

Savage attack on public sector pay: Government must live with consequences

Teachers will suffer a cumulative pay cut of approximately 17%, including an average 6.25% public service pay cut in Budget 2010, a public service pension levy of approximately 7.5% in 2009, and increases in health and income levies which were applied to all workers in 2009. Members cannot afford this devastating loss to their incomes. Members who have high childcare and mortgage costs will find it nigh impossible to make ends meet.

Changes to the pension scheme for public service workers will make it much more difficult to recruit talented, committed people into teaching from now on. Public sector pensions have always been seen as deferred earnings by teachers. In addition to this, teachers and other public sector workers were subjected to a campaign of vilification prior to Budget 2010. All of this does not bode well for the future of Ireland's public services.

Budget 2010 main features

- ◆ Pay cuts for teachers/ public servants (see page 4)
- ◆ New pension scheme, retirement age for new teachers/ public servants
- ◆ No cuts to pensions for current teachers/ public servants
- ◆ Pension parity damaged
- ◆ Teachers/ public servants retiring in 2010 will not have cuts included in pension and lump sum calculations
- ◆ No change to pupil-teacher ratio
- ◆ 500 extra teachers at primary and second-level over next 3 years
- ◆ No change to capitation grants
- ◆ Restoration of certain grants (e.g. grant for school books)
- ◆ Cut in capital building programme
- ◆ Change to uncertified sick leave arrangements in voluntary secondary sector

ASTI General Secretary, John White has described the pay cut as “**a savage diminition of the standards of living of teachers**”.

For detailed information on Budget 2010 and how it affects teachers/ education visit www.asti.ie. ◆

Dáil Vote on Pay Cuts – Join the Protest

The teacher unions and other public sector unions are staging a protest outside the Dáil next Tuesday, December 15th from 6-8p.m. ahead of the scheduled vote on the public sector pay cuts. ASTI members are encouraged to participate. Congregate under the ASTI banner on Molesworth Street.

Over the weekend ASTI members, members of the other teacher unions, and members of other public sector trade unions, engaged in a nationwide lobby of TDs ahead of this week's Dail vote on public sector pay cuts.

Representatives from the four teacher unions also lobbied TDs who are former teachers. ◆

Teacher unions say talks on transformation are over – see page 3

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Campaign of industrial action, non-cooperation

ASTI diaries – important notice

The ASTI 2010 diaries are currently being distributed to schools. The number of diaries being distributed to each school corresponds to the number of paid-up ASTI members in the school. School stewards are asked to distribute the diaries to paid-up ASTI members in their school (school stewards can check the number of paid-up members by contacting Ann Marie Ryan at ASTI Head Office).

School stewards who have not received their school's diaries by Tuesday, December 22nd are asked to contact Ann Marie Ryan at ASTI Head Office as soon as possible.

Contact: Ann Marie Ryan, ASTI Head Office. Tel: 01/6040172; email: amryan@asti.ie.

The ASTI will pursue a campaign of opposition against the Government's handling of the economic crisis and in particular the singling out of public servants.

ASTI Standing Committee has agreed that in association with the TUI, INTO, IFUT and the other public sector unions:

- ◆ Further sustained industrial action is inevitable.
- ◆ There will be an end to co-operation with the Government's transformation agenda.

The ASTI's view is that the Government has rejected working in partnership with teachers and other public servants. This is their decision and they will have to live with the consequences.

The ASTI believes that in this time of recession, it is unthinkable that a major group such as the public sector unions representing up to 350,000 workers are not party to an agreement aimed at addressing our current problems.

The ASTI will work in close co-operation with the other teacher unions and the other public sector unions in the coming days and weeks.

Ill-informed

The ASTI, in common with the other public sector unions, was astounded by the Government's decision to terminate the much-advanced talks between the unions and the Government just days before Budget 2010. This decision was based on ill-informed comment about the implementation of the proposed agreement between the unions and the Government. Amidst the welter of controversy generated by the breakdown of talks, it is important that members are aware of the facts.

Pay talks – the facts

The teacher unions had discussed with the Department of Education and Science that 12 days unpaid leave would be spread over a number of years and that a maximum of two days would be taken in any one year at times agreed with school management. This arrangement would have meant that any disruption to the operation of the school would have been kept to an absolute minimum and the continuity of education would have been preserved for pupils.

The Department of Education and Science proposed that teachers give an extra hour per week. It was made clear to the ASTI and TUI that this hour was not for teaching or supervision and substitution at second level but was for school development planning, induction of new teachers, and continuous professional development.

The advantages of the 12-days unpaid leave proposals included that it would have meant a temporary pay reduction and that the salary calculation for pension and lump sum purposes would not have been altered and pension parity was retained. The deduction imposed in Budget 2010 is higher than the temporary deduction, which formed part of the discussions at the pay talks. The budget also included a savage attack on pensions. ◆

Public sector savings 2009

The ASTI has learned that the following savings on public sector pay were made in the year 2009:

- ◆ €1.1 billion due to the public service pension levy;
- ◆ €300 million due to the moratorium on filling vacancies in the public sector;
- ◆ €1 billion due to the suspension of pay increases due under Towards 2016.

These figures show that public servants have already contributed €2.3 billion. The moratorium on filling vacancies does not apply in the education sector and following representations by the ASTI at the highest level of Government, the pupil/ teacher ratio will not be changed for the next two years. ◆

Teacher unions rule out talks on change

The general secretaries and presidents of the four teacher unions have met to consider the impact of the budget on teachers and their families and plan a response.

The leadership of the unions is determined to reflect the anger of teachers at the budget cuts to salaries and changes to pensions through a sustained campaign of opposition.

The four unions said the unilateral imposition of a pay cut in the budget was completely incompatible with social partnership which in the view of the four teacher unions is now over.

All of the unions categorically rejected out of hand any suggestion that talks on a transformation agenda could continue. The unions said government had its chance to talk last week but spurned the opportunity. "Those talks are over," said a spokesperson. "They will not be restarted."

Get the Latest News

The latest news on the Campaign Against the Pay Cuts is available on the ASTI website. Members are urged to visit the ASTI website on a regular basis over the coming weeks.

Members can also sign up for the ASTI RSS Feed for Latest News and have latest news items forwarded straight to their email.

www.asti.ie

How the pay cuts will affect you

Below is a table of deductions to gross salary, as included in an extract from the Annexes to the Summary of 2010 Budget Measures, published by the Department of Finance.

Salary	Deduction	%
€30,000	€1,500	5.0%
€35,000	€1,875	5.4%
€40,000	€2,250	5.6%
€45,000	€2,625	5.8%
€50,000	€3,000	6.0%
€55,000	€3,375	6.1%
€60,000	€3,750	6.3%
€65,000	€4,125	6.3%
€70,000	€4,500	6.4%
€75,000	€5,000	6.7%
€80,000	€5,500	6.9%
€85,000	€6,000	7.1%
€90,000	€6,500	7.2%
€95,000	€7,000	7.4%
€100,000	€7,500	7.5%
€105,000	€8,000	7.6%
€110,000	€8,500	7.7%
€115,000	€9,000	7.8%
€120,000	€9,500	7.9%
€125,000	€10,000	8.0%
€175,000	€21,250	12.0%

Below is a table showing reduction in take home pay, taking into account the pension levy, health and income levy increases and Budget 2010 pay cut.

Salary	Approx. reduction in take home pay due to pension levy; health, income levy increases; Budget 2010 pay cut
€30,000	€3,000
€40,000	€4,250
€50,000	€5,000
€60,000	€6,500
€70,000	€8,100