

Educators, First Responders Tell Governor, Legislature to “Stop Firing People” in New Ads

Radio, online video and digital ads launch today; urge elected leaders make better choices than cuts to vital services, layoffs of state employees to protect Connecticut’s quality of life

Hartford - Ads featuring teachers and first responders begin airing today in ongoing efforts to protect vital public services by asking the wealthiest to pay their fair share, not firing public employees. The latest ads urge Governor Dannel P. Malloy and legislative leaders make better choices to close state budget shortfalls and run through April 28.

In a radio ad, two Connecticut educators and a police officer (AFSCME Local 749’s Chuck DellaRocco) say they and other public employees serve their communities whether the economy is up or down.

“Now it’s time for Gov. Malloy to show up for them by closing the budget shortfall without sacrificing their livelihoods,” the ad says. “The solution’s pretty simple. Ask Connecticut’s wealthiest taxpayers to pay their fair share. Because there’s nothing fair about our public workers paying higher tax rates than the richest 1 percent.”

In a video ad, the announcer says, “Tell Gov. Malloy and the legislature to stop firing people who serve our communities.”

In the first round of layoff notices, 362 state employees between yesterday and Monday have received pink slips. The governor has threatened to eliminate up to 2,500 jobs to close the budget gap in the next fiscal year.

In one of two digital display ads, the message to Gov. Malloy and the legislature is, “Stand with us. Demand the 1% pay their fair share.”

These latest ads are a joint effort by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), AFT Connecticut and Council 4 AFSCME. The unions represent a combined 65,000 public and private sector workers throughout Connecticut, including over 22,000 state employees.

“State employees help protect our environment and public safety, provide affordable public education and deliver essential services to seniors, the disabled, veterans and others in need,” said AFT Connecticut President Jan Hochadel. “What is called for here is the political courage to cut waste, fraud and abuse and ask the rich to pay their fair share of taxes.”

“Laying off public workers and slashing vital public services is a recipe for economic disaster,” said Council 4 AFSCME Executive Director Sal Luciano. “Now more than ever, it’s imperative that our elected leaders restore taxes on Connecticut’s wealthiest wage earners to protect our quality of life.”

“Good leadership requires the backbone to ask the wealthiest to pay their fair share to close a budget shortfall, not fire the people who do the work that all residents depend on,” said AFT President Randi Weingarten. “The insistence by the governor and legislature to cut public employee jobs and the services they provide hurts Connecticut residents who deserve and expect quality public education, safe neighborhoods, adequate nurse staffing and regular inspections of things we take for granted like safe elevators, poultry and agriculture.”

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