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**15% Budget Cuts - Yet Classroom Dollars are Diverted to Union Salaries**

Salt Lake City, UT — February 23, 2009 — In a year of drastic budget cuts, Parents for Choice in Education (PCE) has initiated legislation, House Bill 381, to ensure that K-12 funding goes towards education expenses rather than teacher union salaries, as is the case in several school districts.

Through GRAMA requests and research of collective bargaining agreements, PCE discovered that some school districts pay as much as 50% of the local teacher union president’s salary even though they are granted full release time from their teaching responsibilities. See a sampling of what PCE discovered below.

District	Association President	Release Time Granted	Teacher Salary UtahsRight.com	% of Teacher Salary Paid by District	Estimated Amount of Teacher Salary Paid by District
Davis	Susan Firmage	Full-time	\$50,549	Up to 50%	\$25,274.50
Granite	Jay R Blain	Full-time	\$56,492	50%	\$28,246.00
Salt Lake	Virginia Ellison	Full-time	\$73,032	33.33%	\$24,344.00
				<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$77,864.50</b>

Not all school districts participate in this ethically questionable practice. For example, the Grand County School District’s policies state that “teachers who apply for said leave [as an association president] will not receive any salary or benefits during said leave.”

“One of the great concerns about bills this year is whether or not they have a fiscal note attached to them,” observed PCE Chairman Robyn Bagley, “this bill actually puts money back into the budgets of school districts—money that belongs in the classroom where it can directly benefit the children.”

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Parents for Choice in Education is dedicated to ensuring every child has equal access to a quality education by empowering parents, increasing choice, and promoting innovative solutions to Utah’s educational challenges.

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