



Vermont State Employees' Association

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My name is Shelley Martin. I am President of the Vermont State Employees' Association.

Thank you, Chairwoman Johnson and members of the Committee, for the opportunity to testify.

I am here on behalf of my thousands of colleagues – Vermont's state employees. We are concerned about many of the proposals on the Composite Reduction List that was released two weeks ago.

Of particular concern is the list of cost-cutting ideas that are subjects of our collective bargaining agreements with the State. Specifically, I am referring to the proposal to reduce state employee compensation by 10% by 2020, adjustment in mileage reimbursement, underfunding of our health care plan and decrease in health benefits.

We feel that these proposals amount to a tax – an unfair tax – on state employees. Taxes should be applied in a broad-based way, focusing on the very fortunate Vermonters at the top.

My colleagues and I have not been immune from the effects of the struggling economy of the past ten years. I would remind people that, just recently, in 2009, state employees did agree to open our contract and agreed to a pay decrease and pay freezes. Meanwhile, state employees often have second jobs and wonder when the economic recovery is going to reach us.

I respectfully ask that your committee refrain from passing a budget that specifically targets state employees. Instead, I urge you and your fellow lawmakers to pass a budget that calls for a more proportionate contribution from the few who have realized substantial economic success to the detriment of the rest of us.

Thank you.