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Groups Urge Leaders to Carefully Approach State Spending Cuts

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A special legislative session will be held later this month to discuss the 2010 budget.

CHARLESTON -- The Legislative Action Team for Children and Families will hold a press conference urging caution in approaching state spending cuts on Monday, May 11.

The legislature is scheduled to reconvene May 26 to finalize West Virginia's 2010 budget. The group supports Governor Manchin's public statements in support of using stimulus funds to avoid major cuts.

Groups affiliated with the Legislative Action Team, which advocates for working families and their children, are concerned that major cuts in state spending could worsen the recession, trigger further job losses, and erode public services that are most needed in hard times. They urge legislators to take the path of minimizing the harm from major budget cuts by taking maximum advantage of federal stimulus funds.

"A recession is, by definition, a decline in economic activity," Jim McKay, Task Force convener, said. "Deep cuts in state spending could lead to a further decline, harm vulnerable families, and undercut the foundations of West Virginia's future recovery."

"West Virginia's crisis is one of revenue, not spending," according to Ted Boettner, executive director of the West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy. "Our current problems were caused by a global recession we didn't create and not by out of control state spending. Almost all states are taking advantage of stimulus funds to weather the storm"

According to Rick Wilson, director of the American Friends Service Committee WV Economic Justice Project, "Eighty percent of state general revenue funds go to public education, higher education, and health and human resources. These and other programs are vital to the current and future well-being of state residents."

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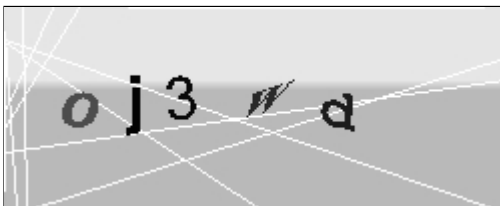
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