K-16 Spending Mandate Proposal Deserves an 'F,' Says Michigan Chamber of Commerce

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The Michigan Chamber of Commerce today urged the Michigan Legislature to reject a Michigan Education Association-led coalition request for automatic inflationary increases in government spending for K-12 public schools, community colleges, and state universities.

"The Michigan Legislature has been generous in its support of public education in Michigan," said Rich Studley, Executive Vice President of the Michigan Chamber of Commerce. "We urge the State House and Michigan Senate to reject this self-serving, special interest group money grab."

The K-16 Coalition for Michigan's Future today received certification of their petition signatures for a statutory amendment to provide the spending mandate. The Legislature has 40 days to accept or reject the proposal. If accepted, the proposal becomes law. If the Legislature rejects the plan, the proposal goes to the statewide ballot on November 7. The non-partisan House Fiscal Agency has estimated that the proposal would cost approximately $1 billion more per year in state funding.

"Once voters understand the extraordinary cost of this spending mandate, they'll conclude this plan is wrong for Michigan," said Tricia Kinley, Director of Tax Policy & Economic Development for the Michigan Chamber. "The Michigan Chamber supports adequate funding for education, but a public debate about this issue will expose the fact that the education establishment has been treated very fairly since the state took over primary responsibility for funding education."

"In the decade following passage of Proposal A (1994-2004), state spending on K-12 education grew by 42 percent," Kinley added. "In addition, local school property taxes for operating purposes increased by 71 percent and local school property taxes for debt increased by 217 percent."

"The K-16 proposal will jeopardize funding for other critical services like police and fire protection, and will strain taxpayer wallets. It's bad public policy, wrong for Michigan, and we will do what it takes to defeat this proposal," Studley concluded.

The Michigan Chamber of Commerce is a statewide business organization which represents more than 6,900 employers, trade associations and local chambers of commerce. The Michigan Chamber was established in 1959 to be an advocate for Michigan's job providers in the legislative, political and legal process.

SOURCE: Michigan Chamber of Commerce

CONTACT: Tricia Kinley of Michigan Chamber of Commerce, +1-517-371-7669

Web site: http://www.michamber.com/

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