

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Detroit Federation of Teachers, AFT Michigan and American Federation of Teachers on Michigan House Education Bills

DETROIT – Detroit Federation of Teachers Interim President Ivy Bailey, AFT Michigan President David Hecker and American Federation of Teachers President Randi Weingarten on the passage in the Michigan House of Representatives of HB 5383, HB 5384 and HB 5387:

“The partisan bills forced through in the dead of night by Speaker Kevin Cotter are some of the most despicable anti-student, anti-public school, anti-teacher provisions we’ve seen in America. Make no mistake: These bills discriminate against Detroit’s children—who are overwhelmingly economically disadvantaged children and children of color—and are designed explicitly to punish teachers who speak up on behalf of their students and themselves. Many of the so-called teacher-related provisions have failed and been rejected when used in other jurisdictions.

“It is increasingly clear that the Michigan House has turned its back on the students of Detroit and would rather punish teachers than give kids a chance to succeed. We call on Gov. Snyder to declare that he will veto the House bill, should it reach his desk.

“Under state-controlled emergency management, indifferent politicians abandoned Detroit’s students to learn in under-resourced schools with deplorable conditions. Through it all, our teachers and school employees have been the glue that has held the schools together. They have taught without textbooks, they have inspired in overcrowded classrooms, and they have provided hope in computer labs without the internet.

“By eliminating teacher voice, House Republicans strip away our ability to advocate for children, who have been failed by our leaders in Lansing.

“It’s past time for the House to get serious and stop the political games. We urge Gov. Snyder to veto this bill, and ask the House to take up the bipartisan Senate bill that, while not perfect, gives Detroit’s schools a fair chance and offers hope to our students, families, educators and staff.”

*The Coalition for the Future of Detroit Schoolchildren formed on December 11, 2014 as an independent, diverse cross-section of Detroit leaders who came together to make recommendations to improve the city’s education system. Its first report, *The Choice Is Ours*, focused on how the state could help. Most of our recommendations were enacted. Now, the Coalition is focused on actions Detroiters can take locally to strengthen the city’s schools.*

The Coalition's leadership teams are made up of approximately 150 community members. The Coalition is led by six co-chairs: Tonya Allen, Skillman Foundation president & CEO; Rev. Wendell Anthony, Fellowship Chapel and president of the Detroit branch of the NAACP; David Hecker, president of AFT Michigan/AFL-CIO; John Rakolta Jr., CEO of Walbridge; Mark Reuss, executive vice president, global product development, purchasing and supply chain of General Motors; and Angela Reyes, executive director of Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation.

The Coalition's 2017 report, [Our School, Our Moment](http://www.DetroitEducationCoalition.org), is available at www.DetroitEducationCoalition.org.

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Media contact: Natalie Fotias at nfotias@skillman.org or 313-393-1179