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January 15, 2021

The Honorable Bill Lee  
Governor, State of Tennessee  
State Capitol, First Floor  
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Governor Lee,

As the governing body of the Tennessee State Employees Association, we write you today to ask you to include and support funding for pay adjustments for state and higher education employees in the FY21/22 state budget.

We know the Tennessee General Assembly is set to convene for a special legislative session on education to address urgent issues facing Tennessee students and schools in the 2021-22 school year, including learning loss, funding, accountability, literacy, and teacher pay. TSEA understands and agrees with the need for a special session on education. However, we believe it is also important to remember that the COVID-19 pandemic has also caused immense disruption for Tennessee's state employees.

Throughout the pandemic, our dedicated state employees have continued to keep Tennessee operating, providing uninterrupted services to our citizens, with many employees working on the front lines and in harm's way. And while we recognize that the special legislative session on education is not the appropriate time to discuss raises for state employees, we hope you will prioritize funding pay for state employees during the upcoming legislative session.

As you know, state employees continue to navigate worksite closures, service delivery method realignments, daily operational challenges in high-risk areas, and countless other hurdles. But, due to dire economic projections, the Tennessee General Assembly in June of 2020 eliminated funding in the state budget for the FY20/21 performance raises for state employees.

Today we are encouraged that the state economy is showing positive signs of growth. The [December revenue report](#) showed TN's yearly revenues for five months equaled \$732.8 million more than the budgeted estimate.

As you consider allocating funding for state employee pay adjustments, we hope you will consider the following:

- A July 1, 2021, pay-for-performance adjustment based on Performance Evaluation data from 2020 (this would make up for the raise cut from the budget last year)
- Hazard duty pay
- Reinstatement of the Longevity retention award for all
- Pay for performance adjustments for January 2022

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Our state employees continue to go above and beyond the call of duty, risking their health and safety daily. We hope we can count on you to recognize and reward their hard work, commitment, and dedication to serving the citizens of our state.

Thank you for all you do serving Tennessee and for your consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donnie Cole".

TSEA Board of Directors  
Donnie Cole  
President