

Public Comments Submitted To Basic Education Funding Commission's Website

Sent: Saturday, August 12, 2023 6:01 AM – 1

Subject: public school vs. private schools

Message: We often see public schools described as 'failing' and the solution for families is to transfer their children to private schools. Public schools have been underfunded for years; giving taxpayer money to private schools will only worsen this problem. Public money should stay in public schools. Perhaps the current way of paying for schools is at the root of inequity across the state.

Name: Ellen T. **City:** Hanover, PA

Sent: Saturday, August 12, 2023 7:26 AM – 2

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: I would recommend the formation of a committee to review other states funding practices to find the best fit in order to replace the present outdated Pennsylvania basic school funding policy. I would also place a timeline for them to report back with their recommendations.

Name: Walter H. **City:** Stewartstown, PA

Sent: Saturday, August 19, 2023 8:06 AM – 3

Subject: Property taxes

Message: Please eliminate the property tax. Funding the public school system should not be tied to my personal residence in any way. ELIMINATING THE TAX is the only thing that the government should do. Its not your property. Our government needs to listen to the people. Put that on the ballot again and see what happens. Let the people decide this once again. No tax should have the power to leave me homeless.

Name: Holly T. **City:** Fleetwood, PA

Sent: Monday, August 21, 2023 1:25 PM – 4

Subject: Philadelphia Charters For Excellence (PCE) request for testimony

Message: To Whom It May Concern, This is written on behalf of PCE who represents 80 member schools of the Philadelphia Charter School community. We are writing to officially request that PCE be included on the September 14, 2023 Philadelphia Public BEF agenda under the testimony section.

Name: Scott P. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 22, 2023 9:23 PM – 5

Subject: Property Tax Elimination

Message: Property taxes in Pennsylvania are illegal and need to be eliminated. Property owners should not be forced to fund a failing public education system with no accountability for graduating students who are illiterate. Property owners are never truly owners of their property.

Name: Kimberly L. **City:** Sinking Spring, PA

Sent: Friday, August 25, 2023 12:39 PM – 6

Subject: audience input

Message: Dear Chair Sturla, I would like to request time for interested persons to speak during the upcoming hearing in Lancaster. I know there will be a platform of speakers but there are many concerned and knowledgeable citizens who would like to share their input. There should be ample time for everyone to speak.

Name: Jeanette T. **City:** Lititz, PA

Sent: Friday, August 25, 2023 12:59 PM – 7

Subject: BEF Input for the Record

Message: Property Tax Elimination Working Group August 24, 2023 Dear Basic Education Funding Commission, We are writing to address a deeply concerning issue that affects the education system in Pennsylvania. Our commonwealth currently ranks among the worst in providing adequate support for education. This problem has been perpetuated by the General Assembly's reliance on insufficient measures, such as the "Hold Harmless" and "Level Up" initiatives, which have failed to address the underlying problems. The consequence of the funding shortfalls and inequities is a vast disparity in education quality across the state's school districts. This is simply unacceptable. Recognizing this, the Commonwealth Court has mandated an end to

