

CONTINUE SUPPORT FOR A BETTER MICHIGAN FUTURE (ABMF)

WHEREAS:As a result of Governor Engler's income tax rate reductions and the changing nature of our economy away from manufacturing and towards services, Michigan has a major structural budget deficit. Current FY 2011 budget deficit is estimated at nearly \$1.8 billion. It will double for FY 2012 if nothing is done. The problem of structural budget woes will not be adequately addressed by just an improvement in the economy; and

WHEREAS:As a result of the \$1.8 billion structural deficit, PreK-12 schools, colleges, universities and cities have experienced funding cuts. These cuts mean larger classes, higher tuition, out of date technology, crumbling infrastructure, and older textbooks among other problems. Without major structural reform of Michigan's revenue system, the budgets for education will only get worse; and

WHEREAS:These cuts mean concessionary contracts and the privatization of so-called "non instructional" work. Employees who have dedicated their careers to educating Michigan's students have taken pay cuts and now pay more for less health care coverage. For many, hard earned retirement benefits are under attack, and

WHEREAS:As Michigan shifts from a skills-based to a knowledge-based economy, the importance of PreK-12 education and postsecondary education and training for all Michigan residents is greater now than it is has ever been. However, as a result of the state's cuts in education funding, tuition at Michigan's four-year public colleges and universities continues to be higher than both the national and Midwest average. At the same time the state slashes financial aid, thus limiting access to post-secondary education; and

WHEREAS:AFT Michigan has been a leader advocating for revenue policies that are adequate, stable and fair. Almost a decade ago, with the Michigan League for Human Services, AFT Michigan organized the Revenue Group, a coalition of progressive organizations fighting to restructure tax policy to enhance revenue; and

WHEREAS:Today, a number of labor and other progressive organizations have formed A Better Michigan Future, a coalition working tirelessly to reform the Michigan tax structure to ensure the revenue needed to properly fund public PreK-1 6 education and other important services. ABMF's platform calls for a graduated income tax which would apply a higher tax state for the wealthy and could lower rates for up to 90 percent of taxpayers, extending the sales tax to include luxury and non-essential service, auditing state government vendor contracts *and* closing tax loopholes. AFT Michigan has helped fund ABMF and serves on its steering committee, and **NOW THEREFORE BE IT**

RESOLVED: AFT Michigan will continue to fully support A Better Michigan Future, urge other state and regional unions and other education and progressive organizations to do the same, and will urge local unions to support candidates and ballot proposals that further the cause of ABMF.

Submitted By: AAUP-AFT Local 6075

Legislation Committee recommends the resolution (as amended by committee) be adopted.