Dear Jon (Edney):

Not to worry. Jerry Brown and the state Legislature are taking your advice. Just read the stories in this newspaper: Brawley cuts school busing, El Centro schools lack sufficient budgets, Holtville schools are behind on math and science, IVC classes are impacted, SDSU-IV Campus is cutting its teaching budget, and the list goes on.

If you wish real hard, the Cal Environmental Protection Agency (clean air and water) and Cal OSHA (which protects workers and customers) will be eliminated as well.

There have been major cuts in the state’s budget and these will increase. State school populations have grown as has the population overall. More students and population equal more state spending.

There are tremendous demands on the California budget. Jerry Brown attempted to get a revenue deal with the Republicans, but true to their word, come school cuts or not, they would not agree to compromise.

Brown has called for reorganization of CalPERS, the retirement system, which will cause state and local workers to be responsible for more of their retirement payments. Just ask the local city managers about this. They have to inform their bargaining units that city employees’ payments into the retirement system will increase.

State workers will not be able to up their retirement benefits by adding accumulated vacation time and otherwise tweak their final retirement benefits. These changes have not been popular with Brown’s union base, but he has been the “adult” in Sacramento.

It’s difficult to imagine any state or local legislative body adopting the “pragmatic solution-oriented suggestions” you make including not passing any new bills for two years.

As a former council member who has served us well, you know that no city council, county board or state legislature would be serving its electorate if it were to adopt such an idea.
It would be relinquishing its legislative function to address the many issues raised by businesses and constituents.

The state has been in the red for many years. While Republicans and Democrats have been willing to use smoke and mirrors to legally “balance the budget,” Brown has taken a realistic stance toward the budget and seeks voter support in raising revenue.

The state chamber of commerce and most professional groups recognize that budgets cuts are not the sole solution; the state needs more revenue. I’m not crazy about increasing the sales tax (regressive) or any tax, but if we don’t want California’s schools or university to slip any further into mediocrity, then we need more revenue.

Please, the state needs solutions but not partisanship or unrealistic commentary.

Rich Ryan lives in El Centro.

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