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**TIME IS RUNNING OUT...WE NEED A RESPONSIBLE BUDGET NOW!**

**TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2009, LANSING, MICHIGAN**—“There are only eight more days of sand in the State budget hour glass before the deadline of September 30,” said Scott Dianda, President of the Michigan State Employees Association, at a rally on the steps of the Capitol Building which featured a giant hour glass with sand running through it.

Dianda urged legislators to pass a responsible state budget.

“It is unacceptable that our leaders in the House and Senate are negotiating in secret backroom meetings!” said Dianda. “They have recommended nearly \$1.5 billion in cuts at the state, local and school levels with no input from anyone affected. “

“We all know that Michigan is facing difficult times...that’s nothing new. For a decade, we have cut services, laid off workers and shut down programs that the citizens of this State need and use every day. A budget that puts Michigan families in jeopardy by cutting the most basic of public services hurts everyone.”

Dianda pointed out that legislators have known of the looming budget deadline for months, but still found time to take weeks of paid vacation throughout the summer.

“While State workers were forced to take unpaid layoff days to help balance last year’s budget, our elected Representatives spent weeks away from their desks,” said Dianda. “Half the legislators are even going up to Mackinac Island this weekend! With their busy vacation schedules, we hope our Representatives will find the time to do their jobs and pass a responsible budget.”

Dianda highlighted areas in a responsible budget:

- Making sure that Michigan’s children have access to quality education.
- Making sure that their school buses are being inspected for safety.
- Making sure that Michigan keeps its Promise to students who want to continue their education.
- Making sure that there are enough firefighters and police officers to keep people safe.
- Making sure that our prisons stay open and that criminals are kept behind bars.
- Making sure that the State’s Capitol Building is guarded and secure.

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*add 1—MSEA Capitol Rally*

“A responsible budget should absolutely include a complete review of all State contracts,” said Dianda. “Nineteen billion tax payer dollars are wasted on contracts we don’t need!”

He emphasized that State workers are not the reason that Michigan doesn’t have a budget.

“State workers are not responsible for the political mismanagement and failed leadership of our elected Representatives.”

“A responsible budget will not ask State workers to give up their measly one percent pay increase which doesn’t even keep up with the cost of living in these expensive times,” said Dianda. “A responsible budget will not ask State workers to—once again—pay more for their health care when they have already given up so much and when health care costs have doubled!”

Dianda ended the Capitol Rally by reminding listeners that “Legislators work for US!”

The crowd chanted, “Get To Work! Get To Work! Get To Work!”

The Michigan State Employees Association (MSEA) was founded in 1950 and has over 5,000 members, representing primarily State, but also county and university employees. MSEA is affiliated with the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Local 5 of the AFL-CIO.