

# Sons and Brothers

November 24, 2014

## What Is #SonsAndBrothers?

California's future is in color. Young men and women of color are tomorrow's innovators and leaders. They are a source of strength, creativity, and economic dynamism. Our youth are invaluable assets who need opportunities to achieve and contribute like all young people.

"Sons & Brothers" is a comprehensive plan by the California Endowment to help all young people of color reach their full potential, because when our sons and daughters succeed, we all succeed.

According to the 2010 census, 70 percent of Californians under 25 identify as people of color, a group that struggles with structural racism and inequality. An African-American boy born today, for example, has a one-in-three chance of going to prison.

This lack of opportunity isn't just a community problem, it's a major threat to the overall health, safety and prosperity of all Californians.

Sons & Brothers is a \$50 million, 7-year commitment to confront the problem head-on.

## Three Key Milestones

Mounting evidence shows that brown and black children are subjected to a negative feedback loop that continues through adulthood. Far too many of our boys and young men of color are in a state of crisis. They are dropping out of school, growing up in poverty, and falling short of their promise. We can solve this problem. Research points to a clear set of early warning signs: pivotal moments that signal a young person is veering off track.

According to a study by the Department of Education, a child who has been suspended just once is half as likely to graduate school. A student who doesn't graduate is significantly more likely to spend time in jail or prison. For too many, it begins with a single suspension, or the inability to keep up with reading.

We need to focus our efforts on three places where help will make the greatest difference:

- **3rd grade reading and chronic absence:** If a child can't read well by 3rd grade, he or she is likely to fall behind and drop out of school. Chronic absences from school are a leading cause of poor academic performance.
- **Suspensions and early truancy:** Each suspension doubles the chance of dropout and triples the chance of involvement with the criminal justice system.
- **Justice system involvement:** The system is expensive, often harms kids and doesn't keep others in the community safe.

## What We're Doing

The California Endowment is laying a marker on the future of our state. We are investing \$50 million to make sure that our sons and daughters – and California – will succeed.

In seven years, we pledge to deliver on these critical goals:

- Train 1,000 youth leaders.
- Improve school attendance by 30 percent.
- Reduce suspensions by half, without forsaking discipline.
- Educate school police to better understand childhood development and trauma.
- Launch pioneering prosecutor programs to address root causes of negative behavior without throwing young people behind bars.
- Make sure all eligible children are covered for physical and mental health.

It's going to take all of us—whether we sit in business, government, or nonprofits—to invest in these young men and believe in them.

## Fast Facts About California's Amazing Diversity

- Los Angeles has the 2nd largest Native American population in the United States.
- 14 percent of the Native American population in the United States is in the state of California.
- There are nearly 80 different Native languages spoken in California.
- LA County has the largest Asian-American and Pacific Islander population of any county in the U.S.: nearly 1.5 million, making up 15 percent of the country's total population.
- Los Angeles has the second-largest population of Mexicans, after Mexico City.
- Los Angeles has the largest Thai population outside of Thailand and is home to the world's first Thai Town. It also has the largest population of Koreans outside of Korea.
- Oakland is home to a large immigrant population, with over a quarter residents foreign-born. 42.5 percent of Oakland's 390,724 residents speak a language other than English as their primary language at home.
- California has the largest Hmong population in the U.S. — and within California, the majority of individuals of Hmong heritage can be found in Fresno. The Hmong community in Fresno is the second largest in the country, following Minneapolis.
- California has the largest American population of Southeast Asians, concentrated in the Los Angeles-Long Beach, Sacramento, and Fresno areas. Long Beach has one of the largest Cambodian American communities in the United States.
- California has 2.3 million African-Americans as of 2010, the largest population of African Americans in the western U.S.

## Get Social and Spread the Word

This is a generation of powerful communicators, and we're calling on all of you to help spread the word.

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