f'.t to the NEWS
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SHORT WORK
WEEKS

When federal, state or local governments are faced with the awful necessity of cutting down expenditures, their customary reaction is to cut off essential services first, so as to force the taxpayers to cough up more money. It was a breath of fresh air recently when Governor Ella Grasso of Connecticut announced a remarkable plan to eliminate the anticipated deficit in her state budget.

Her proposal did not involve closing schools, starving wel fare recipients, or even laying off state employees. Her idea was positively ingenious. She wanted to make Connecticut state employees work a 40-hour week instead of their present 35-hour week.

The short life of Governor Grasso's eminently sensible idea is a good lesson in why the cost of government always goes up, but never comes down. The special-interest spending lobbies are well-organized, militant, and prompt in their demands, while the long-suffering taxpayers who pay the costs are not.

Almost immediately after Governor Grasso announced her pro posal, the Connecticut State Employees Association authorized its president to call a strike, and the president of the Connecti cut Employees Independent Union announced that his members would strike even though they knew it was illegal. A few days later, state employees turned the hearings at the State Capitol into

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raucous, disorderly demonstrations, shouting down all those who tried to speak in support of Governor Grasso's plan.

The ones who ought to strike are the taxpayers. It probably comes as **a** big surprise to taxpayers who work a 40-hour week or more, and may even have to moonlight on the side in order to make ends meet, to learn that many government employees work only a 35-hour week, and are paid overtime for work beyond 35 hours.

New York State employees, many of whom work only a 37½-hour week, receive 42 paid days off per year (including 13 sick days). Ac cording to labor columnist Victor Riesel, this short work week requires the state to keep 20,000 extra employees on the payroll.

Federal employees with three years' service receive 44 paid days off per year, including 13 sick days and 11 paid holidays. When they reach 15 years' service, they receive 50 paid days off per year. In addition, there are extra holidays, such as the day after Christmas authorized by President Ford's executive order signed on December 16 in order to give a four-day weekend. This cost the U.S. taxpayers millions of dollars in premium pay for essential personnel who had to remain on duty, especially in the Defense Department.

The plain fact is_ that most government employees work less and receive more benefits than most taxpayers.

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