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Fwd: Statement from SEANC Executive Director Ardis Watkins on the state budget

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To: Molly Steur <msteur@ednc.org>

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From: **Jonathan Owens**

STATEMENT FROM SEANC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ARDIS WATKINS on the State Budget:

“Legislators love to tell us how well North Carolina’s economy is doing, but this budget looks like the work of a state that’s struggling.

State employees got no raise last year, while their healthcare costs went up dramatically. This year, most will only get 3% — which doesn’t keep pace with inflation for this year much less makes up for last year.

Retirees get a one-time 2.5% payment, not a permanent cost-of-living adjustment — lawmakers’ own budget documents call it “one-time.” Next year, it’s gone.

Meanwhile, the state is cutting hundreds of positions from agencies whose mission is public health and safety.

Finally, \$1 billion is being unappropriated without an explanation rather than fund real raises and a lasting COLA. What is the plan for that money?

If N.C. is being run like a business, it is a business in terrible financial shape. Cutting the workforce, shutting workers out from any raise only to follow it with peanuts. This is what a business does when it’s in trouble.”

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