these inequalities, attributing them to an excessive reliance on school property taxes that has been exacerbated by legislative band-aid attempts to rectify the situation. As a member of the General Assembly, you hold a fundamental responsibility to the children of Pennsylvania, as outlined in the state's constitution and explicitly stated in the Commonwealth Court Order. This duty must not be taken lightly or ignored. There is no way to equitably redistribute school property tax revenue across the state's 500 school districts; the tax itself MUST be eliminated. There are other compelling reasons to discontinue the use of property taxes for education funding: • They are an archaic and regressive form of taxation that has no place in a modern economy • They disproportionately penalize the most vulnerable homeowners, particularly retirees with fixed incomes, especially those relying solely on Social Security, who constitute a large portion of the state's retirees • It is the most useless tax for retirees who receive nothing for it • Reliance on property taxes for education financing is an anomaly among developed nations • It is the most detested tax in Pennsylvania. The General Assembly has allowed this education funding tragedy to persist for far too long. However, you will soon have an opportunity to fix it. A new bill, the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," is set to be introduced in the Senate this session. This proposal offers an excellent solution to our education funding challenges and will answer the Commonwealth Court Order. The "School Property Tax Elimination Act" provides for the replacement of all school property tax revenue with a combination of modestly increased sales and income tax rates, a less regressive taxation method where everyone contributes to education funding according to their ability to pay. Notably, these replacement taxes will be distributed locally, preserving local control. It introduces a small, 2% tax on food and clothing except items included in WIC/SNAP programs, with no expansion of the rest of the tax base. It broadens the income tax to encompass select categories of retirement income, but excludes Social Security income and retirement income equivalent to Social Security, such as those earned by law enforcement, military and railroad workers. Contributions to qualified retirement plans will remain untaxed when filing state returns. While critics may raise concerns about taxing retirement income, it is undeniable that the school property tax is already a severe tax on retirement income, and is particularly hurtful for those living solely on Social Security. This plan includes the elimination of all school districts' debt. It also provides an initial \$12B cash infusion to schools (per the Independent Fiscal Office) to help them through the transition period and soften the impending loss of ESSR funding. It also includes training for school district financial officers to help manage this infusion during the transition period. This bill will present a pivotal moment for you to show leadership in addressing the deeply flawed education funding structure in our state. The Commonwealth Court has charged you with this responsibility; it is time to modernize education funding by fully eliminating the school property tax in Pennsylvania. We implore you to acquaint yourself with the details of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" when it is introduced this fall. We encourage you to join your fellow legislators in remedying the longstanding chaos in our state's education funding. Respectfully, Property Tax Elimination Working Group.

Name: Robert K. **City:** Lehigh, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 12:50 PM – 8

Subject: BEFC Hearings in Harrisburg and Pittsburgh

Message: Regarding the BEFC Hearings, please advise: The exact location and time of the hearings If they are open to the public If the meetings in each location will discuss the same topic or if it is advisable to attend all of them Thank you in advance.

Name: Traci E. **City:** Export, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 2:21 PM – 9

Subject: Property Tax Elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with

finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Alonso A. **City:** York, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 2:29 PM – 10

Subject: Property tax elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in

Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Jim M.

City: Shavertown, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 3:06 PM – 11

Subject: School property tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold

Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Julie B. **City:** East Stroudsburg, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 3:11 PM – 12

Subject: HB 13

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks

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Name: Jack S. **City:** Shawnee, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 3:12 PM – 13

Subject: School Property Tax Elimination Act

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures “all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education.” The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically “Hold Harmless” policy

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Name: Linda C. **City:** Montoursville, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 3:17 PM – 14

Subject: School tax reform

Message: School tax elimination

Name: Robert A. **City:** Morrisville, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 3:21 PM – 15

Subject: Property Tax Elimination Act

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing

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This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Byron S.

City: Lehigh, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 3:27 PM – 16

Subject: Elimination of School Property taxes

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax

Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. 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Name: John R.

City: Croydon, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 3:35 PM – 17

Subject: School Property Tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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Name: Stephanie R. **City:** Bethlehem, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 4:20 PM – 18

Subject: School Property Tax Elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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Name: Jeanette L. **City:** Upper Chichester, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 4:24 PM – 19

Subject: School Property Tax Elimination Act

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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Name: Dawn N.

City: Honey Brook, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 4:35 PM – 20

Subject: Property tax elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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Name: Robert S.

City: Girard, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 4:57 PM – 21

Subject: Tax structure

Message: It's time to give us seniors a school tax break as soon as possible...

Name: Greg B. **City:** Erie, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 5:01 PM – 22

Subject: Property Tax Elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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Name: Harry K. **City:** Hanover, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 5:10 PM – 23

Subject: School and Property taxes.

Message: I am 71 yrs old and my school and property tax is the highest in Berkshire County. We need your help! We will loose our homes etc. Not to mention other taxes. I'm sure that a lot of people can't afford to live anymore. Between food, gas, and the high level of taxes for school and property I would like to know why our COLA is so low. Now more inflation. We need your help! I live in Antietam School District. 46.+% for taxes. We had a devastating flood and of course the school doesn't care about us, or the education our kids get. They are worried about their increases and jobs. Please help!

