



**Broward Teachers Union**

**COPE-TIGER**

## **COPE-TIGER CALL TO ACTION!**

February 6, 2012

- **STATE BUDGET**
- **PENSION – FRS**
- **PROPOSED TAX CUTS**
- **UNFAIR TEACHER EVALUATIONS**

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**SPECIAL EDITOR'S NOTES:** *Important -- Members may ONLY send messages before the start of their official workday and after the end of their official workday using the district's CAB system. Members can send messages from their private email addresses and telephone numbers before work and after work and during duty free lunches and breaks. Following these communication guidelines is imperative!*

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## **BUDGET**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- Last week (February 1, 2012) the House Appropriations Committee passed a budget which would increase K-12 education funding by \$1.1 billion while increasing college tuition by 8% and eliminating more state jobs.
- The House's proposed budget would also cut payments by 7% to hospitals for inpatient care and by 2.5% to nursing homes.
- The House's proposed budget; however, avoids the deep funding cuts to hospitals that the Governor has recommended.

- The proposed budget goes to the full floor of the House next week

### **ACTION ITEM -- MESSAGE**

*(Do NOT copy and paste these talking points / See contact info below)*

- We support and applaud any efforts to increase funding for public education with an understanding that this “increase” basically restores a mere portion of last year’s deep cuts
- This is a positive step in the right direction; but by no means a cure
- Florida continues to rank at the bottom in education funding
- We must continue to identify new, creative, innovative, and sustainable funding sources for education instead of taking the money from other critical need areas such as health care
- The Legislature should be commended for introducing a bill which would bring fairness to our tax system by requiring out of state remote (online) sellers to pay Florida’s already-existing sales tax
- This bill is pro Florida business development because it levels the “playing field” by state business owners compared to those who sell products online especially through the Internet from outside the state
- Attempts to make this legislation revenue neutral forego an excellent opportunity to increase our state budget by upwards of \$1 billion per year which would avoid having to make the painful cuts that we are facing

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### **PENSION – FRS**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Since last week, there have been new developments with the privatization and pension issues. As a result of his inability to gain support for his privatization proposals, Governor Rick Scott is at it again, trying to deceive Floridians about the public employee pension fund.

The truth is Florida's pension fund is one of the best in the country. But Governor Scott wants to trick us into believing the fund is in trouble so he can get his hands on our money. Why? So he can give billion dollar contracts to his campaign supporters who run out-of-state for-profit companies. Shouldn't our governor and legislative leaders work hard to keep those taxpayer revenues in Florida?

We all need to call and email Gov. Scott RIGHT NOW! Tell him to stop the scam and leave our pension fund alone.

Last year, he used the pension fund as an excuse to reach into our pockets and take three percent from our salary to give to his big business buddies. This year, Governor Scott is using it as an excuse to privatize thousands of state prison jobs.

Florida's retirement system was just fine until Rick Scott started cooking the books and trying to mislead Floridians. Now, he and Senate President Mike Haridopolos are twisting the arms of Republican senators to support a privatization plan they know has nothing to do with the pension fund.

In retaliation for Senator Mike Fasano's opposition to the Governor's tricks, the Senate President stripped Senator Fasano of his chairmanship of the Budget subcommittee on Criminal and Civil Justice Appropriation. It's time to tell Rick Scott we've had enough of his schemes to take money out of our pockets and put it into the bank accounts of out-of-state for-profit corporations. It's not fair. It's not right. We won't stand for it anymore.

### **ACTION ITEM MESSAGE**

**Call and email Gov. Scott NOW and tell him to stop this scam and leave our pension fund alone.**

**ACTION ITEM – CALL:** Rick Scott, Governor: 850-717-9249 / [rick.scott@eog.myflorida.com](mailto:rick.scott@eog.myflorida.com)

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### **TAX CUTS**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

The House Tax & Finance Committee passed PCB 12-07 (proposed committee bill) last week which proposes \$125 million in tax cuts, including but not limited to: doubling the corporate income tax exemption from \$25,000 to \$50,000 and includes a broad range of cuts that would impact from manufacturing to private airplane owners.

Further, the Legislature is proposing a constitutional amendment that would create a "super" homestead exemption on the first \$400,000 in value of homestead property.

The impact on local governments could be devastating.

