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Thursday, June 9, 2011

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Michigan House Foregoes Real Education Reform In Favor of Politically-Motivated Attacks on Teachers

Lansing – The state House of Representatives abandoned its chance to address real educational reforms for Michigan's school children, instead passing four bills today that undermine collective bargaining rights and weaken due process for teachers with a new process that would be more difficult and less consistent.

"Time and again, we've heard Lansing lawmakers talk about education reform that will help our kids. Well, they had a great opportunity to address real issues and make real improvements, but they whiffed by passing these bills," said **Keith Johnson**, President of the **Detroit Federation of Teachers**, who spent the day speaking with legislators. "Teacher tenure isn't the problem in our schools. The lack of a real evaluation system that holds everyone accountable is the problem."

Last year, the state passed new evaluation requirements. The American Federation of Teachers – Michigan developed a common-sense evaluation framework for school districts to implement. Passing bills attacking tenure instead of working for better evaluation methods proves that lawmakers are only paying lip service to reform and instead are working to pass an uncharted, extreme political agenda.

"These attacks on our collective bargaining rights don't address any of the real problems faced by our schools, they are simply attacks on teachers and educational support staff," said **Judy Schram**, Lamphere Public Schools librarian. "Our children need people focusing on how to ensure a full curriculum, reasonable class sizes, and quality facilities. They don't need more posturing on politically-motivated bills like these tenure laws."

Legislation passed by the House, House Bills 4625-4628, circumvent the collective bargaining process by allowing the most-experienced teachers to be laid-off first, robbing students of years of institutional knowledge in favor of younger, cheaper employees. The bills also limit what can be negotiated in the collective bargaining process, including methods of performance-based compensation, and change the process for teacher tenure hearings.

"While the extreme agenda of the state House moves forward, efforts to improve education for our children gets put aside," said **David Hecker**, President, **American Federation of Teachers – Michigan**. "Make no mistake: while these bills target teachers, our kids are the ones who will suffer. If voters remember one thing, I hope it's that the House voted to put petty politics ahead of our kids' futures."

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