

June 29, 2009

Dear NCATA Members,

As we start the week at the General Assembly I wanted to provide a quick update. As you know, the General Assembly and the Governor have been struggling to put together a budget in very difficult times. We all know that the State is facing a major economic downturn.

First let me discuss the budget process. The General Assembly adjourned last Thursday without a budget. There seems to be no hope that there will be a budget in place for the next fiscal year by the July 1 deadline. In fact, the Senate passed a continuing resolution last week and the House passed its version last night. I am sure they will work out the differences today and have a continuing resolution in place before Wednesday.

The situation at the General Assembly is very uncertain at this time but some issues are clear. As it effects funding for Teacher Assistants, the major decision to be made is not on the spending side of the budget but is rather on the revenue side. The House passed a tax package that raised about 790 million dollars in additional revenue. The Senate is considering a tax package of about one billion dollars. The Governor has called for and has campaigned for additional revenues totaling one and a half billion dollars. In her public appearances around the state, the Governor has included teacher assistants as a justification for her tax proposal. I had encouraged the Governor's staff to include teacher assistants and am pleased when she did.

We continue to make our case to the conferees and to the leadership. From our discussions, one thing seems clear. Any restoration of funding for teacher assistants will depend on the size of the tax increase. Should the budget include only the taxes raised by the House, we will not see any of our funds restored. Our best hope is for the Governor's package to be adopted.

Members, please contact members of the General Assembly and ask them to support the Governor's package.

Sincerely,

*Steve Metcalf*

NCATA Governmental Affairs Specialist