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the education system
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Cutting the budget to the education system will do more harm than good. In 1994 and 1995 the US government spent 508 billion dollars on education from primary through graduate school – about 7.5 percent of the country's total GDP (PBS). While much of this expense occurs at the local level, pressure both locally and nationally to cut these expenditures is understandably high. But cutting the budget to the education system might easily do more harm than good. Based upon economic statistics and a survey of the case of education in California, cutting education seems to lead directly to poorer education which has discernable negative consequences for production and economic performance. The recent case of the state of California grants insight into the immediate impact of budget cuts on education systems. As of 2009 the California government had enacted budget cuts of about 12 billion, with an additional 1.2 billion proposed (O'Connell). This has led to "class-size increases in Pasadena" and "the expected laying off of 2250 teachers," both linked to lower graduation rates (O'Connell). The consequences, however, reach farther than immediate effects on classroom quality and graduation. Lower education rates seem to lead to lower economic performance. According to Business Weekly, even at current rates decreases in educational performance could lead to a cut of as much as 2% of GDP due to changes in demographics and expected graduation rates (Symonds). With the growth of global markets and the precedence placed on economic performance in the burgeoning economic powerhouses of India and China, for instance, the United States must work harder to compete. Symonds warns of the possibility of "more US white collar jobs [moving] offshore" as high school graduation rates in the US' competitors increase. We cannot neglect the other side of the budget cuts.

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For states such as California, with its 24.3 billion dollar shortfall, cuts must be made somewhere, and the budget cuts provide welcome economic relief as well as an incentive toward greater efficiency. However, as O Connell notes these motivations do not seem to produce an immediate return in quality. Additionally, studies show that at times education budget is not directly linked to education quality. Emmanuel Ablo and Ritva Reinikka at the World Bank look at the case of Uganda, where “ budget problems alone were misleading in explaining outcomes,” but note that this is linked also to weaker institutions (Ablo). In general, for countries with stronger educational institutions, we must concede that the benefits of budget cuts in education do not outweigh the broad and severe consequences. RESOURCES “ School Funding,” PBS Online Backgrounders, The News Hour http://www.pbs.org/newshour/backgrounders/school_funding.html Ablo, Emmanuel & Reinikka, Ritva, “ Do Budgets Really Matter? Evidence from Public Spending on Education and Health in Uganda” available online http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=604999 O Connell, Jack, “ State Schools Chief Jack O Connell Highlights Impact of Budget Cuts to Education,” California Department of Education (CDE), June 3 2009, available online [<http://www.cde.ca.gov/nr/ne/yr09/yr09rel86.asp>] Selingo, Jeffrey, “ The Disappearing State in Public Education,” available online [http://lapislink.com/sheeo1/about/press/AID/Chronicle_2-28-03.pdf] Symonds, William, “ America the Uneducated: A new study warns of a slide for the US as the share of lower achievers grows,” Business Weekly, November 21, 2005, available online [http://www.businessweek.com/magazine/content/05_47/b3960108.htm]