



October 21, 2009

The Honorable Darrell Steinberg
California State Senate Pro Tempore
State Capitol Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: October 15 News Conference on “The High Cost of Furloughs”

Dear Honorable Steinberg:

We are gratified that Ken Jacobs of the UC Berkeley Center for Labor Research and Education has now documented that Governor Schwarzenegger’s three-day mandatory furlough program fails to meet savings targets and is damaging essential state programs.

We have long contended that the current furlough program is destructive because:

- The State loses federal funding
- CalPERS contributions drop, leading to increased employer contributions in the out years
- Revenue collections are reduced
- Public health and safety programs suffer
- Economic activity drops from the reduced state payroll
- The Sacramento area economy is especially hard hit due to the high concentration of state employees who live and work in this region

In addition, your own office of on Oversight and Outcomes has concluded that savings “scored” from the furloughs are “illusory for at least a third of the roughly 100,000 state employees paid from the general fund.”

Now that we have credible evidence the three-day furlough is failing to meet savings targets, and a one day furlough program serves at least as well, we urge you to pressure the governor to reduce monthly furlough days from three to one. We ask you to use your considerable influence and leverage to speak out strongly. Demand that the governor reduce this unfair and unproductive burden on state scientists and all state employees.

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We remain strongly opposed to the mandatory furlough plan regardless of days per month or duration. We will continue to press our legal claims to see the program overturned as an illegal pay cut. We contend that the proper place to address savings from the state employees is at the bargaining table. But without modification to this program, we must wait for the courts to act, and that will take several more months.

In the meantime, you can help by using the considerable influence of your office and personality to persuade the governor to at least scale back this ill-conceived and destructive program.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patty Velez", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Patty Velez
President