



**California Federation of Teachers**  
American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Wednesday, August 29, 2012**

*Contact: Steve Hopcraft, 916/ 457.5546, [steve@hopcraft.com](mailto:steve@hopcraft.com); Twitter: @shopcraft  
Fred Glass, 510/ 579.3343; [fglasscft@gmail.com](mailto:fglasscft@gmail.com)*

**The following statement was issued today by the California Federation of Teachers on the pension reform legislation:**

We are disappointed that some elements of the pension reform plan currently before the Legislature scapegoat public employees who have spent years educating our children, cleaning our schools, providing services for the needy and ensuring public safety. Public employee pensions are not the main cause, or even a major cause, of the State's on-going budget problems, and portrayals as such are misleading.

Our state budget woes are overwhelmingly the result of inadequate taxes on the wealthy and corporations, and the impact of the recession on state revenues. Blaming hardworking public employees for the Wall Street-driven financial crisis that led to pension fund shortfalls is not acceptable.

CFT has always supported correction of abuses of the system such as "spiking," which in any case was almost exclusively the province of highly paid managers and administrators. The vast majority of public employees earn modest salaries, already contribute to their retirement fund, and retire on very modest compensation.

Due to the decisions of corporate shareholders to increase their profits by jettisoning reasonable pension programs for their workers, public employees are put in the position of seeming to have something "special" with a modest pension, which after all represents deferred salary. We hope the lesson that emerges from this pension reform episode is that all workers, whether public or private sector, deserve to enjoy decent lives after they finish their careers.

*The CFT represents 120,000 education professionals working at every level of the education system from ECE to the University. The AFT has more than 3,000 local affiliates nationwide, 43 state affiliates, and more than 1.4 million members.*

**For more information please visit: [www.cft.org](http://www.cft.org)**