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New Online Game Lets Players Tackle Federal Budget Deficit

Innovative California Organization & Federal Budget Experts

Present the “Federal Budget Challenge”

Palo Alto, CA – In Washington, the battle rages on over the fiscal impact of health care reform. Lawmakers are facing tough choices that will affect our nation’s balance sheet for years to come. Now there’s an opportunity for voters to take on the budget deficit themselves. Nonprofit, nonpartisan organizations Next 10 and The Concord Coalition today announced the launch of the “Federal Budget Challenge,” an online simulation that lets users make policy decisions and try to reduce the federal deficit. The Federal Budget Challenge follows Next 10’s successful “California Budget Challenge,” an online tool used by more than 120,000 engaged Californians.

“As the federal deficit soars, the baby boomers begin to retire and both houses of Congress debate the cost of health care, it is now more critical than ever that Americans understand the way our nation’s finances work,” said Robert Bixby, executive director of The Concord Coalition. “The Federal Budget Challenge is an interactive and engaging way for Americans to learn about some of the tough choices facing our country.”

The Federal Budget Challenge (available at www.federalbudgetchallenge.org) leads users through a series of policy choices ranging from health care to national defense to tax deductions. At each step along the way, a graph displays how their choices impact federal budget deficits over the next ten years. Users can opt to receive a detailed explanation of each choice that offers arguments for and against each option.

“If we continue on our current course, accumulated federal deficits will total over \$14 trillion dollars in 10 years,” said F. Noel Perry, founder of Next 10. “Our nation’s finances impact all of us and it’s our responsibility to understand how the federal budget works. This tool allows users to set their own priorities and make policy choices that reflect their values and vision for the future.”

Nonprofit, nonpartisan groups Next 10 and The Concord Coalition partnered to create the Federal Budget Challenge. The Concord Coalition is one of the nation’s leading advocates for generationally responsible fiscal policy. Founded in 1992 by the late Senator Paul Tsongas (D-Mass.) former Senator Warren Rudman (R-NH), and former U.S. Secretary of Commerce Peter Peterson, the Concord Coalition

is dedicated to educating the public about how to build a sound economy for future generations. California-based Next 10 educates, engages and empowers Californians to improve the state's future.

In the months to come, Next 10 and The Concord Coalition will take the Federal Budget Challenge on the road, visiting classrooms and community meetings throughout the country. At each stop, they will teach audiences about the workings of the federal budget and give them a flavor for what it takes to make tough decisions about our nation's finances.

To mark the launch of the tool, The Concord Coalition and Next 10 will hold a series of events in Florida, California, and Washington D.C. Students from Palm Beach, American University, George Washington University, and Palo Alto's Henry M. Gunn High School will be among the first to use the tool and try their hands at reducing the deficit. For further details or to attend any of these events, please contact the number above.

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About Next 10: Next 10 is an independent, nonpartisan organization that educates, engages and empowers Californians to improve the state's future. www.next10.org

The Concord Coalition is a nonpartisan, grassroots organization dedicated to educating the public about the causes and consequences of federal budget deficits, the long-term challenges facing America's unsustainable entitlement programs, and how to build a sound foundation for economic growth. www.concordcoalition.org