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For Immediate Release**

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Campaign for Fiscal Equity and Alliance for Quality Education Respond to the 2009 State of the State

Statement of Geri D. Palast, Executive Director, Campaign for Fiscal Equity:

"Governor Paterson has been dealt a challenging hand, but he must address the economic crisis using the same principles of fairness and equity that he has supported throughout his career. The schoolchildren of New York State have operated at a deficit for more than 15 years. The 2007 resolution of the Campaign for Fiscal Equity litigation was designed to make them whole by prioritizing new funding for the neediest schools and students to provide for their constitutional right to a quality education. Yet the Governor is proposing a \$2.5 billion cut in this commitment this year. Before asking the poorest children in our state to sacrifice their futures, he must take every possible action to make good on this commitment by raising taxes on our wealthiest citizens and working for federal stimulus funds to fill the budget gap. The State will bounce back, but this is the only opportunity for these kids," said Geri D. Palast, Executive Director, Campaign for Fiscal Equity.

Statement of Billy Easton, Executive Director, Alliance for Quality Education:

"Governor Paterson hit the right message when he said that we must protect our school children, unfortunately there is a total disconnect between this speech and his budget that takes \$2.5 billion out of our schools," said Billy Easton, Executive Director, Alliance for Quality Education. "The Governor reiterated the call for shared sacrifice, but he is not listening to New Yorkers who overwhelmingly want those earning over \$250,000 to share in the sacrifice by paying a little more in taxes. While the Governor says he is concerned about rising property taxes, his policy of dramatic school aid cuts will result in higher property tax increase. It was a great speech, but on education the words do not meet the actions."

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