



Contact: Maggie Bava
The Rogers Group
310-552-4180

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**The \$100 Billion Question: Next Ten Challenges All
Californians to Take the
“California Budget Challenge”**

*State legislators also challenged to engage their constituents, winner to select
constituents to participate in ceremonial events surrounding
Governor’s signing of the budget bill*

Sacramento, Calif., May 15, 2006 – Kicked off by the Governor’s May Budget Revision and as the California legislature launches into its annual state budget review, Next Ten today challenged all Californians to roll up their sleeves and take the “California Budget Challenge,” a nonpartisan Internet tool (www.NextTen.org) that offers Californians a chance to balance the state’s budget and explore the policy options faced by legislators today.

Next Ten also issued an open letter to all California Assembly and Senate members, asking them to challenge constituents to play the budget game. Constituents will not only have the chance to call the shots on how much to give to schools, health care, prisons and other state programs, but they will also have the ability to share their preferences with legislators.

“Next Ten has created a phenomenal tool that engages Californians in the dialogue that the Executive and Legislative branches are having over the next 45 days,” said Leon Panetta, former Director of the Federal Office of Management and Budget and Director of the Panetta Institute at California State University, Monterey Bay. “Civic engagement is the first step towards making meaningful change, and I commend Next Ten for its important work on this front.”

“Next Ten offers the sense of empowerment that is vital to affecting change,” said Carol Whiteside, President of the Great Valley Center. “And what’s exciting about the

California Budget Challenge is that it can be done from any computer with an Internet connection.”

This challenge to all Californians leads into “California Budget Month,” Next Ten’s statewide initiative to engage Californians in the budget process and to foster a greater understanding about the budget choices involved in determining the state’s economic future and quality of life. This week, Next Ten will be issuing similar challenges to statewide business chambers and nonprofit organizations.

“A well-informed, engaged public can work together to break gridlock, rebuild trust in government and rebuild the California dream,” said F. Noel Perry, Founder of Next Ten. “We invite citizens up and down the state to get engaged and help shape our future budget and state.”

Next Ten’s California Budget month will culminate at the end of June with the announcement of the California Budget Challenge winner - the legislator who gets the most Californians to take the Challenge by June 15th. Next Ten will coordinate with the winner to will select two constituents to participate in ceremonial events surrounding the Governor’s signing of the budget bill.

###

About Next Ten

Next Ten is an independent, nonpartisan organization that educates, engages and empowers Californians so that, together, we can improve our future economy and quality of life. We call ourselves Next Ten because we aren’t here for the quick fix. We have our sights set on joining with others to improve the state over the next ten years, and the ten years after that. Next Ten believes that together, we can create the brighter future we all want for ourselves and our children. Next Ten was founded by F. Noel Perry, a venture capitalist and philanthropist concerned about California today and the California our children will inherit.