

STATE SENATOR • MARTHA G. SCOTT • 2ND DISTRICT

# Scott Press Release

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## **Op-Ed Submission: Solve Budget Without Hurting Children, Public Safety**

Michigan is facing one of the most difficult budget crises our state has ever seen. There have been several proposals on how our state can solve this \$2.8 billion shortfall, but no matter what, difficult cuts must be made. While Senate Democrats realize this, we also understand that with these devastating cuts, Michigan would not be able to successfully compete with other states in the region and our already-struggling families would continue to suffer. A budget that is only focused on slashing valuable programs will do more harm than good, and the Legislature should also be considering serious reforms.

Our Caucus' budget priorities focus on the things that will make our communities a safer place to live and make our state more attractive to new businesses. These include early childhood and public education programs; Promise scholarships that help our students afford higher education; local revenue sharing that provides police officers and fire fighters to watch over our loved ones; and health care programs that keep our citizens from needing more expensive care down the road.

The funds to restore these vital programs don't appear out of nowhere. That's why my colleagues and I have identified a number of reasonable funding sources that would allow us to restore these key investments. These include assessing just a 2 percent fee on physicians, as we do with other health care providers, to allow us to secure a 3-to-1 match from the federal government. This alone would provide more than \$300 million dollars towards to offset painful cuts.

Another opportunity for reform is joining the majority of other states by decoupling from the federal government on estate taxes for estates more than \$2 million. Asking multi-millionaires to pay their fair share could collect at least \$130 million. Other reform ideas include reducing the more than \$36 billion in tax expenditures the state hands out every year to avoid wiping out important services. We can also limit our tax loopholes, as Michigan currently gives millions of dollars in breaks to oil and gas companies, insurance companies, and others.

We can't fix our budget through cuts or tax increases alone. Michigan needs to get its priorities straight and take these reforms into consideration to protect important programs. The safety and well-being of our communities and the future of our state will be in jeopardy if the Senate Republicans continue to ignore these ideas. My colleagues and I will continue to do whatever it takes to restore these priorities and protect Michigan's future.

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*Senator Scott represents the 2nd Senate District, which includes areas of Detroit and the cities of Hamtramck, Harper Woods, Highland Park and all of the Grosse Pointes. She serves on the Senate Appropriations Committee.*