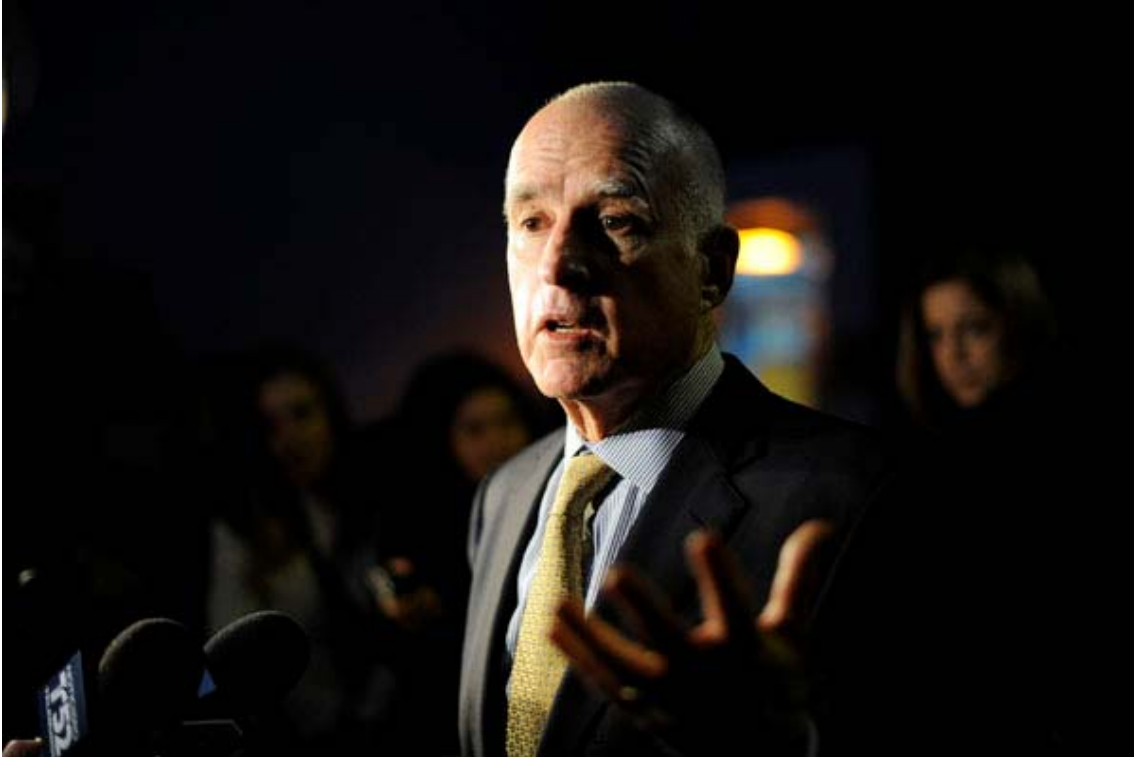


## Gov. Jerry Brown pitches new taxes, budget cuts at City Hall, Burbank

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Gov. Jerry Brown speaks to the media outside of Bret Harte Elementary School in Burbank Wednesday, January 18, 2012. (Hans Gutknecht/Staff Photographer) (Hans Gutknecht)

After delivering his annual State of the State address in Sacramento Wednesday morning, Gov. Jerry Brown took his show on the road, flying to Los Angeles to make his pitch for new taxes and sharp budget cuts to local politicians and teachers.

Brown delivered a version of his speech at Los Angeles City Hall and then headed to Burbank to meet privately with teachers and administrators.

While most local leaders are wary of Brown's plan for severe spending reductions and elimination of community redevelopment agencies, some offered support for other proposals, like a \$100 billion high-speed rail line from Sacramento to San Diego.

"This is federal money that puts people back to work," City Councilman Eric Garcetti said. "What's the downside? Voters voted for this."

County Supervisor Michael Antonovich criticized the governor for seeking more tax increases and urged him to instead seek major structural changes such as civil service reform.

"Threatening voters with draconian cuts in public safety and education if they don't approve his tax increases is a typical scare tactic used by bully politicians who have failed to initiate reforms and improve government efficiency," Antonovich said in a written statement.

"The governor fails to recognize that when you have a dead horse, you need a new horse – not a new saddle," he added.

But Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky sided with Brown's plan.

"I think the governor's being practical and pragmatic about how to close the state's deficit," Yaroslavsky said. "In the broadest possible terms, that's the responsible way to approach it."

During his 30-minute City Hall speech, Brown also pitched pension reform legislation, a plan that drew praise from City Controller Wendy Greuel.

"I always appreciate his frank and honest assessment of where California is, and where it's going, Gueuel said.

Councilmen Paul Koretz and Bill Rosendahl pushed Brown on two issues of particular importance to Los Angeles: Adult day health care and redevelopment.

Last year, Brown released a plan to transition the 35,000 clients of California's 300 adult day care centers into managed health care programs. More than half of the state's adult day health care centers are located in Los Angeles, and dozens are in the San Fernando Valley.

Defending his decision on the adult day health care costs, Brown pointed to abuses in the system.

"When the government opens a pot of money, there are sophisticated people who want to get in front of that money stream," he said.

Koretz urged Brown to pass legislation to delay dissolution of the state's 400 redevelopment agencies. A new bill by state Sen. Alex Padilla, D-Pacoima, would extend the deadline for the dissolution by two months to April 1.

Delaying the dissolution would cause fewer lawsuits and less havoc, Koretz told the governor.

But Brown was blunt in his reply.

"I don't think we can delay this issue," Brown said, outlining his criticisms of redevelopment.

"Don't worry about lawsuits," Brown added, "We're sued every day."



Gov. Jerry Brown speaks to the media outside of Bret Harte Elementary School in Burbank Wednesday, January 18, 2012. (Hans Gutknecht/Staff Photographer) (Hans Gutknecht)

The Democratic governor later met privately for about an hour with teachers and administrators from the Burbank Unified School District to reiterate his hope that voters will approve a half-cent sales tax and an income tax on wealthy wage-earners to fill a \$4.8 billion hole in the state budget for education.

The educators expressed concerns about drastic cuts to the classroom if his ballot initiative fails in November.

"He was a really good listener," said David Kemp, a three-term member of the Burbank school board. "He told us the key to the future of schools is getting the tax initiative passed, and that it's a whole different ballgame if it doesn't."

Burbank Superintendent Stan Carrizosa said the 15,000-student district will take a hit of about \$5 million if the tax package fails, forcing drastic cuts in its \$120 million budget.

But that would pale compared with the situation in Los Angeles Unified, which already has a deficit of \$543 million for the new school year and could lose an additional \$278 million if the tax initiative fails.

That has prompted LAUSD Superintendent John Deasy to propose a \$270-a-year parcel tax for the November ballot.

During a brief news conference, Brown was surprised to learn about Deasy's plan to put the tax measure on the same ballot as his initiative. He intentionally suggested that the LAUSD measure be put on the municipal ballot in June, then amended his comment to say he would call Deasy to "collaborate" on a plan.

Contacted last Wednesday, Deasy said he would "take all the collaboration I can for LAUSD."

Earlier in the day, Deasy released a statement underlining the need for additional funding for K-12 education.

"Our current reality is that this Great Recession has hit our students' education in extreme ways without the proper protection from the state," Deasy said. "I look forward to taxpayers sharing our concern and commitment that our children deserve the educational experience we had and no less. It is time for our state to invest in our children no matter their ZIP code or circumstance."

Staff Writer Christina Villacorte contributed to this report.

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