



SCHOOL EQUITY CAUCUS

Making a difference for the public school children of Michigan

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CAUCUS INFORMATION ALERT

May 6, 2011

Dear Colleague:

Re: House approves School Aid bill.

Despite compelling reasons to avoid doing so, last night the House voted to approve their version of the 2011-12 School Aid bill (**HB 4325**). The voted bill is nearly identical to the K-12 version sent to the full House by the Appropriations Committee. It includes the 3.5% Foundation cut, the \$170 existing cut, and other elements reported in the April 20th *Caucus Information Alert*. It does include placeholders for Declining Enrollment and Small and Rural Schools funding.

The 57 representatives who voted for this bill ignored the House Fiscal Agency that next week will announce an extra \$500 million dollars in first quarter revenues, the coming Revenue Estimating Conference that is expected to forecast a continuing positive trend in revenues, assertions that community colleges and higher education should not be part of the SAF, persuasive local examples of the devastation the proposed cuts would inflict on students and schools, and polls that consistently show voters want schools spared the deep cuts being considered.

In the face of party pressure, several representatives, the significant few who could have blocked this vote, went back on their commitment. They said it was only to move the process forward, probably into conference committee where they will attempt to reconcile the Executive, Senate, and House bills.

This is not a last vote and the effort to improve the School Aid legislation is far from over. The same arguments and strategies we employed to make this vote closer than once thought possible, can be effective when the time comes for a final vote. Legislators, who rationalized that this vote is provisional and their constituents will have forgotten it by the next election, know they get a school funding do-over when the final version comes before them. Hopefully by then they will think harder about their legislative legacy in their home districts.

Thanks to those who contacted their legislators yesterday and especially to those who sent me reactions about their contacts. It may not feel like it today, but in large part through our combined efforts, I think we will see the cuts reduced in the final vote.

Jerry