

THE BUSINESS PERSPECTIVE:

# Yes on 82: P-12 For a Stronger California



## Coming up at the Chamber

[View all upcoming events on our web calendar.](#)

**WED | May 24**  
Joint Transportation & Environmental Quality Committee Meeting  
Topic: Cold Ironing  
[more info](#)

**WED | May 24**  
Southern California Leadership Network Graduation  
[more info](#)

**THU | May 25**  
Export Seminar Session #5  
Topic: Export Compliance  
[more info](#)

**THU | May 25**  
Land Use, Construction & Housing Committee Meeting  
[more info](#)

**WED | May 31**  
25th Annual Small Business Awards Luncheon  
[more info](#)

**THU | June 8**  
Member Orientation  
[more info](#)

**THU | June 8**  
New Member Reception  
[more info](#)

**FRI | June 9**  
Accenture Pancakes & Politics  
[more info](#)

**FRI | June 9**  
Health Care Committee Meeting  
[more info](#)

**TUES | June 13**  
Referral Network  
[more info](#)

**THU June 15**  
Export Seminar Session #6  
Topic: Making Export Sales & Getting Paid  
[more info](#)

**THU | June 15**  
Land Use, Construction & Housing Committee Meeting  
[more info](#)

**MON | June 19**  
Education & Workforce Development Committee Meeting  
[more info](#)

**TUES | June 27**  
Referral Network  
[more info](#)

**TUES | June 28**  
Environmental Quality Committee Meeting  
[more info](#)

**TUES | June 28**  
Transportation & Goods Movement Committee Meeting

Elections are fundamentally about setting priorities. In June, we have the opportunity to make early education a priority by supporting [Proposition 82](#), which will fund a program of voluntary, high-quality preschool for every four-year-old in California.

The Chamber was the first business organization in California to endorse Prop. 82 for one simple reason: a sound, 21st century education system is critical to our economy and vital to our success as a region.

Those on both sides of the initiative are passionate about their positions. That is not unusual. Our support for the measure is grounded in the following facts.

Prop. 82 will give all children a head start on learning at an age when it matters most, as we now know from a plethora of scientific research. In a city as diverse as Los Angeles, quality preschool helps level the playing field so that when children enter kindergarten, they are ready to learn. Across the country, other states are reaping the benefits of preschool, helping all children dramatically improve their academic and social skills.

But while many of California's children go to day care, only one in five receive high quality preschool. Prop. 82 will improve existing preschool centers by setting limits on class sizes and strengthening education requirements for teachers.

We worked hard with the drafters of the measure to put private and nonprofit preschools on the same playing field with public schools, giving parents a real choice that is lacking in our public education system. It invests in new facilities, teacher training and recruitment, and encourages parental involvement.

As for the cost of Prop. 82, nothing worthwhile is free. But we do have a choice. We can continue to pay the high costs of remedial education, high school dropouts, and juvenile crime – or we can make an investment in preventing those problems before they start. Every economic study of preschool has shown that the benefits outweigh the costs. [The Rand Corporation estimated that in California the return on an investment in universal preschool](#) would be more than two to one.

Given that L.A. County is home to nearly one-third of California's children, the benefits here are especially dramatic. Rand estimates that universal preschool would prevent 3,245 dropouts – equivalent to the number of students in a large high school -- and reduce juvenile arrests by 19% or 9,560 per year in L.A. alone.

Some have argued that any new spending on preschool should be targeted only to poor children. Yet our schools offer a path to success for everyone, not just those who can't afford an alternative. In addition, a targeted program – similar to Head Start today – would do little to improve access to preschool in underserved areas, which are already overcrowded. L.A. is home to 150,000 four-year-old children, but has only half as many preschool spaces. Unless we provide incentives for private and nonprofit preschools to expand, too many children will continue to miss out on preschool because there simply isn't a place for them to go.

I cannot end this piece without talking about the opposition's subliminal message that this initiative is simply Rob Reiner's liberal political crusade. Rob Reiner is a good and decent man who has been a champion on this and other issues. Prop. 82 is not about a single personality, but about all our children.

We have a renewed focus on education in California. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has made improving the schools in L.A. his top priority, sparking a real debate about how the school district should be run. At the state level, the high school exit exam has motivated teachers to make sure every child succeeds. If we demand high standards from our children, it is our responsibility to provide them the tools needed to reach their full potential.

Universal preschool is not the cure-all for fixing our schools, but it is an important beginning and must be part of a modern education system. For that reason, Prop. 82 deserves our support.

And that's *The Business Perspective*.



*The Business Perspective* is an award-winning weekly opinion column by Rusty Hammer, President & CEO, L.A. Area Chamber

## L.A. Business THIS WEEK

View the latest issue of the Chamber's [weekly email newsletter](#). [Contact us](#) to subscribe.

[more info](#)

Russell J. Hammer  
President & CEO  
Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce

The Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce is the voice of business in L.A. County. Founded in 1888, the Chamber promotes a prosperous economy and quality of life in the Los Angeles region. For more information, visit [www.lachamber.org](http://www.lachamber.org)

350 S. Bixel St.  
Los Angeles, CA 90017  
213.580.7500 tel  
213.580.7511 fax  
[info@lachamber.org](mailto:info@lachamber.org)

---

Powered by



Los Angeles Area Chamber of Commerce, 350 S. Bixel St., Los Angeles, CA 90017  
213.580.7500 | fax: 213.580.7511 | [info@lachamber.org](mailto:info@lachamber.org) | [www.lachamber.org](http://www.lachamber.org)

[Modify](#) your profile or [unsubscribe](#) from this list automatically. If you request to be taken off this list, the L.A. Area Chamber will honor your request pursuant to [CoolerEmail's](#) permission-based email terms and conditions.

---