

STATE SENATOR • GRETCHEN WHITMER • 23RD DISTRICT

Whitmer Press Release

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Whitmer: Let's Cut Ourselves to Save 100 Troopers

Resolution Would Reduce Legislative Office Budgets, Uphold Public Safety Over Partisan Politics

LANSING-Senator Gretchen Whitmer (D-East Lansing) moved for a vote today on her resolution that would mandate that all Senate caucus and member offices, regardless of party, should have the same overall compensation and expense levels. This proposal stands to save taxpayers \$3 million, money that under the substitute would be directed to help stave off the State Police trooper layoffs included in the Governor's Executive Order on Tuesday.

"We have and will continue to explore all opportunities to reduce state spending while maintaining essential services, and we should certainly be looking to cut ourselves before reducing our police force," said Sen. Whitmer. "During hard times like these, there's no reason that we should be putting partisan politics before public safety. This resolution could save the state nearly twice as much money as laying off 100 state troopers will."

Executive Order 2009-22, the second issued during the current fiscal year, reduces spending by nearly \$350 million, achieving \$304 million in the general fund savings. The executive order will result in the layoff of 100 Michigan State Police troopers, which is expected to save the state \$1.7 million. The executive order calls for a number of other state employee layoffs, and includes temporary layoffs for all state employees in nonessential positions that will result in a shutdown of most state government operations on six days between now and September 30.

"The Troopers Association has tremendous concerns regarding the effect these layoffs will have on all of public safety," said Christopher Luty, Vice President of the Michigan State Police Troopers Association. "We appreciate that our lawmakers are willing to consider any measure that will keep our troopers working."

Language in the substitute introduced by Sen. Whitmer today states that "ANY EXCESS FUNDING WITHIN THE SENATE SHALL REVERT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE POLICE, RATHER THAN TO THE SENATE MAJORITY LEADER'S OFFICE."

Currently, individual Senate Republican office budgets are almost \$100,000 more than those of Senate Democrats. This proposal would take the \$3 million that the Senate

Majority currently has in excess of the Minority and put it in the Department of State Police. This would represent a savings of approximately 10 percent of the Senate budget.

Under Senator Whitmer's resolution, SR 15, all Senate offices, in the Majority or Minority, Democrat or Republican, will receive equal compensation and expense amounts. Each individual member's office shall have the same number of benefit packages, and both caucus staffs should have the same level of overall compensation. Additionally, all information regarding the Senate's compensation and expenses shall be made available to the public on the Senate's website.

The Secretary of the Senate has listed all of the office budgets at <http://databank.senate.michigan.gov/>. Anyone viewing the links will note that the individual Majority office budgets are approximately \$100,000 more than the Minority budgets, with the Senate Majority Leader's office topping \$760,000.

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