

One Message: Enough is Enough – It's Time to Fight Back!

Talking Points:

- Michigan's school funding crisis is having disastrous effects on Michigan's students and the state's economic future.
 - Increased class sizes
 - Elimination of art, music
 - Limiting transportation services
 - Closing schools
 - Pay to play for athletics
 - Layoffs, outsourcing and staff reductions
 - Cutting school supply budgets
 - Closing school libraries
- For too long, Lansing has tried to use short-term fixes and bad ideas to balance the budget and fund education.
 - Rely on one-time federal funding (Stimulus, Race to the Top).
 - Privatization of support staff services
 - Cut all public employee salaries by 5 percent.
 - Force veteran teachers into retirement.
 - Increase employee retirement payments while decreasing retirement benefits.
 - Impose a 20-percent copay on health care premiums.
 - Set up a public employee health insurance pool (that will actually cost more money than it saves).
- The constant attacks on school employees' pay, pension and health benefits will not provide a solution to the budget crisis. These are merely band-aids for our state's financial problems.
 - School employees have led by example, making almost \$1 billion in salary and benefit concessions during the past three years.
 - Most school employees—**from K-12 to support staff to Higher Education**--already pay out of pocket for health insurance and retirement – and those that don't have made salary concessions instead.
 - The average Michigan teacher spends \$500 or more out of pocket on basic classroom supplies.
- Legislators must focus on long-term, balanced solutions to Michigan's antiquated tax structure and broken school funding system that will provide adequate, equitable and stable funding for public education.
 - Close tax loopholes and end ineffective tax incentives.
 - Audit government contracts for efficiency.
 - Expand the sales tax to include some services and luxury items.
 - Enact a graduated income tax that would be a tax cut for 90 percent of Michigan families.

TIP:

(Use specific examples from your own local experiences to show how cuts are affecting your community.)