



# NEWS

New York State  
Public Employees Federation  
AFL-CIO

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## **PEF President responds to proposed State Budget**

**Albany** - "We agree with the governor that our economy is shrinking and people are suffering, but his proposed 2009-10 budget includes destructive cuts in state services and the state work force while ignoring cost-cutting options that can save the state billions," said state Public Employees Federation (PEF) President Ken Brynien.

"We are disappointed to learn the governor continues to rely on savings from state-worker givebacks that amount to far less money than the savings that can be realized by cutting the use of high-priced consultants.

"Many of the proposals, particularly regarding benefits, do nothing to address the fiscal crisis, but appear to be decisions based more on ideology rather than the need to provide immediate savings.

"Make no mistake, reopening our contract is not an option. We will not ask our members to give up a hard-earned 3 percent raise when spending on consultants increased during the first 7 months of this year by 13.5 percent. Now, more than ever, the state needs to rely less on costly consultants and more on state workers who can do the work for less, even when you take into consideration the cost of benefits.

"The governor's proposal would have a disproportionate impact on some of the neediest residents. Cutting 450 beds from the state Office of Mental Health would poke a hole in the safety net for the mentally ill. His budget would abandon many of our troubled youths by eliminating needed services with the closure of state Office of Children and Family Services facilities. And those closures would be realized before the governor's own task force on the future direction of the juvenile justice system even has a chance to make recommendations

"The governor's attempt to streamline and improve the delivery of economic development services is a good idea, but goes in the wrong direction. If there is a merger, it should be the Empire State Development Corporation (ESDC) and the New York State Foundation of Science, Technology and Innovation (NYSTAR) that merge into the state's Department of Economic Development. This would ensure that New York has a transparent economic development program run by professionals selected through the merit system, not run by an unaccountable shadow agency staffed with political appointees making much more money than civil servants.

"We believe there are better, less damaging ways to address the state's budget deficit and we will take the governor up on his stated willingness to accept advice and adjustments to his proposal. Therefore, we will continue to offer better options to close the budget gap, including increasing the income tax on the wealthiest New Yorkers, relying on the rainy day fund and reducing the use of costly consultants."

PEF is the state's second-largest state-employee union, representing 59,000 professional, scientific and technical employees.