

WACH-TV, Columbia, SC

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By Jerrita Patterson

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COLUMBIA, S.C. -- Several people braved the cold temperatures on Tuesday at Finlay Park. They turned the park into a temporary "Tent City." And they're doing it to send a message.

The setup is called "Sanfordville." The message is for its namesake, Governor Mark Sanford. Those present want the governor to accept all available stimulus money. Organizers call the protest a last ditch effort to protect thousands of jobs.

Richland County Treasurer David Adams says South Carolina desperately needs the money.

"Lets use it to make sure we stop the bleeding and the pain in South Carolina," said Adams. "These people didn't work on Wall Street to create the problems. We are currently now paying for the sins of others."

The protest started at 10:00 a.m. and ended at midnight. Tuesday morning the park underwent a facelift of sorts, as protestors set up shop. Protestor Tim Kelly wants Governor Sanford to accept the more than \$700-million to help rebuild an economy that's on life support.

"We want to send a message to Mark Sanford now that South Carolina needs help now," said Kelly. "South Carolinians can't wait for two years for his plan to take effect."

By noon the South Carolina Education Association made it's presence known. According to state education officials, without the stimulus money districts will lose teachers and students will suffer.

Protestor Brady Quirk-Garvan says the thought of eliminating teachers is disturbing.

"Everybody has that teacher that made an impact in their life," said Quirk-Garvan. "And to think of them being laid off is pretty heartbreaking."

Teachers Bonnie Byrd and Marnette McKinney consider the governors actions reckless.

"If you have a choice between paying debt and feeding your children, you feed your children first," said Byrd. "Debt has to wait."

"Become a part of the United States of America in supporting the governments effort for us to get through these hard times," said McKinney.

By early evening State Representative Anton Gunn and former Governor Jim Hodges, joined the rally. In total nearly 30 people braved the chilly weather to shine light on stimulus money benefits.

The protestors hope Governor Sanford will warm up the idea of accepting the federal funds. In the meantime they say they'll continue camping out for change.