

# Union Rips Special Needs Cuts

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**By Matt Pommer The Capital Times**

Union leaders are attacking a plan to cut special adoption offices and staff members as shortsighted in both fiscal and human terms.

Gov. Doyle's administration is moving to close five of the eight offices and eliminate 14.5 positions that handled special needs adoptions. Leaders of the Wisconsin State Employees Union hit the idea in a letter to legislators.

"These children are extremely high-risk kids," said the letter signed by WSEU Executive Director Marty Beil and Tom Corcoran, president of the union's Local 2748. "They may lie, steal, hoard food or act out sexually. They are angry and oftentimes direct their anger toward others. Only in a committed family do they have a chance of learning the skills needed to function in society.

"It is not even remotely reasonable to expect quality services when staffing is being cut in half," the union leaders said.

Some workers will face relocation, while others will face more time on the road; established relationships will be broken; and service will become substandard, they said.

"State adoption staff believe if these proposed changes occur, not only will it be a death sentence for the special needs adoption program but an additional financial burden to the taxpayers of Wisconsin," the letter continues.

Gov. Jim Doyle's biennial budget proposes the elimination of 2,900 state jobs as part of his effort to avoid tax increases. Doyle's office had no immediate response to the letter.