

New La. group fights against tax cuts

Written by

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A recently formed group composed of various organizations from around the state held a press conference Wednesday announcing their opposition to future tax cuts.

The organization, called Better Choices for a Better Louisiana, said the administration and legislators need to look at reducing "tax code spending" — not just budget cuts — to close a \$1.5 billion budget gap in the 2011-12 budget year that begins July 1.

"We need a more balanced approach to solving Louisiana's budget problems," said Edward Ashworth with the Louisiana Budget Project, a member of the organization that looks at how government spending affects low- to moderate-income families.

Group members will gather at the State Capitol on May 4 to urge lawmakers to adopt a budget that includes new revenues. The group contends that a budget based solely on cutting education, human services, health care and other vital services risks serious long term damage to the state and its people.

Steve Monaghan, president of the Louisiana Federation of Teachers, said there must be a broader conversation about what can be done to fill budget gaps, rather than a consistent expectation that cuts are the only answer.

The group's formation comes as pressure grows to find ways to offset deep budget cuts expected for public colleges and health care services in the upcoming fiscal year.

Among the 36 organizations listed as the group's members are the Agenda for Children, Children's Defense Fund, the LFT, the Louisiana chapter of the AFL-CIO, the Louisiana Association of Nonprofit Organizations, the Louisiana Primary Care Association, the state chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness and the Louisiana NAACP.

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