

A Petition to the Members of the Board of Alders Finance Committee

The undersigned residents and taxpayers of New Haven wish to register our opposition to Mayor DeStefano's proposed 2010-2011 budget. The \$670,448,590 proposal is a large one and calls for a city-wide 9–11% tax increase, regardless of taxpayers' ability to carry this burden. This is unacceptable.

We agree with the Mayor that these times are not normal. We disagree emphatically, however, with the Mayor's proposed responses to these events. The Mayor's proposal does little to attack the real problem, which is rapidly escalating costs, well beyond the rate of inflation. We refuse to be deflected from this focus.

In normal times, those who want work can generally find it. In normal times, wages and salaries increase, real estate values rise, the stock market expands – and we can support tax increases. But these are not normal times. In households throughout New Haven, families are re-learning how to “do without”. In New Haven's businesses, and in our churches, colleges, and universities, responsible officials are finding ways to cut costs – not to control their growth, but to cut them. We affirm that, in these decidedly not normal times, New Haven's city government must do the same. As City Alders, you have the authority to demand changes in the proposed budget and not simply accept it with minor changes. As those who voted you into office, we deserve your protection and support.

We urge you to request that every department head identify ways to cut their actual expenses– not their proposals, but their current budgets – by 10% and to submit such reductions in a revised budget proposal. These are competent professionals who know how best to do this. They alone know how the dollar is spent and which activities provide the least value.

As an outside group we cannot presume to dictate where those cuts must be. We are confident, however, that competent professionals in every department know best how to cut 10% from their expenses with the least pain to New Haven's quality of life and critical City services. Let them use furloughs, freeze hiring, wages and salaries, health care benefits, or simply turn the lights off earlier. Let them identify the ways to achieve the 10% reduction. We expect that some services will be sacrificed, and we are reluctantly ready to deal with that. We are not ready for yet another tax increase.

We know that what we propose is difficult. But these are not normal times. We urge you to send the Mayor's proposal back and demand accountability from each and every department throughout this city. We love this city. We want this city to remain a great place to live for all.

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2010-11 Mayor's Budget Proposal to the New Haven Board of Aldermen, Petition Dated March 19, 2010

Sign a hard copy or the one online, but not both. Thanks

