

Coalition for the Future
of Detroit Schoolchildren

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Coalition slams destructive House legislation

DETROIT – Coalition co-chairs, members and supporters gathered at Fellowship Chapel to denounce legislation passed by the House today – on predictably partisan lines. The destructive package of bills undermine the last five months of progress toward meaningful reform of Detroit’s education system and present a threat to children every bit as poisonous as Lansing’s inaction in the Flint water crisis.

“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. “We’re calling for Governor Snyder to put an end to this. He should know by now what happens when you let an entire city be poisoned for the financial benefit of a few.”

“They’ve allowed special interest groups, motivated by profit, to gut the only real reform being proposed - the Detroit Education Commission,” John Rakolta Jr., Coalition co-chair and CEO of the Walbridge.

House Democrats fervently oppose the bills.

“House Republicans had a chance to work in bipartisan fashion with Senate Republicans and Democrats in both chambers to pass a plan that would have had the backing of Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan and Gov. Rick Snyder, but instead they chose to pave their own path with corporate special interests that run for-profit schools here in Michigan,” said Assistant Democratic Leader Fred Durhal III (D-Detroit). “It was state oversight that focused more on cutting costs and helping corporate-run charters make money that got us into this mess, but House Republicans haven’t learned their lesson. Instead, this package of bills just gives us more of the same.”

“The House is running a short game. They’re appealing to a small group of corporate donors at the expense of 100,000 children,” said Arlyssa Heard, a Detroit parent. “Children don’t just disappear. The child that doesn’t get an education today will become the adult who can’t find employment tomorrow. Is that the kind of future we want for people? For our city and our state?”

“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.”

A video recording of today’s press conference will be available at <http://bit.ly/1WaiVa7>.

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