A balanced budget will spur recovery

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Arizona faces huge challenges with the state's economy and the state budget deficit. That is why Children Action Alliance, the Arizona Education Association, the Protecting Arizona's Family Coalition and Service Employees International Union have joined together with other organizations from across the state to form the Arizona Budget Coalition (ABC).

ABC is ready to work with Governor Brewer and state lawmakers to build a budget that will help Arizona recover from the economic recession, allow our state to compete in the global economy, and create the kind of legacy we all want to leave for the next generation.

Like most Arizonans, the Arizona Budget Coalition believes that massive budget cuts take Arizona in the wrong direction and damage our economy, workforce, families, and future.

The dramatic budget cuts already adopted for this fiscal year have slashed private sector jobs in communities around the state as well as jobs throughout state government.

The cuts enacted in the 2009 revised budget threaten the services Arizonans care about most, including K-12 education, protecting children from abuse and neglect, home care for seniors, and rehabilitation and treatment for children and adults with disabilities.

These cuts have caused more harm to the state's economy and weakened the state's ability to recover from the recession. Some of the budget plans proposed for next fiscal year continue this damage and even include additional budget cuts that will cause more harm.

There are better options to balance the state's budget while protecting jobs, education, health and human services. The ABC has come together to present Governor Brewer and state legislators with a long menu of budget options that have already been identified and explored by legislators, researchers, and community leaders in fiscal studies and budget proposals.

These options include short term strategies, such as accounting shifts and delaying scheduled tax cuts. They also include longer term strategies, such as shoring up Arizona's capacity to collect state taxes that are already owed and raising taxes in fair and practical ways that keep us competitive with other states.

The menu shows that there are many good alternatives that give Arizona an opportunity to reverse the FY 2009 cuts that are causing a devastating impact on vital services and to avoid new cuts in FY 2010 that would destroy jobs, education, health, and human services.

The Arizona Budget Coalition includes organizations representing teachers, state employees, health care, seniors, children and families, private sector social services, and community and faith groups. Our

coalition stands united in supporting a budget that protects education, health, and human services so that Arizona can save jobs and build our future.

The Arizona Budget Coalition includes more than 30 organizations. The Steering Committee is Dana Wolfe Naimark, Children's Action Alliance, John Wright, Arizona Education Association, Tim Schmaltz, Protecting Arizona's Family Coalition, and Scott Washburn, Service Employees International Union.