

MASB LeadStrong

Michigan Association of School Boards

July 20, 2009

The Honorable Andy Dillon
Speaker of the House
Capitol Building
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Speaker Dillon:

On behalf of the Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) and the publicly elected boards of education we represent, thank you for the bold leadership you demonstrated in presenting your proposal for a statewide health insurance plan for public sector employees.

This proposal, as you know, will save school districts time and money allowing boards, administrators and teachers to focus on what really matters—the 1.6 million school children in the state.

We wholeheartedly support this proposal and see it as long overdue. In these times of dwindling revenue, any effort to save money for schools deserves examination and full consideration. We understand that your aim is to develop a system that is fair to employees while saving the state millions of dollars. We appreciate and support both of these goals.

Thank you again for your leadership. If there's anything MASB can do to help you with this initiative please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Kathy Hayes
Executive Director

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July 27, 2009

To: Members of The Michigan Legislature
From: MASA/MASB
RE: Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Pool Proposal (Sent to Statewide Media Outlets)

Lansing, MI - The Michigan Association of School Boards (MASB) and Michigan Association of School Administrators (MASA) stand united to applaud Speaker Andy Dillon for his bold leadership in starting the conversations on the need for reform in the health care system for public sector employees. Moving all public employees, including school employees and legislators, to a statewide health insurance pool will result in savings of at least \$900 million per year.

This proposal will combine all current and retired local, state and county government employees, as well as school employees, into one health care pool that will result in a more efficient system. At the same time it offers Michigan's hard working public servants fair and high quality health care.

Currently more than 2,000 separate units of government all must negotiate different health care benefits with countless bargaining units scattered throughout the state. This proposal seeks to consolidate that effort to a small team appointed by state leaders. This team will negotiate only once with top tier health care providers.

Contrary to what detractors will tell you, the state will not run this system. State officials will negotiate for the best and most efficient health care plans. This new system would result in less red tape and actually cut down on the bureaucracy associated with health care.

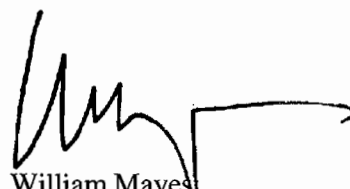
For schools, the rising cost of health care has hamstrung the bargaining process resulting in the disruption of the learning environment. As state funding continues to dwindle we find ourselves spending an excessive amount of time focusing on negotiations as opposed to what matters – teaching our students to succeed in a globally competitive economy. Change is never easy, but we all must be prepared to seek new alternatives and shoulder the burden to ensure that our state survives the troubling years ahead.

We call upon legislative leaders and Gov. Granholm to carefully examine this proposal. Business as usual isn't working. Any proposal that stands to reform the system, save money and recognize the hard work of our public employees deserves a full conversation and complete consideration.

This plan represents a much needed example of forward thinking. Reforming the health care system is a huge step toward long-term system-wide reform that this state so desperately needs.

The time for change is now and those who seek to defend the broken status quo must re-evaluate their priorities. Doing nothing is no longer an option. We need our elected leaders to lead so that educators can educate the next generation.


Kathy Hayes
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William Mayes
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