

## NASW-NYS Political Post

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**A Penny Saved ...** In a move that many cited as shocking and others termed as a hostile move aimed at unions who have been engaged in testy “negotiations with the Executive, Governor Paterson announced a plan to slash the state’s workforce by six percent ( 8,900 positions) earlier in the week. The announcement followed a report that the state’s deficit had ballooned to \$16.2 billion...a \$2.2 billion increase over previous estimates. "This is not a decision that has been reached lightly," noted a message sent to agency heads Tuesday from Dennis Whalen, Paterson's director of state operations. The cuts are designed to save \$481 million over two years.” Media sources are reporting that the Division of Budget is finalizing a timetable and targets for various state agencies. Paterson’s office noted they had “been asking for state work force concessions since last fall, including the giveback of a 3 percent raise due April 1.” Additional requests by the Governor included asking state employees to accept a five-day pay "lag" whereby, they would sacrifice a week's wages: to be paid out in their retirement package. Unions, however, have rejected his requests. Paterson himself noted “Unfortunately, the labor organizations representing state employees have rejected all of the savings options put forward by the Paterson administration, as a result, the state is left with no other option.” Senate Majority Leader Malcolm Smith, offered the Governor his support... “We urge the union leadership who represent the public sector work force to step up and renegotiate a fair agreement that is consistent with the principle of shared sacrifice.” Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, however, offered a softer, however, short response ... "This is an unfortunate turn of events. I would hope that the Governor and the public employee unions can come together and avoid this painful step."

**Show Me the Money ...** Speaking of the Budget, as of press time, the budget process has remained a closed door process this year, with little leaked information and lots of closed door meetings. Rumors around the capitol halls cited they were indeed pushing for an on time April 1 budget. Meanwhile, self made billionaire Tom Golisano is offering to bankroll any legislator who bucks legislative leaders and rejects the closed door budget, noting, “only a few independent Democrats need to stand with Republicans to break the 32-30 Democratic majority in the Senate.”

**Working 9-5 ...** President Obama spent a considerable amount of time in the halls of the nation’s capitol this week attempting to gain support of “skeptical Senate Democrats” for his \$3.6 trillion spending plan. His mission was said to have “focused attention on the core initiatives that unite the party while downplaying the issues that divide it.” Good luck with that Mr. President!