



## News Release

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### **Arizona American Federation of Teachers Recommends Plan to Pay for Additional School Funding, Educators' Pay Raises**

**PEORIA, Ariz.**—The Arizona American Federation of Teachers offered a realistic plan today to pay for additional school funding and much-needed pay raises for teachers and other school staff.

Since 2008, Arizona has cut \$1.5 billion in education funding. To restore those massive cuts and create a continuous revenue stream for funding public schools and educators' salary hikes, the union recommends a 2.5 percent tax on services, such as haircuts, legal services and other consulting services. It would raise an estimated \$2.65 billion annually.

“For years, Arizona has shown utter disdain for public education by slashing school funding and ignoring the devastating consequences for every student. This hurts every child’s future and the future of our state,” said Ralph Quintana, president of the Arizona AFT. “The only way to have a reliable source of funding is through a new tax. Gov. Doug Ducey’s idea of taking money already designated for other worthy purposes is a ‘rob Peter to pay Paul’ scheme that is wrong and unacceptable.”

Quintana noted that Oklahoma—which also has a Republican-controlled legislature and a Republican governor—just approved several new taxes to restore decades-long school funding cuts and pay for salary increases for teachers and other school employees.

The additional revenue raised from a new tax could be used to:

- Fix older school buildings and build new ones—and pay off the lawsuit that contends the state hasn’t provided the required money for school site maintenance.
- Create curriculum that is aligned to the state’s standards and provide classroom necessities from modern technology to basic classroom supplies.
- Provide 100 percent funding for all-day kindergarten and for pre-K programs.
- Restore arts programs, alternative education programs for special education students and classes for gifted students.

- Provide a salary increase for all school staff—teachers, paraprofessionals, custodians, secretaries and others.

“Our students, educators, parents and communities have been backed up against a wall for more than a decade. The state has devalued and disinvested in public education and disrespected public school teachers and other school staff, which has hurt recruitment and retention. The public supports a fully funded public education system, and the way to do it is through a new revenue source,” Quintana said.

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