

Louisiana Federation of Teachers

Weekly Legislative

Digest

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2018 Third Extraordinary Session

Now available on the Web at <http://la.aft.org>

At last!!!

Legislature steps back from budget cliff

When it all came down to a vote, lawmakers didn't even need the full 10-day special session to take a step back from the fiscal cliff and compromise on a multi-year budget fix that sets Louisiana on a more stable, reliable course.

To be sure, it's not the fairest solution possible. HB 10 (now Act 1), extends one-half of a one percent sales tax set to expire on July 1 through mid-2025. That means our state will still have one of the highest sales taxes in the nation, and sales taxes fall hardest on lower income workers.

Nonetheless, it is a victory for common sense and compromise. A hard core faction of extreme conservatives had blocked any resolution through two special sessions earlier in the year.

Although the session was slated to last until Wednesday, June 27 (at a cost to taxpayers of \$60,000 a day), the House of Representatives and Senate agreed on Sunday to the bill, which will raise some \$463 million.

The bill by Rep. Paula Jones (R-Baton Rouge) means that most state agencies will not suffer budget cuts. TOPS, food stamps, safety net hospitals and nursing home residents are safe for the year in the \$29 billion state budget.

A stable budget gives hope to teachers and school employees who will renew efforts to win state pay raises in the coming year. A first step will be to demand that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education ask the legislature to reinstate an annual inflation factor in the

Minimum Foundation Program, which funnels state funds to local school boards. A portion of the MFP increase would go toward salaries.

Senator Eric LaFleur (D-Ville Platte) set the table for a raise when he told reporters that he expects educators to campaign for pay raises in the coming months.

A recent LFT survey showed that overwhelming majorities of educators favor some sort of job action to win pay raises. The MFP has been frozen for 10 of the last 11 years, and only one state raise was granted to teachers in that time.

Please take a moment to thank your senator and representative if they voted in favor of HB 10. [Here is a link to the Senate vote](#), and [here is a link to the House vote](#). If you don't know who represents you, [click here](#).

As for those who voted against the compromise for a stable, predictable budget, remember them when elections for the House and Senate are held in fall of 2019.