

Study: Public sector to lose 51,000 jobs, 26,000 of those teachers, with new budget

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By **MARC KOVAC**

COLUMBUS -- Ohio's public sector stands to lose more than 51,000 jobs under the \$55.5 billion biennial budget proposed by Gov. John Kasich, a liberal think tank announced Thursday.

Innovation Ohio said its study of spending cuts to school districts, local governments and state agencies pinpointed 51,052 positions eliminated. The number represents direct job losses and doesn't account for indirect losses resulting from the economic plight of the newly unemployed.

"When Gov. Kasich talks about his budget being a jobs budget, the way most people understand that term is that would be a budget that creates new jobs, not destroys existing ones," said Dale Butland, a spokesman for Innovation Ohio. "... Since he's come into office, Ohio has gained about 22,000 jobs. The number of jobs that would be lost through his budget is more than twice that number."

But the governor's office countered the job loss numbers and defended Kasich's pledge against tax increases.

"It's political posturing," spokesman Rob Nichols said in a released statement. "These people (at Innovation Ohio) are former (Gov. Ted) Strickland staffers seeking to preserve the legacy of their former boss. They think the only way to solve Ohio's budget problems is to raise taxes. We can't do that and expect to see any job creation at all. It will kill jobs, kill this state and Gov. Kasich will not do it."

Innovation Ohio compared major budget cuts proposed in Kasich's budget with public worker salary data in calculating the job loss estimates.

Total direct jobs lost, the group said, would include more than 26,000 primary and secondary school and higher education teachers and staff, nearly 5,800 state workers and 18,000-plus local government employees.

"Ohio, like most other places in the country, has just started to experience economic recovery," Butland said. "Throwing this many more people out of work could easily stall or reverse that recovery. That's the real danger."

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