

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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> Dems to Lansing Republicans: Stop Bullying Teachers

> Latest comments by Republican leadership continues attack on Michigan educators

Lansing, Mich. - State Representatives Jim Ananich (D-Flint) and Rudy Hobbs (D-Lathrup Village) called on Lansing Republicans to stop the attacks on Michigan's teachers following disturbing comments last night by the Republican House Speaker and Chair of the House Education Committee. On the heels of forcing through legislation that could strip teachers, police, and firefighters of their right to collectively bargain, Speaker Jase Bolger (R-Marshall) and Chairman Paul Scott (R - Grand Blanc) made comments yesterday that are a heavy-handed attempt to silence any educators who speak out against them. Republicans are also proposing massive education cuts, upwards of \$700 per pupil, that could make teachers jobs even harder and create overcrowded classrooms.

"Instead of focusing on creating jobs and making sure everyone who works for a living can earn a decent paycheck, Lansing Republicans seem hell-bent on intimidating anyone who might disagree with them," said Ananich, a former teacher and member of the House Appropriations School Aid Fund Subcommittee. "Considering it's been the poor decisions and broken promises of Lansing lawmakers that got us into this mess, they may want to consider listening to the folks back home who are trying to fix the problem."

Bolger and Scott were quoted in several media outlets yesterday implying that teachers could be arrested if they try to oppose Republican efforts to cut their wages, void their contracts, and ultimately eliminate their jobs. Bolger's statement in a press release referred to teachers "risk(ing) their careers by participating in an illegal activity." And Scott ominously said it was "concerning" for teachers to consider "illegal activities."

"Teachers are not the enemy, they are the people we depend on to teach our kids and prepare them to compete for the good-paying jobs that will turn Michigan's economy around," said Hobbs, a former local school board member and member of the House Education Committee. "Let's listen to them explain how these devastating cuts and job-killing proposals will affect their lives. We should be welcoming them to the conversation, not intimidating them from saying their piece."

Ananich and Hobbs encouraged teachers, parents, and all concerned citizens to continue expressing their opinion at every opportunity, including education-related committees scheduled in Lansing next week:

Tuesday, March 22

10:30 AM

Appropriations: Subcommittee on School Aid

426 State Capitol Building

12:00 PM

Appropriations: Subcommittee on Education

426 State Capitol Building

The House Education Committee that Rep. Scott chairs is normally scheduled for Wednesday's at 9 a.m. in 519 of the House Office Building in Lansing.

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