

## SENATE CONSIDERING RAISE FOR EMPLOYEES



Senators of the state are hoping to be able to give out an increase of \$28 million to state employees, which would actually amount to a 4 percent raise for each employee, something that the employees have not seen for quite some time now. However, in order to do this, they may end up having to raise the taxes for businesses, which is part of the reason why it has not been decided yet. This means that most likely, businesses would have to suffer during the process, which could cause some serious tension. It seems neither decision is necessarily a “win” situation. The house lawmakers have approved a 2 percent raise for the state employees by adding this amount of money to the state budget. The state budget is set to go into full force by July 1<sup>st</sup> of this year. The House already made agreements to spend nearly \$80 million as a way of helping different businesses to pay the state taxes as well. Businesses are already forced to pay taxes but in order to increase the pay of state workers, these businesses may end up having to pay higher than usual unemployment taxes. And, the advocates for these businesses are not necessarily happy about it at all, stating that the state employment agency has paid out over \$85 million worth of benefits just last year, along with the \$50 million that it paid in benefits to employees that had been fired from their place of work. And now, because of mistakes that are made, it seems that the different businesses in the area are the ones that have to suffer the most and are left being forced to pay out \$136 million as a way of making up for these foolish mistakes that were made. A vice president of the Chamber of Commerce, Darrell Scott, believes that all the money paid out for both fraud and misconduct will end up costing businesses, which ultimately puts a burden on them as well. Many can understand, however, why the senate is pushing for a pay increase. State workers have not been able to receive a pay increase since 2007, which is when the recession first began. In the meantime, hourly wages for employees in South Carolina who are working for the private sector have increased by a whopping 9.7 percent. Jackson believes that it is simply not fair. Jackson says that they do not expect a 9 percent raise and are not asking for it. They just want the 4 percent instead and this is something that the state employees are truly hoping on, especially since they have had to wait nearly five years for a pay increase.

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