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# Press Release

## **Florida Legislature Takes another Step toward State Income Tax on Teachers, Firefighters, Police Officers and other Public Sector Workers**

The Florida Legislature's plan to balance the state budget on the backs of Florida's public sector workers through radical changes to the Florida Retirement System (FRS) advanced today as each chamber voted out its own budget proposal. Instead of examining our antiquated tax structure for ways to increase funding to help balance the budget, politicians are systematically destroying one of the best run public pensions systems in the nation.

After the Senate vote and in anticipation of House action, **Mike Williams, President of the Florida AFL-CIO** issued the following statement: "Hundreds of public sector workers visiting the Capitol today watched majorities in both the House and Senate choose to protect tax exemptions, loopholes and subsidies for the big business lobby over teachers, firefighters, police officers and anyone who chooses to serve the people of this state. Public sector workers across Florida are already struggling, most enduring these tough economic times with no pay increases for the past six years. Today's votes will only increase our struggle while temporarily protecting the wealthiest and most powerful interests in the state."

### **Representatives from several public sector unions also released short statements following the vote.**

"This action results in a pay cut for teachers and everyone else who works in public schools and throughout state government. This is nothing more than an income tax on state workers and their earnings that will remove even more dollars from the stream of commerce in local economies and local businesses. This is just another example of legislative leaders and Rick Scott's callous disregard for our states law-enforcement officers, firefighters, teachers and other public servants." - **Andy Ford, President of Florida Education Association**

"Our conservative group is very grateful to true honest Republican members like Senator Latvala for his perseverance in attempting to make the pension bill fair and equitable. But we are now moving into the part of the budget process that happens in the dark not the sunshine. Our officers will now have to trust Tallahassee politicians and hope that factual numbers are used to make the decisions and not false political rhetoric."- **Lisa Henning, Legislative Director of Fraternal Order of Police**

"Politicians in Tallahassee need to get their priorities in order and start looking out for our seniors and working families instead of corporate profits. These politicians should be focusing on finding real solutions that bring retirement security to all Floridians, not attacking hard working middle class families in an attempt to divide us against each other."- **Jeannette Wynn, President of AFSCME District Council 79**

"The Pension bill that was passed today is another example of Florida's firefighters and other public employees shouldering the burden of the state's \$5 billion dollar budget deficit. Instead of addressing tax loopholes and exemptions we are being forced to pay a tax on our salaries to bail out Florida." – **Gary Rainey, President of Florida Professional Firefighters**

"Today, the Florida Legislature took a giant step in destroying the trust that was created between Florida's teachers, police, firefighters, state, county, and municipal public employees who keep our water pure, our public buildings clean, collect our waste products, and move our citizenry to jobs on public transit." -- **Dwight Mattingly, Vice-Chair of Amalgamated Transit Union Florida State Conference Board**

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