

Together NC Statement on Gov. Perdue's budget proposal

Perdue's budget "did well to protect vital public investments," says Together NC

Now, it's the legislature's turn to stand up for North Carolina, says Together NC, the 120-plus group coalition. What follows is a statement from the Together NC coalition.

RALEIGH (Feb. 17, 2011) – Governor Perdue heeded our calls to protect many of the state's vital public investments that are critical to our prosperity, now and in the future.

Gov. Bev Perdue did well to protect public education, community colleges, and critical health services from draconian cuts, including:

- keeping state-supported K-12 teachers and teacher assistants in the classrooms
- bolstering funding for critical mental health services through the NC Mental Health Trust Fund
- fully funding enrollment growth in community colleges and universities
- maintain open enrollment in NC Health Choice, the state's low-income kids health insurance program, to all children who are eligible.

She did so by taking a forward-looking approach to the state budget that included revenue options and she should be commended for her leadership. A cuts-only approach would have cut out North Carolina's economic heart.

However, it's important to acknowledge that the cuts proposed in the Governor's budget will still be extremely painful. Thousands of people will lose their jobs, including those who support our K-12 classrooms. Our world-class university system will take a heavy blow.

For these reasons, we must note that Gov. Perdue's budget missed an opportunity to fundamentally address our antiquated revenue system and update it for the future. Her decision to cut the corporate income tax rate, which will cost the state over \$400 million per year when fully implemented, was an illusory quick fix that will do little to boost the economy or create jobs.

The better path would be to include more reform-minded revenue options that could have protected other key public investments in jobs, health services and more and protected us in future economic downturns.

But now, it's up to the General Assembly to stand up for North Carolina. Any more cuts would increase job losses, cut off health care to our state's children, and imperil education.

Governor Perdue has done her part and shown real leadership. Now our lawmakers should do their part to protect our state's future.

Together NC is a broad and diverse collection of 120+ organizations who have come together to promote wise choices for shared prosperity for all North Carolinians.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Louisa Warren, 919.801.0465, Louisa@ncjustice.org; Rob Thompson, 919.649.2449, rob@nccovenant.org; Jeff Shaw, director of communications, 503.551.3615, jeff@ncjustice.org.