

Chamber of Commerce Board Backs School Tax Override

An override tax for Torrance schools won unanimous endorsement of the Torrance Chamber of Commerce board of directors, according to J. H. Paget, president.

After studying a formal presentation of school financial problems, the board officially endorsed the tax override, which will be presented to the voters Oct. 11.

School Superintendent J. H. Hull and S. E. Waldrup, assistant superintendent, made the presentation.

In endorsing the override, the chamber joined the Torrance Industries Tax Committee and the PTA in backing the measure.

If passed by the voters, the override tax would become effective in 1961-62, Paget said.

Dr. Hull told the civic leaders there are five basic reasons why more money is needed:

1. Inflation has increased the costs of everything.
2. Increased enrollment has continued each year in Torrance. This means a proportionate increase in the number of schools, teachers, other

employees, and equipment.

3. Average age of the school children is increasing, with a much larger number of high-school students. The average cost of educating a high-school student is about \$200 higher than the average cost of educating an elementary pupil.

4. Construction of new homes seems to be continuing at a record rate in Torrance. However, taxes paid by the average homeowner do not pay for educating one child, with industry contributing about 54% of the total.

5. The proportion of state aid has been decreasing as the total volume of money increases. In 1956-57, state aid provided 56% of the total budget, while next year it will provide only 42%. This means a 14% higher figure to be financed through local taxes.

Dr. Hull said enrollment has increased from 2000 to 25,000 during the past 13 years and in a like period in the future probably will increase to some 40,000. A total of 27 entirely new school plants have been built in the past 10 years.

Torrance costs per pupil have averaged about \$50 less than the county in recent years, but will increase as the district gets older, Hull noted.

He said the Board of Education has made cuts in the past few years to save some \$450,000 annually, "but cannot get much further without hurting the educational program."

Dr. Hull also declared, "If Torrance were spending as much as the average county or state unified school district for each of its 25,000 children, this year's budget would have had to be \$1,250,000 higher."

He further stated that "These economies have been carried as far as is educationally sound, and the problems of teacher recruitment, on a competitive market dictate that Torrance have a competitive salary schedule—this just naturally can't be attained without more money."

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