### **ACTION ITEM -- MESSAGE**

(Do NOT copy and paste these talking points / See contact info below)

During these tough economic times -- when the Legislature is making deep cuts to critical need services( such as healthcare) in order to balance the state budget -- proposing any tax cuts is not only irresponsible but will inevitably lead to a worsening of Florida's already serious economic crisis.

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### **UNFAIR TEACHER EVALUATIONS**

#### **Senate Bill 736 Update: Stop Unfair Teacher Evaluations!**

### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

At the request of union members taking action and making their voices heard, Senator Audrey Gibson has proposed Senate Bill 1380 and Representative Dwayne Taylor has proposed House Bill 1067. These bills would repeal an unfair requirement in SB 736 that impacts your evaluation, pay and job security.

The bills would remove a provision in the law that require non-FCAT teachers and non-classroom instructional personnel to receive performance evaluations that are partially based on FCAT scores.

More than half of Florida's instructors teach subjects that are not covered by the FCAT. This includes kindergarten, art, music, physical education, social studies, science, computer technology and ESE teachers.

According to SB 736, if you are a non-FCAT teacher, you would receive a performance evaluation based on test scores of students you never taught. You would be assessed in areas that have little to do with the curriculum that you teach because most districts do not have end of course exams or appropriate measures to determine student learning growth in these areas. Senate Bill 1380 and House Bill 1067 would ensure that non-FCAT teachers are fairly evaluated and remove one of the one-size fits all punitive impacts of SB-736.

**ACTION ITEM – PLEASE CALL AND EMAIL SENATOR STEPHEN WISE TODAY. TELL HIM TO ALLOW SB 1380 TO BE HEARD IN HIS EDUCATION COMMITTEE.**

Senator Wise District Office: 904-381-6000

Senator Wise Tallahassee Office: 850-487-5027

Senator Wise Email Address: [wise.stephen.web@flsenate.gov](mailto:wise.stephen.web@flsenate.gov)

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#### **ADDITIONAL CONTACT INFORMATION**

1. Governor Rick Scott -- [rick.scott@eog.myflorida.com](mailto:rick.scott@eog.myflorida.com) / 850-488-4441

2. President of the Senate Senator Mike Haridopolos --  
[haridopolos.mike.web@flsenate.gov](mailto:haridopolos.mike.web@flsenate.gov) / 850-487-5628

3. Speaker of the House Representative Dean Cannon --  
[dean.cannon@myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:dean.cannon@myfloridahouse.gov) / 850-488-2742

4. Senator Ellyn Bogdanoff -- [bogdanoff.ellyn.web@flsenate.gov](mailto:bogdanoff.ellyn.web@flsenate.gov) / 850-487-5100

5. Senator Mike Fasano -- [fasano.mike.web@flsenate.gov](mailto:fasano.mike.web@flsenate.gov) / 850-487-5062

6. Representative Jeanette Nunez -- [jeanette.nunez@myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:jeanette.nunez@myfloridahouse.gov) / 850-488-7897

7. Representative Matt Hudson -- [matt.hudson@myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:matt.hudson@myfloridahouse.gov) / 850-488-1028

8. Representative George Moraitis -- [george.moraitis@myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:george.moraitis@myfloridahouse.gov) / 850-488-0635

9. Broward County Legislative Delegation Chair Representative Evan Jenne -- [evan.jenne@myfloridahouse.gov](mailto:evan.jenne@myfloridahouse.gov) / 850-488-0245

10. Broward County Legislative Delegation Vice Chair Senator Eleanor Sobel -- [sobel.eleanor.web@flsenate.gov](mailto:sobel.eleanor.web@flsenate.gov) / 850-487-5097

Find your legislator by logging on to [www.myfloridahouse.gov](http://www.myfloridahouse.gov). On top of home page click on “representatives” which will take you to a page with a box that reads “find your representative”. Type your full address and it will provide the names of your state representative and senator.

**Information provided by BTU Director of Public Policy Maggie Zalamea and the BTU’s state affiliate, the Florida Education Association. For comments, questions or concerns, please contact Director of Public Policy Maggie Zalamea by telephone at 954-486-6250 or via email at [mzalamea@btuonline.com](mailto:mzalamea@btuonline.com). Thank you.**