

Prop. 127 will divert money from schools in name of idealism

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OPINION

The world is filled with people who want to do good. It is ironic that two arenas where you often find 'do-gooders' – politics and education, can't seem to get along. The good that they seek is generally at odds.

Proposition 127 threatens to force schools to divert even more money away from student services in the name of political idealism. Even those arguing that "climate change" is a hoax agree that more renewable energy makes sense. Those who are committing the most money to defeating Prop. 127 are the ones who've invested the most in expanding operation of renewable energy in Arizona. So, why the opposition?



Don Covey

When the government forces the market to operate within artificial constraints it creates damaging costs. In the case of the renewable energy mandate proposed by Proposition 127, these costs will show up as rate increases. APS projects that rates will double. The state's cooperatives are projecting a 40 percent increase within the first 10 years. Building new generating facilities costs money.

Meanwhile taking generating capacity offline that is still being paid for creates huge costs. It's like vacating a house you owe a mortgage on and buying a new house and paying for both. You are now paying twice as much for housing even though you are only living in one house. The old power plants will still be being paid for but won't be producing power, and we will be adding new renewable facilities and converting some coal plants to systems that can interact with renewables.

Where will the money come from? Higher rates will be necessary. We are OK with that – goes the argument for Prop. 127, because we're making the world a better place. But our public schools can't afford to bear the costs.



Carol Peck

Some want voters to support a statement in favor of more renewable energy, but more is at stake. A mandate for a massive increase in the use of renewables in a short period of time is a monumental shift to accomplish in just 12 years! Experts aren't even sure it is feasible. Embedding the mandate in the Arizona Constitution (Sec.2 Article XV) restricts the ability of elected officials on the Corporation Commission to alter or modify it irrespective of the consequence. Common sense be damned.

Those working in public education want to make the world a better place. That's why we pursue accountability, rigor, and programs that help students succeed. Our schools are operating on a razor's edge. Decades of financial stress due to recession and recovery have crippled our ability to attract and retain teachers, and nothing matters more than quality teachers. What is needed is new revenue to support growing successful innovative public schools. There are proposals that could make Arizona a better place for public school students, but none are currently on the ballot. While waiting for a solution to the revenue question, one thing is clear – we must not put more costly burdens on public schools reducing their effectiveness.

Voting "No" on Proposition 127 won't stop the expansion of renewable energy in Arizona, but it will protect our schools from more mandates that take money away from classrooms where our children are trying to learn. And, that makes Arizona a better place – for kids and for Arizona's future.

Don Covey is the former Maricopa County school superintendent and Carol G. Peck is the former National School Superintendent of the Year, affiliates of The Best Public Education In Arizona Foundation. www.lovepublicedaz.org.

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