



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Detroit – Statement by David Hecker, President of AFT Michigan, Concerning Passage of the School Employees Retirement Bill

In the middle of last night the state legislature passed school retirement legislation that is yet another attack on the women and men who educate our children. The legislation ignores the sacrifices school employees make every day at the bargaining table in wage concessions and increases in health insurance co-pays and premium sharing. In addition, it ignores the fact that our members spend their own money for books and supplies to benefit their students.

With this legislation school employees are essentially taking another three percent pay cut on top of concessions that have been bargained. Moreover, the legislation weakens the retirement for employees who cannot retire this year and creates a two-tier system for new employees. Research is clear. The most important determinant of a student's education is the quality of the teacher in the classroom. Undercutting school employees' retirement is not a path to attracting and retaining the very best. And the very best is what our children deserve.

AFT Michigan supported the retirement legislation that was previously approved by the State House. This legislation would have saved the state and school districts money and would not have undercut the very people to whom we entrust our children.

We again call on the governor and legislators to enact laws that address Michigan's structural deficit and increase state revenue. This is what our children and all Michiganders need the state legislature to do.

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AFT Michigan is a union of 35,000-members working in K-12 and intermediate school districts, community colleges, universities, and local government. The 97 locals extend as far south as Monroe and north to Whitefish Township in the Upper Peninsula.