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## **Rep Terrie Wood, Sen Majority Leader Duff on State's New Union Agreement**

**Author :** David Gurliacci

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*State Rep. Terrie Wood, a Republican who represents most of Darien in the state House of Representatives, sent out this message on Tuesday to her constituents about the state's new agreement with public employee unions just approved by the state Senate (following her statement is a shorter one from state Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff):*

I am following up on my email to you all last week on the pending SEBAC (State Employee Bargaining Agent Coalition) agreement and vote.

With deep disappointment and equal dismay, I report to you that the State Senate approved this agreement to

unionized state employee contracts yesterday. The vote was along party lines, with all 18 Democrat Senators in favor, and all 18 Republican Senators opposed. The tie was broken in favor of the agreement by Lt. Governor Nancy Wyman.

I applaud Governor Malloy initiating negotiations with the state unions and respect that there are some positive provisions in the new agreement. Though a good start, ultimately this deal does not address the severity of our fiscal situation as much as it should. I opposed it when it came for a vote before the House last week.

Sold to us as a cost-savings measure, this new agreement fails to achieve the savings needed to help close the projected \$5.1 billion budget deficit we are facing for the next biennium. Because of that, it is highly likely that majority Democrats will raise taxes when they finally get around to submitting a budget.

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**See also:**

- [Wood: Not Enough Concessions in Renegotiated State Union Contract](#) (July 26)
- [Statement to Constituents from Rep Terrie Wood on State Budget Mess](#) (July 1)

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They have floated numerous tax-hiking schemes, most recently an increase in the sales tax. It is also likely that they will significantly cut municipal aid and some important social services.

In addition, this agreement locks the state in to a four-year no-layoff provision and guaranteed pay raises (3.5 percent) in the last two years of the next five. Further, it locks in benefits and extends the deal until 2027.

This means these things can't be revised until these time periods expire. There is great respect for our state employees for the good work they do, however, we simply need more balance and flexibility as a state.

House Republicans have had a budget proposal which achieved greater savings from state employee union contracts, while not raising taxes or cutting the most essential state services. The narrow majority refused to even allow a debate on it.

A month after this fiscal year began we are still without a budget proposal from the Democrats. We are now waiting to see what they will put forward, and I am deeply concerned that it will be more tax hikes, and a continuation of the failed policies that have gotten us where we are today.

Our responsibility as legislators is to address our budget difficulties with courage, common sense and compassion. I will continue to do this on your behalf.

*Editor's note state Sen. Carlo Leone and state Rep. William Tong, both Democrats, did not issue statements about the vote.*

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**Statement from state Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff and Senate President Pro Tempore Martin Looney**

*Duff, who represents Norwalk and about half of Darien, and Looney, a New Haven Democrat, issued [this joint statement](#) on Monday:*

Senate Democratic leadership today issued the following statements regarding the final Senate approval of an agreement with the state employee unions that will save taxpayers more than \$1.5 billion over the next two years:

“Today, Democrats in the Senate voted for significant contractual concessions and systemic reforms to our state employee labor agreements,” said Senate President Pro Tempore Martin M. Looney (D-New Haven). “The SEBAC agreement is the most critical single piece of the budget equation, and today Democrats in the Senate wiped out 30 percent—more than \$1.5 billion—of the projected biennial deficit.

“I want to thank my colleagues for their leadership and courage in approving this agreement.”

“This agreement is the latest step toward making government more affordable and more efficient for taxpayers,” said Senate Majority Leader Bob Duff (D-Norwalk).

“Outside independent analysts confirm that the new SEBAC agreement makes important long-term changes to our state employee pension and benefit programs resulting in significant savings for taxpayers — roughly \$24 billion over the next 20 years.”

“These savings are another important step toward reaching a final balanced budget that protects taxpayers, vital services and the important economic gains made here in Connecticut.”