

MICHIGAN PARENTS FOR SCHOOLS
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Hon. George Cushingberry, Jr.
Chairman, House Committee on Appropriations
S0687 House Office Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

4 April 2007

Dear Chairman Cushingberry,

We are parents of children who attend Michigan public schools, and we are writing you today about Senate Bill 221, which is currently before your committee. As you know, this bill sets forth the Senate's plan to close the deficit in the School Aid Fund for the current fiscal year without finding new revenue. As part of that effort, the bill calls for a \$34 per pupil "proration" of the foundation allowance - in other words, a cut in State aid to schools well into their fiscal years.

We strongly urge you and your colleagues on the committee and in the House to develop an alternative proposal for closing the School Aid Fund deficit that does not involve cuts to districts so late in the year. You are aware, we are sure, of the number of districts statewide that could be pushed into insolvency with these cuts, and a much larger number of districts are near to exhausting their reserves after several years of school aid payments that have not kept up with inflation.

Moreover, while a cut of this size might have been manageable (if unwelcome) last summer, giving districts time to prepare, implementing this cut now will be extremely disruptive to most districts in the state. We are very worried about what this will mean for our children's schools.

We agree with educators and lawmakers from both sides of the aisle who argue that now is the time to invest in public education rather than pull the props out from under it. Asking for new funding, in the current economic climate, carries with it certain responsibilities: parents are justified in demanding that our local schools act as prudent stewards of public funds, and all groups involved need to be willing to make reasonable sacrifices. As parents and citizens, we are willing to do our part by making financial sacrifices so that our children's public schools can have adequate and stable funding. But under current law, we cannot make these kinds of decisions locally.

Most of all, we urge you and your colleagues to work toward a stable and lasting solution to the problems presented by our current system of school funding - one that is fair to our State's children as well as its taxpayers. The effort to close the current deficit in school aid may provide an opening to do just that.

Thank you very much for your consideration,

Steven & Lynda Norton
Jeannette Jackson
Janice & Andrew Lieberman
Jennifer Tanau
---- Michigan Parents for Schools

With the support of the following concerned parents and citizens:

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