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CSEA, PEF Reach Agreement with Paterson Administration to Avoid State Layoffs Without Reopening Contracts

ALBANY — The Civil Service Employees Association (CSEA) and the New York State Public Employees Federation (PEF) have come to an agreement with Gov. David Paterson to achieve long term savings, avoid massive state layoffs and maintain essential services without reopening union contracts.

Under the terms of the agreement hammered out between the governor's office and the unions, the state will shed payroll by encouraging employees in targeted positions to take a cash buyout to leave state service. The buyout will be available to all employees in the targeted positions. The Paterson Administration is pledging that it will not pursue layoffs over the next two years as it seeks to gain savings and maintain services.

There will also be a Labor/Management effort to better employ the negotiated voluntary reduction in work schedule program included in both unions' contracts, to help achieve state payroll savings.

CSEA and PEF will accept Governor Paterson's proposed legislation seeking to establish a Tier V in the state retirement system for new hires after a specified date in the future. The union's movement on Tier V reflects the reality of current economic conditions and the fact that it will only apply to future hires. There will be no negative impact on the retirement rights and provisions of current employees.

"From the start, CSEA has remained focused on not just protecting our members but also the essential services we provide to New Yorkers every day," said CSEA President Danny Donohue. "CSEA recognizes these are extraordinary times with unprecedented challenges and we have tried to find ways to help without reopening contracts. We believe the agreement worked out with the governor's office achieves all of these aims."

"The governor moved significantly from his original demands for major contract concessions from the state's work force," said PEF President, Ken Brynien. "Considering the deteriorating condition of the state's finances this represents a reasonable accommodation which preserves the integrity of our contract and provides cost savings to the state in lieu of layoffs. We will continue to push the governor and legislature to reduce the reliance on costly consultants as a way for the state to address future financial crises."

Both union leaders praised their members for standing strong during this difficult fight to preserve our contracts and the essential services our members provide.

CSEA and PEF together represent more than 120,000 state Executive branch employees.