

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“DO AS I SAY, NOT AS I DO”

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2009, LANSING, MICHIGAN—Governor Jennifer Granholm’s \$39 million across-the-board proposed state government budget cuts are a perfect example of, “Do as I say, not as I do,” according to Scott Dianda, president of the Michigan State Employees Association (MSEA) which represents state workers in Labor and Trades plus Safety and Regulatory.

“State workers are being told that they must sacrifice yet again,” Dianda said. “The one percent pay raise that we negotiated in our last contract doesn’t even begin to keep up with the cost of living. In addition, over 60 percent of new state workers are in a 401K and one percent over 30 years means a lot to them.”

He noted that the proposed budget cuts are bound to adversely affect already shaky employee morale.

“Some state workers had to take unpaid days at the end of 2008,” Dianda said, “and many state workers are already doing the jobs of two or three people.”

“State employees watched while the huge 38 per cent salary increase for legislators went into effect in 2001--plus it was retroactive for one year,” Dianda said. “Michigan legislators have the second highest pay rate next to California.”

“Millions of taxpayer dollars also could be saved by cutting legislators’ lifetime benefits that they receive after working a total of six years. This is in stark contrast to the 11 percent of Michigan residents who lack health insurance--and the figure is quickly rising.”

Dianda observed that state government is top-heavy with management.

“Departments have multiple supervisors, a director, a deputy director and then a top director. Many of them make over \$100,000 a year. How about cutting jobs from the top down rather than from the bottom up?”

Dianda says state workers certainly recognize that these are tough economic times, especially in Michigan.

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add 1—“Do as I say, not as I do”

“It’s hard to swallow the Governor’s 10 percent proposed pay cut for legislators and government officials when it won’t even take affect until 2011—after she and many other current officials have left office.”

“So many people are hurting in Michigan that this ‘Do as I say, not as I do,’ mentality isn’t helping at all.”

Dianda indicated that changing the structure of state government would be a positive move, but cautioned that changes need to be carefully scrutinized to be sure that they really will save money in the short-term as well as in the long-term.

“MSEA has many practical cost-saving measures to propose for state government,” Dianda said. “We want to be part of the solution.”

The Michigan State Employees Association has been located in Lansing since 1950.

“It’s in our constitution that MSEA must be located in the city of Lansing,” Dianda said, emphasizing that MSEA is committed to Lansing and to Michigan.

“In fact, MSEA is building the time capsule for Lansing’s 150th birthday celebration in 2009,” said Dianda. “We want to make sure that in the next 150 years, Lansing is very productive and MSEA is still going strong.”

“We need to all work together to make sure that this happens.”

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NOTE TO EDITOR: PHOTO ATTACHED

SUGGESTED OUTLINE: *Scott Dianda, president, Michigan Sate Employees Association (MSEA)*