



# Rhode Island Council 94

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

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January 23, 2009

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

On Wednesday, January 7, 2009, Governor Carcieri released the details of his plan to close a \$357 million dollar deficit in RI's FY09 budget. Additionally, while the state and national economies have continued to worsen, the FY2010 budget deficit is estimated to be \$487 million.

Many of the provisions of the Supplemental Budget (H-5019) target our members' jobs, pensions, contracts, bargaining rights, and health care benefits with harmful cuts.

The House Finance Committee is holding hearings at an accelerated pace and would like to pass a Supplemental Budget by the first week of February.

We cannot afford to sit back and wait. We must fight back now.

Council 94 is currently opposing many of these initiatives including:

- **Raiding Our Pensions:** The administration is attempting to grab close to \$100 million by only contributing 25% of the employer contribution; set a mandatory retirement age of 59; reducing disability pensions, and eliminating Cost of Living Adjustments for employees who retire after April 1, 2009. (Budget Article 32)
- **Weaken State Services:** Eliminate 893 Full Time Equivalent positions, straining state agencies that all ready short staffed during the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. (Article 1)
- **Reduce Injured on Duty Benefits** to 80% of salary and health benefits. (FY09 Article 46)
- **Permit emergency rulemaking** without public input and mid-year budget revisions without legislative oversight: Allow the administration to reduce/suspend appropriations for all departments and/or reduce municipal/educational aid when revenue shortfalls occur; grants ability to change legislative and judiciary budgets; and permits emergency rule making without complying with the administrative procedures act. (FY09 Budget Article 2)

The most effective and proven defense against these budget proposals is to contact your elected officials. You must begin now. Call your state senator and your state representative. Then call the House Finance Committee Chairman Steven Costantino (222-2738) and the Senate Finance Committee Chairman Daniel DaPonte (222-3438).

**in the public service**

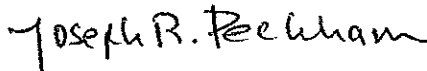


Talking points are enclosed to assist you in calling, emailing, or writing to your elected officials. Please let your local union president know how the elected officials react to your call.

In Solidarity,



J. Michael Downey  
President



Joseph R. Peckham  
Deputy Executive Director

P.S. If you are not sure who your state senator and/or representative are, please call your city's or town's Board of Canvassers. A list of Board of Canvassers phone numbers is on the back of the first page.

If you have a computer with access to the internet you can go to the Secretary of State's web site to find your elected officials. The web site is:

<http://www.sec.state.ri.us/vic/>

You can also call Council 94 at 401-724-5900 for assistance.

**RI COUNCIL 94, AFSCME, AFL-CIO**  
**FY09 BUDGET CUTS STATE PHONE CONTACT SHEET**  
**To find your elected officials visit: <http://www.sec.state.ri.us/vic>**

Hello may I speak to Representative / Senator (insert name):

Rep: \_\_\_\_\_ Sen.: \_\_\_\_\_

My name is (Insert Your Name, e.g. Jane Doe), I am a member of Council 94 and I work at (Insert State Agency/Facility e.g. Department of Administration.)

I am calling you to request that you help us oppose the supplemental budget cuts that target state workers.

This year the supplemental budget's proposals will:

- Raids our pensions by eliminating the Cost of Living Adjustments, establishing a mandatory retirement age of 59, and reducing disability pensions. (FY09/H-5019 Article 32)
  - The pension system was all ready reduced in 2005.
  - Please don't allow the governor to impose \$100 million cut to our system when it is illegal, unconstitutional, and unfair.
- Weaken State services during the worst economic crisis since the great depression by eliminating 893 state jobs. Many critical state services such as providing food stamps and providing unemployment benefits are so short staffed that Rhode Islanders who need help now are being forced to wait. (Article 1)
- Allow the administration to change rules, regulations, programs and protections that Rhode Islanders depend upon without public input or comment. (Article 2)

I know that the state and our country are facing tough times. But please remember that I just approved a contract that contained sacrifices including no pay raise for last year, health insurance co-share going to 20-25% of premium in the last year of the contract, and working one day without pay. Additionally a law passed ensuring that I will have to pay 20% of my health care premium cost when I retire.

As someone who lives, pay taxes, and votes in your district, I ask that you oppose the budget cuts that will harm the delivery of state, municipal and educational services.

Will you oppose?

- |   |     |    |           |
|---|-----|----|-----------|
| 1. Raiding my Pension & Eliminating the COLA:<br>(FY09 Budget Article 32)                     | Yes | No | Undecided |
| 2. Weakening state services during an economic crisis:<br>(FY09 Budget Article 1 & Article 2) | Yes | No | Undecided |

Thank you for your time and consideration. (END CALL)

**\*\* Also call Speaker of the House William Murphy at 222-2466, Senate President M. Teresa Paiva-Weed at 222-6655, House Finance Chairman Steven Costantino at 222-2738, and Senate Finance Chairman Daniel DuPonte at 222-3438 in addition to your Representative and Senator.**

**\*\*Please circle the Representative's or Senator's responses, and return the forms to your union president or steward. When calling the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, or Finance Chairs leave a message with the receptionist. Local union leaders are to return the forms to Council 94\*\***

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RI Council 94, AFSCME-AFL-CIO  
Sample Letter

Letter Writing Tips:

- Use the sample below to help write letters/emails to your state representative and state senator.
- Try to avoid writing the letters/emails word for word so that all letters do read exactly the same way.
- Sign your name and home address at the bottom of your letter/email.
- Add personal details on how the pension cuts and staffing shortages are hurting you, your families, and service recipients.
- Please mail written letters to the state representative & state senator home mailing address.

Sample Letter:

February 3, 2009

Dear State Representative <Insert Name> /State Senator <Insert Name>:

I am writing to ask you to oppose Supplemental Budget Article 32.

Budget Article 32 attempts to raid our pensions, establish a minimum retirement age of 59, and eliminate our Cost of Living Adjustments.

We believe that Governor Carcieri's efforts to impose these cuts upon vested employees are unconstitutional, illegal and unfair.

Many state employees all ready have had their pensions reduced in 2005.

I have worked hard for the state for many years and pay one of the highest employee contribution rates in the country at 8.75% of my salary.

Forcing another 1600 state employees out the door will weaken state services at a time when Rhode Islanders need access to vital services such as food stamps, unemployment benefits and Medicaid.

I hope you will oppose the cruel cuts contained in Budget Article 32. I look forward to your reply letting me know where you stand on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Sign Name  
Home Address