



## Cuts-only budget strategy under fire

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By Theresa Schmidt - [bio](#) | [email](#)

LAKE CHARLES, LA (KPLC) - Members of a broad based coalition are traveling the state to advocate a balanced approach to the state's budget woes, rather than a cuts-only approach. *Better Choices for a Better Louisiana* has formed to fight a cuts-only approach to dealing with the state's fiscal crisis.

Their campaign brought them through Lake Charles this morning. They say they want to prevent Louisiana from having to do less with less. The coalition includes AARP, the Louisiana Federation of Teachers-- the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill and organized labor. When it comes to the state's \$1.6 billion deficit-- they say a cuts only strategy is *not* the way to go



"We cannot cut our way to excellence. Louisiana citizens deserve a functional government that provides quality essential services," said Melissa Flournoy, Louisiana Progress director. She believes citizens of Louisiana will support taxes to offset devastating cuts to essential services such as education and health care.

Rather than decimate education, health care and services that affect quality of life they advocate increasing revenue-- by raising the so-called sin taxes on cigarettes, alcohol and gaming and by suspending stelly rollbacks passed in 2007 and 2008. Steve Monagham with Louisiana Federation of Teachers says the state's future depends on choices made now. "If we continue on the path we're going by 2030 this will be a state of very old people. You'll have to look very long and hard to find individuals of child bearing age."

As well, they advocate a moratorium on any new tax breaks and a review of all 441 existing tax exemptions. "In order to get our budget out of the ditch we need to increase revenue, which is \$939 million of tax increases that we're proposing and we need to cut the outflow of money from the state's fiscal coffers that we're losing through these 441 tax exemptions that are costing us over \$770 billion a year."

They plan to meet at the state capitol May 4th to urge lawmakers to adopt a budget that includes new revenues.

Member organizations plan to meet at the State Capitol at Noon, Wednesday, May 4th to urge lawmakers to adopt a budget that includes new revenues.

For more information about Better Choices for a Better Louisiana, including its principles and goals and a complete list of member organizations [click here](#). For a link to Louisiana progress [click here](#).

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