

STATE SENATOR • GRETCHEN WHITMER • 23RD DISTRICT

# Whitmer Press Release

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## **Whitmer: Cut Legislators' Pay, Health Care before Cutting Schools** *As budget meltdown threatens school funds, Whitmer urges politicians to lead by example*

LANSING— Calling for the Legislature to lead by example, Michigan Sen. **Gretchen Whitmer** today announced a government reform plan that will include cutting legislators' pay before they slash funds for education.

"Leading by example means sharing in the sacrifice and the pain like so many families in Michigan who are struggling to get by," **Whitmer** said. "The single biggest problem with Lansing is that politicians have lost touch with the people they represent. That culture of entitlement has to end, and it has to end now."

In a floor speech to the Senate today, Whitmer challenged senators to lead by example and share in the sacrifices that other families have been forced to make. Whitmer will introduce legislation that would:

- Pro-rate legislators' pay each time local schools are sent a letter pro-rating their funding.
- End taxpayer funded lifetime health care benefits for legislators.
- Reduce the salaries of legislators who miss session.
- Require candidates seeking public offices to disclose their income and assets.

"If legislators cut our young people's education, then they should also cut their pay first," **Whitmer** said. "While all of Michigan is hurting, we should not be protecting politicians' lavish salaries, lifetime health care benefits and their special perks. Michigan needs real reforms and real leadership – and I propose that we start right here with the Legislature."

The Michigan Senate has already slashed per-pupil funding by \$165, while at the same time refusing to clearly identify where funding for the education budget will come from. The danger is that per-pupil funds may be even further slashed because the Senate has refused to generate revenue to pay for critical services such as education. Michigan's budget deficit is approaching \$3 billion for the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

"In just a few days, the administration will be forced to send proration letters, as required by law, telling our local school districts that the budget passed last week was a house of cards, built using imaginary revenues and phony accounting practices by Senate

Republicans,” **Whitmer** said. “Cutting funding to our schools while leaving politicians’ benefits, salaries and perks intact is the height of hypocrisy.”

Video of Sen. Whitmer’s statement from today on government reforms to help protect education can be seen here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBKnNFSfv8A&feature=channel>.

Sen. Whitmer's statement from October 1st on the need to fund education for a viable future in Michigan can be viewed here:

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOeOn\\_Zmlk&feature=channel](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOeOn_Zmlk&feature=channel).

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