENT AGAINST PROPOSITION 1E ★

The opponents of Proposition 1E say that Proposition 63, the Mental Health Services Act, is providing essential and effective services for hundreds of thousands of people living with mental illness who weren't receiving treatment before. I agree. The Mental Health Services Act is changing lives as we rebuild our public mental health system in California.

But we are facing an unprecedented crisis in California—a \$42 billion budget shortfall, a deficit like we have never seen before. We have made painful cuts to education, colleges, health care and transportation as well as programs that serve seniors and families who need our help most. There are no easy choices.

Proposition 1E will redirect funds from the Mental Health Services Act to the state's Early and Periodic,

Screening, Diagnosis and Treatment (EPSDT) program, which provides mental health services to children, for the next two years. This will not reduce the level of Mental Health Services Act services currently being provided.

The diversion of funds from Proposition 63 should never happen again. But solving a budget crisis of this magnitude has required that we all sacrifice for the collective good. Voting yes on Proposition 1E protects kids and ensures that our most vulnerable Californians will continue to receive critical services. Yes on Proposition 1E.

SENATE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE DARRELL STEINBERG
Co-Author, Proposition 63