



Tennessee State Employees Association

Communications Office of TSEA

627 Woodland Street

Nashville, Tennessee 37206

chuck.rainey@tseaonline.org

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Contact: Chuck Rainey
Phone: (615) 256-4533

Governor's Address Somber

NASHVILLE – Monday, January 9th ended with state employees feeling betrayed again, as Governor Phil Bredesen revealed his initial 2009-2010 budget proposal. With an unknown amount of help coming from the federal government and Tennessee's budget still in the early stages of development, Governor Bredesen asked for the power to adjust Civil Service Laws in an effort to put more Tennesseans in the unemployment lines.

“The Tennessee Employees Association is appalled that our Governor cannot see the various options before him for balancing the state's budget. He continues to look for ways to target state employees and is using our economic crisis to gain more power to feed his need to fix things his way,” said Jim Tucker, Executive Director of the Tennessee State Employees Association.

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“TSEA holds firm to our belief that layoffs, furloughs and reduced hours at state offices should be a last course of action after all other avenues to balance the budget have been explored carefully,” said Tucker. The state of Tennessee can not afford to put more people out of work during this recession. Our economy is based on consumer spending and the unemployed have nothing to spend. It is time to look beyond workforce cuts for a solution to budget reductions.

TSEA has urged its membership and all state employees to contact their legislators with this message, “Do not allow this Governor to weaken the democratic process by stealing powers that belong in the hands of your elected senators and representatives.” The hiring freeze, a voluntary buyout and natural job attrition has dropped state employment to a bare-bones level. “Approximately .5 percent of the \$28 billion dollar budget covers wages and employee benefits for state employees. How can that small portion of the budget be the right place to cut when the 17th largest state population is served by the 38th largest state government with the 46th largest tax base?

TSEA is a nonprofit association existing to provide a strong unified voice with which it advocates the work-related interests of members. The attainment of association objectives will ensure a better life for our members and will attract and retain an effective, efficient state workforce to provide services for all Tennesseans. TSEA was established in 1974. For further information, visit the Web site at www.tseaonline.org.

