Fact Sheet: Why First 5 LA Filed Lawsuit

At First 5 LA, we focus on the First 5 years of life. We fund programs and services that help ensure children 0-5 will enter school ready to learn and succeed.

Why First 5 LA filed lawsuit:

• In 1998, California voters passed Proposition 10 which created First 5 Commissions.
• Proposition 10 taxes tobacco products and uses the monies to set up a “trust fund” which is completely separate from the state general fund.
• First 5 Commissions manage these tobacco dollars and fund programs and services that ensure children will enter school ready to learn.
• The intent of Proposition 10 is to expand and enhance, as well as fill gaps in services for our children, NOT to fund existing services that are the responsibility of state and local entities.
• First 5 has been on the ballot three times and three times, voters have supported the intent and purpose of Proposition 10 (the most recent being Prop. 1D in May 2009).
• Now, our state leaders want to circumvent the process and ignore the will of voters.
• The Governor and Legislature have not only decided to illegally take $1 billion from the Children’s Trust Fund, but they are also proposing to use it in a manner that is inconsistent with the intent of Proposition 10.
• In Los Angeles County, the grab translates to approximately $424 million in funds. First 5 LA refuses to go along with Sacramento and is taking a stand for children and voters.
• We will not play political games and “negotiate” our children’s futures because we do not have that authority – the voters have spoken and we need to respect that.
• We adamantly oppose re-directing monies intended to be used at the local level to Sacramento – these are local dollars and should be controlled locally.

Basic info on First 5 LA:

• First 5 LA is an independent public entity governed by a board of 13 commissioners and it serves the entire county.
• The state of California collects the tobacco taxes and distributes it to L.A. County based on birthrate.
• Annually First 5 LA receives approximately $100 million.
• The First 5 LA Commission identifies local issues and finds local solutions.
• First 5 LA currently funds 309 contractors and grantees.
• First 5 LA currently funds 2,826 positions in our county.