



March 20, 2008

Contact:

Marty Beil 608-836-0024

Rich Abelson 414-244-6868

Rick Badger 608-836-4040

Senate Democrats' Budget Plan Protects Services and Working Families  
*AFSCME Leaders ask Lawmakers to Sit Down on Tuesday to Forge a Final Budget*

Wisconsin's three AFSCME directors today applauded Senate Finance Committee action Thursday to advance a budget plan that protects services important to working families.

"Two weeks ago the Governor delivered a budget repair plan that supported school aids, Shared Revenue and the state employee Compensation Reserves," said AFSCME Council 40 Executive Director Rick Badger. "The Assembly axed the Governor's plan, and now the Senate has developed a budget plan that builds upon what the Governor delivered."

"Senate Democrats developed a budget that keeps the focus on protecting the interests of working families," said Marty Beil, Executive Director of AFSCME Council 24, the Wisconsin State Employees Union. "They cast aside the irresponsible Assembly GOP budget plan, which calls for cuts of \$250 million and merely passes off the tough decisions to state agency officials."

"Senate Democrats' proposal provides \$18.6 million to pay for the shortfall in the state childcare program that provides childcare assistance to thousands of low-income families and which will help keep hundreds of small business owners afloat," said Rich Abelson, Executive Director of AFSCME Council 48 of Milwaukee, noted Abelson.

Council 40 Director Badger supports the Senate Democrats' budget plan because it allows for the \$76 million in newly-available federal funding to be used for the state highway rehabilitation program. "Their plan provides money for highway maintenance, and recognizes the toll this winter has taken on our roads," said Badger.

The three AFSCME directors also applauded the Senate's commitment to enacting a "hospital assessment", which will raise hundreds of millions of dollars that will be used to lower health care costs, and closing corporate tax loopholes to help bring more fairness to our tax system.

Expecting swift action Tuesday on the Senate Democratic budget plan, Abelson, Beil and Badger urged legislative leaders to come to the bargaining table and negotiate a final budget product.

"We call upon Senate and Assembly leaders, in concert with the Governor, to sit down together on Tuesday and begin hammering out a budget," said Marty Beil. "Working families cannot afford a stalemate. It is time to do the heavy lifting that will be necessary to deliver a responsible budget for the taxpayers of this state."

###