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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE OF MICHIGAN
HOWARD C. WALKER
104TH DISTRICT

APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEES:
DEPARTMENT OF
NATURAL RESOURCES, CHAIR
AGRICULTURE, VICE-CHAIR
STATE POLICE/MILITARY AND
VETERANS AFFAIRS, VICE-CHAIR

February 14, 2007

Governor Jennifer Granholm
George W. Romney Building
111 South Capitol Avenue
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Governor Granholm:

We have written to you before about the plight of our lower funded schools and feel it necessary to write once again in light of your recent budget proposal.

When voters approved Proposal A in 1994, they did so with the promise that the gap in funding between our lowest and highest funded schools would be closed. Nearly 12 years after passage, that gap has not narrowed nearly enough. In fact, as you know, some of our wealthiest school districts continue to receive nearly \$50 million in special "20J" payments. In our current economy when many Northern Michigan schools are talking about closing, these wealthy schools talk about ending foreign language classes for elementary students. This is an atrocity that plagues our school funding process, which brings us to our reason for writing today.

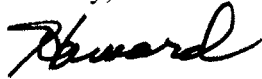
In your recent budget presentation to the Legislature, a great deal was said about "investing" in our state, and one of the ways you propose to invest is to increase payments to our schools by \$178 per student. Although all school districts across the state will appreciate this much needed additional funding, we were disappointed that your proposal made no mention of an "equity" payment; the Legislature provided such a payment for the current Fiscal Year. Although the \$23 per student was not nearly enough, it did show our lower funded districts that the state was at least interested in finally beginning the discussion on closing the gap.

As the Legislature begins its work on your proposal for the next Fiscal Year, we intend to continue to push the conversation on closing the gap. We hope that you and your administration will be open to these discussions and that we can find common ground on providing a fair and equitable solution to the discrepancies in school funding.

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Thank you for your time and attention. As always, if you have any questions, please our offices at any time.

Sincerely,



Howard Walker
State Representative
104th District



Kevin Elsenheimer
State Representative
105th District