

Together NC Statement on Senate Budget Subcommittee proposals

Senate budget “waves white flag of surrender” on jobs, economy, health care and social progress

RALEIGH (May 24, 2011) – This morning, the NC Senate released its state budget proposal. Like the House budget, the proposal will result in the loss of thousands of jobs, imperil our economic recovery, and stall our progress.

The Senate has chosen to abandon and ignore what makes North Carolina a great place to grow up, grow old, work and do business—the strong public investments that are the fabric of our communities. These vital investments include:

- Our nationally-recognized early childhood education systems;
- Our public schools that pave the way for opportunity for our future generations;
- Our network of high-quality, affordable health services that improve life for North Carolinians while reducing long-term catastrophic health care costs;
- Great community colleges that educate and re-train workers for jobs in the evolving economy;
- Our stellar university system that is an engine for innovation and accessible to those who want to attend;
- Robust public infrastructure in roads, water, sewer, public safety, parks and culture.

Rather, the Senate budget that emerged this morning is akin to a white flag of surrender, a retreat from all that we have done to make our state so desirable for families and businesses.

The proposed cuts will be felt in every community, every classroom, every doctor’s waiting room, every court, and every park.

What’s most frustrating is that the deep cuts revealed today are completely avoidable. The Senate could have chosen to protect public schools, public health and public safety simply by maintaining our current revenue stream. But like the House, the Senate is letting the temporary tax package passed in 2009 expire.

This tax package, which includes a 1 percent sales tax increase and an income tax surcharge for high-earners, would have raised approximately \$1.4 billion next year. Combined, the cuts to K-12 schools, the Smart Start and More at Four early education programs, Mental Health and Medicaid add up to only \$1.2 billion.

This is a clear-cut case of ideology trumping common sense. Now is the time for our lawmakers to show real leadership by preserving the investments that make North Carolina’s future a prosperous one.