



## 2009 SESSION: SEANC PROTECTS SERVICES IN TOUGH ECONOMY

SOMETIMES, IT'S NOT WHAT IS GAINED, BUT WHAT IS SAVED THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE. IN 2009, STATES ACROSS THE NATION SLASHED JOBS AND NORTH CAROLINA FACED ITS OWN \$4.8 BILLION BUDGET SHORTFALL. SEANC SUCCESSFULLY FOUGHT BACK MANY ATTEMPTS TO CUT STATE SERVICES AND BENEFITS.

### ■ **No mandatory furloughs for 2009-2010**

SEANC fought several furlough bills, including House Bill 708 that called for 20 furlough days per year and would have resulted in an 8% pay cut. Talk of a furlough bill allowing 50 days over 26 months never saw the light of day. *Twenty-two states* ordered mandatory furloughs for state employees.

### ■ **Longevity pay maintained**

In order to meet the budget shortfall, a two-year suspension on state employees' longevity pay was under consideration. This valuable benefit for experienced employees was saved during budget negotiations.

### ■ **No across-the-board pay cuts**

Senate Democratic leadership pushed for a pay cut of 5% for all state employees in a closed-door caucus meeting. SEANC's friends in the Senate stood strong in opposition to any across-the-board pay cuts.

### ■ **Employee protections maintained**

SEANC fended off attacks on employee rights, including Senate Bill 800, which would have placed DHHS employees on leave without pay during investigations. This bill presumed guilt before innocence and would have opened the door for all agencies to do the same. SEANC was also victorious in blocking a last-minute attempt to remove some employees from the protections of the State Personnel Act.

### ■ **Retirement system funded**

The state pension fund received \$29 million to keep it funded near 100%. SEANC has been the *only* association fighting for years to raise the employer contribution to match employees' 6% contribution.

### ■ **Thousands of jobs saved**

While the job cuts included in the state budget were serious, far more drastic cuts in excess of 2,000 positions were originally proposed by the legislature. SEANC was successful in getting many programs restored, such as DHHS' Division of Oral Health that provides dental care for underprivileged children. SEANC lobbyists and members made phone calls, sent e-mails and attended legislative sessions and committee meetings to lobby for the continuation of many programs.

### ■ **Legislators held accountable for State Health Plan vote**

When legislators voted to raise costs for State Health Plan members, while asking for no sacrifices from health plan administrator Blue Cross and Blue Shield of NC, SEANC ran radio ads and distributed fliers in legislators' home districts to let voters know which legislators chose big insurance over working families. SEANC was the *only* membership group to fight valiantly against Senate Bill 287 and to demand transparency of the secret, no-bid contract with Blue Cross.