



February 13, 2009

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The Honorable David Paterson
Governor
Office of the Governor
State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Paterson:

As the largest union representing state and local government employees, the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) is acutely aware of the budget crisis facing almost every state, county, city and school district in this country. While revenues are plummeting, Medicaid rolls are soaring, revenues are shrinking, infrastructure is crumbling, and local law enforcement is stretched to the limit. With the 7.6% national unemployment rate, unemployment insurance call centers are crashing in several states, and too many unemployed workers are unable to access services.

But we do not have to tell you this. You are confronted with impossible budget choices every day. I want you to know that AFSCME has marshaled all of its internal institutional resources, and has worked tirelessly for over a year now with other national organizations in an effort to secure major new assistance to state and local governments in the economic recovery bill currently moving through Congress. AFSCME has played a leadership role by asking for House hearings focusing on the deteriorating fiscal situation, securing nearly 150 Democratic and Republican lawmakers to demand action, and mobilizing our local leaders and union members with over 40,000 phone calls, letters and emails of support for state and local aid. In recent weeks we have held more than 40 state and national press conferences, and just this week launched ads urging lawmakers to vote yes on the bill. AFSCME also led a coalition with Americans United for Change that has generated 50 press events across the country and generated another 100,000 phone calls by coalition partners.

Our efforts, along with yours and those of many other allies, are now paying off as Congress prepares for final action on the economic recovery bill. I am the first to admit that the bill, as extraordinary as it is, will not solve all of our national or state and local fiscal problems, but it provides substantial help. The new bill contains roughly \$225 billion in new fiscal relief for state and local governments. It includes over \$70 billion to stabilize budgets and prevent deep cuts to education programs; an \$87 billion increase in federal payments for Medicaid; \$150 billion for spending on infrastructure, including transportation facilities, roads and bridges, public transit, school construction, and energy efficiency projects; \$8.8 billion for flexible grants in the State Fiscal Stabilization Fund; and \$900 million for state administration of unemployment insurance and employment services. These are a few of the many federally funded programs that will provide much needed funding to state, county and municipal governments.

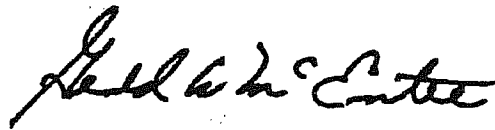
American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, AFL-CIO

TEL (202) 429-1000 FAX (202) 429-1293 TDD (202) 659-0446 WEB www.afscme.org 1625 L Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036-5687

As you make your budget plans, I urge you to consider the federal fiscal relief that will soon be flowing to your state or locality before taking any action that would reduce staffing and services. As you know, cutbacks of vital public services will only worsen economic hardship. We hope the economic recovery bill and the role AFSCME played in securing its passage will help you to remember the partnership public workers have with their elected leaders and the commitment we have to making our communities grow and making government work at all levels.

I greatly appreciate everything you have done to ensure that state and local fiscal relief is a significant portion of the federal economic recovery package.

Sincerely,



GERALD W. McENTEE
International President

GMcE:fb:gm

cc: George Boncoraglio
Danny Donohue
Raglan George Jr.
Veronica Montgomery-Costa
Eddie Rodriguez
Mary E. Sullivan
Lillian Roberts
Anthony Gingello
James Lyman
William Travis