

Coalition to Stop the K-16 Spending Mandate Announces Formation

Group calls on Gov. Granholm and State Legislature to reject automatic, guaranteed funding increases

The Coalition to Stop the K-16 Spending Mandate, a growing alliance of taxpayers, local governments, and law enforcement officials, today called upon Governor Granholm and the State Legislature to oppose a proposal that would provide automatic, guaranteed annual increases in education funding.

"Education is a critical component to a well-functioning society and a prosperous economy. Unfortunately, this proposal circumvents the state budget appropriations process and removes a large sum of public money from annual financial oversight ... resulting in no accountability to Michigan citizens," said Jim Barrett, President & CEO of the Michigan Chamber of Commerce, on behalf of the coalition.

The K-16 education funding proposal calls for, among other things, annual increases in K-12, community college, and state university spending by the rate of inflation. Proponents of the guaranteed increases have collected enough signatures to have the State Legislature vote on the issue and place the proposal on the November ballot, if necessary.

"Decisions about state spending should be based on results, not guarantees," Barrett added. "This proposal sets a very bad precedent for allowing special-interest groups to have guaranteed funding no matter what it means to other critical services or taxpayers' wallets."

The non-partisan House Fiscal Agency has estimated the proposal would cost state government approximately \$1.1 billion more per year over current education spending. Nowhere in the lengthy wording of the petition is any reference to education quality, student achievement, test scores, or graduation rates.

"The Coalition to Stop the K-16 Spending Mandate supports adequate funding for Michigan's K-12, community colleges, and state universities," said Jerry Peterson, President of the Michigan Association of Counties. "However, if this proposal is adopted, public safety, local public health funding, and child support enforcement will be only a few of the key services which will be compromised."

"This proposal will also make it difficult for the Governor and Legislature to honor their commitment to counties to restore our revenue sharing dollars, further exacerbating cuts to these mandated and necessary services," Peterson added.

"Tomorrow, the State Legislature will receive Governor Granholm's proposed 2006-2007 fiscal year budget message," noted Barrett. "We encourage them to say 'No' to the K-16 funding mandate, then make state spending decisions based on priorities, results and available revenue."

Members of the Coalition to Stop the K-16 Spending Mandate (as of 2/7/06) include:

Grand Rapids Area Chamber of Commerce Michigan Restaurant Association
Jared Rodriguez, (616) 771-0359 Andy Deloney, (517) 377-3931

Michigan Association of Chiefs of Police Michigan Soft Drink Association
Chief Ervin Portis, President Bill Lobenherz, (517) 371-4499
(517) 788-4127

Michigan Association of Counties Michigan Townships Association
Tom Hickson, (517) 372-5374 David Bertram, (517) 321-6467

Michigan Association of Home Builders Police Officers Association of
Dawn Crandall, (517) 322-0224 Michigan
Ken Grabowski, (313) 937-9000

Michigan Association of REALTORS® Small Business Association of
Bill Martin, (517) 372-8890 Michigan
Rob Fowler, (517) 482-8788

Michigan Chamber of Commerce Michigan Osteopathic Association
Tricia Kinley, (517) 371-7669 Doug Borruso, (517) 347-1555

Michigan Municipal League
Arnold Weinfeld, (517) 485-1314

SOURCE: Coalition to Stop the K-16 Spending Mandate

CONTACT: Tricia Kinley of Michigan Chamber of Commerce, +1-517-371-2100

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

<https://michamber.mediaroom.com/index.php?s=19845&item=39685>