



A Union of Education, Technical Support, Charter School and Education Support Professionals

## PRESS STATEMENT

May 9, 2011

*Regarding end of 2011 Florida Legislative Session  
by BTU President Pat Santeramo*

**NOTE:** The members of the Broward Teachers Union are already preparing for the 2012 legislative session and the upcoming elections by reaching out to the community and sponsoring a Fight for Our Future protest from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, May 24 across from the Broward County Courthouse in downtown Fort Lauderdale. All community members impacted by the legislature's failure to represent the real citizens of Florida are encouraged to attend.

"This year's legislative session was an all-out attack on Floridians and working families who struggle to pay their taxes and contribute to their communities.

"In the name of education reform, legislators passed an unfunded law that will significantly increase the amount of testing our students must complete instead of their engaging in meaningful learning activities. The tests that legislators are mandating for the most part don't even exist yet and they provided no state funding to develop, implement or even score the new tests.

"While Florida is already at the bottom of all states for public school funding, legislators cut state support for our schools by \$1.35 billion or \$542 per student, which will be devastating to local districts.

"To top matters off, the legislators who are desperately trying to keep control after attacking working families all session passed a law that will make it more difficult for people to vote by increasing the requirements for voter registration and cutting the time for early voting in half.

"Legislators who are completely opposed to increasing taxes to pay for essential community programs and services or repealing luxury tax exemptions for the state's wealthiest residents passed a mandatory 3 percent income tax on public employees including police officers, firefighters and teachers in the name of pension reform. That is 3 percent less money that public employees who are community members, friends and neighbors too will be able to spend in local stores, at gas stations and in restaurants.

"The governor and legislators turned their backs on our communities and children while by passing a budget that is fat with pork barrel spending including using our state's limited tax dollars to pay for a nautical sports center and botanical garden just to name a few.

"This draconian state budget will be a real set back for Governor Rick Scott's promise to create new jobs as it will result in wide spread layoffs of public employees. It's no wonder he is the least popular governor Floridians have seen in years.

"Our members are committed to bringing about a change in our state by making sure during the next election cycle that our elected legislators represent the interests of all Floridians instead of just the very rich who contribute to their campaigns."