



# news release

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## **PUBLIC EMPLOYEE UNION OFFERS A BETTER BUDGET FIX** *Public Employees Are The Solution, Not The Problem*

Today Gov. Pawlenty refused to raise revenue to balance the state budget. Instead, he wants to cut local government aid and life services for families hurt by the poor economy. All that pain so he can afford more expensive tax breaks for big corporations.

Below is a response from Eliot Seide, director of AFSCME Council 5, a union of 43,000 public and non-profit workers in Minnesota, including 19,000 state employees.

**On priorities**, "While working families are losing their jobs, their homes and their health care, Gov. Pawlenty wants more tax breaks for wealthy CEOs. He's in their boardroom, not at our kitchen table. His priorities are simply wrong and his failed economic policies have created huge deficits and no new jobs."

**On fair taxes**, "To repair Minnesota's economy, we need to cut wasteful programs like JOBZ and ask the wealthy to pay their fair share of income taxes." For example, \$1 billion could be raised in two years if people earning more than \$250,000 paid their fair share of taxes, equal to 11.7 percent of their income, the average rate of what all Minnesota households will pay.

**On freezing wages**, "If the Governor wants a wage freeze, then he needs to propose no layoffs. AFSCME members earn \$38,000 on average. Like most Minnesotans, they're struggling paycheck to paycheck and they shouldn't have to sacrifice alone while corporate taxes are cut in half."

**On cutting local government aid**, "Gov. Pawlenty's budget will force cities to raise property taxes and cut parks, libraries and public safety. It's a disaster for local communities across the state."

**On kicking 84,000 adults off health insurance**, "Workers who lose their jobs lose their health insurance. It's shameful to kick people who are already hurt by the poor economy."

**On efficient government**, "Minnesota's public sector workforce is one of the leanest and most productive in the nation. We're not the problem, but we'd like to be part of the solution. We welcome the opportunity to work with any public employer to deliver even better public services at the best price."

**On cutting wasteful spending**, "Let's halt expensive outsourcing to prevent layoffs, and let's eliminate needless layers of management to focus on frontline services."

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