

Coalition for the Future
of Detroit Schoolchildren

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Coalition leaders denounce House legislation

DETROIT – Today the Michigan House Appropriations Committee moved forward – on predictably partisan lines – a destructive package of legislation that undermines the last five months of progress toward meaningful reform of Detroit’s education system.

“The House just gave Detroit the finger,” said Rev. Wendell Anthony, Coalition co-chair, Fellowship Chapel and president of the Detroit branch of the NAACP. “They’ve rejected the bi-partisan plan backed by the Coalition, the Senate, Governor Snyder and Mayor Mike Duggan. Why? To punish teachers who just want to get paid for their work?”

The Coalition for the Future of Detroit Schoolchildren released its recommendations to fix Detroit schools 13 months ago. The Senate passed the Return to Excellence legislation one-and-a-half months ago. Finally, the House has moved forward – bewilderingly snubbing the synergy built over the past year to make things right for children and families in Detroit.

“The House legislation makes no effort to improve education for the children of Detroit,” said John Rakolta Jr., Coalition co-chair and CEO of the Walbridge. “They’ve allowed special interest groups, motivated by profit, to gut the only real reform being proposed - the Detroit Education Commission. The DEC is necessary to bring coordination and accountability to an education system that is, across the board, failing kids.”

“I’m appalled that some people believe that the children in Detroit deserve less than children in the rest of the state. It’s disheartening – but it’s not over,” said Angela Reyes, Coalition co-chair and executive director of Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation. “The common sense solutions are there. I think in the end, the common sense people will be too. We will continue to fight until we have quality education for all our children.”

*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.*

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