Name: Samar K. **City:** Reading, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 5:40 PM – 24

Subject: No one should lose their home or property due to school taxes. Eliminate school taxes on our homes and propertities. Pa. Can do better!!!

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation

where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state. Ps I already pay my school taxes using my retirement Funds. That excuse is not valid. Use the calculator and you will see most people will save money and their homes with these changes. Who will stand up and do the right thing for the citizens of Pennsylvania? You can, will you?

Name: Craig J.

City: Reading, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 8:14 PM – 25

Subject: Property Taxes

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's

retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Mike M. **City:** Forty Fort, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 9:30 PM – 26

Subject: PA school tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement

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Name: Elizabeth A. **City:** Columbia, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 9:37 PM – 27

Subject: School Taxes

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales

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Name: Karen L. **City:** Plymouth, PA

Sent: Sunday, August 27, 2023 10:31 PM – 28

Subject: Property taxes

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but

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Name: Mary B. **City:** Coatesville, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 10:04 AM – 29

Subject: End the School Property Tax !!

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school

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Name: Rodney H. **City:** York, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 10:18 AM – 30

Subject: Property Taxes

Message: Eliminate property tax

Name: Marsha A. **City:** Alvin, TX

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 10:19 AM – 31

Subject: School Tax

Message: At 75 years old on fixed income I struggle every year to pay the \$3600 tax bill. Why don't our State Representatives recognize this hardship on all homeowners and resolve the issue? Sales and income tax are the solution to this problem that makes all Pa residents contribute to funding. Please resolve this economy killing, home owner injustice causing fixed income residents and seniors hardships!

Name: John L. **City:** Gibsonia, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 10:21 AM – 32

Subject: PA Education Funding

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with

finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Kimberly F. **City:** Johnstown, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 10:28 AM – 33

Subject: Enough with taxes

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in

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Name: Kim M.

City: Hanover, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 10:44 AM – 34

Subject: School tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold

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Name: Doug G. **City:** Williamsport, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 11:13 AM – 35

Subject: Property taxes

Message: I support the elimination of property taxes.

Name: David F. **City:** Camp Hill, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 11:30 AM – 36

Subject: School Property Tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a

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Name: Michael S. **City:** Spring Brook, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 11:57 AM – 37

Subject: Hb13

Message: We need to pass Hb13 to many people losing their homes.

Name: Rebina B. **City:** Bristol, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 12:15 PM – 38

Subject: School Property Tax Elimination Act

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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Name: Denise J.

City: Montoursville, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 12:18 PM – 39

Subject: Eliminate school property tax

Message: Please consider HB 13 which would eliminate the school property tax so no one would lose their home over a tax. Thank you.

Name: Calvin M. **City:** Dunlevy, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 12:23 PM – 40

Subject: Education Funding

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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Name: Kay B.

City: Lehigh, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 12:36 PM – 41

Subject: Tax elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Norton L. **City:** Shunk, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 12:55 PM – 42

Subject: School Property

Message: School Property fair funding was ordered in court February 7th 2023. So far nothing has been done. When will the people have a fair funding system?

Name: Bonnie B. **City:** Reading, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 1:03 PM – 43

Subject: School property

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or

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Name: Bonnie B. **City:** Reading, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 1:32 PM – 44

Subject: School Property Tax Relief

Message: I'm interested in getting involved.

Name: Tom M. **City:** Williamsport, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 1:57 PM – 45

Subject: Property Tax Elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's

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Name: Ralph H. **City:** Kennett Square, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 3:21 PM – 46

Subject: School TAX equity

Message: Please take HB13 into consideration for future school funds

Name: Barbara B. **City:** Lebanon, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 3:29 PM – 47

Subject: School/Property Tax's

Message: Please consider HB13 to eliminate school/property taxes. People are losing their homes, and there has been a mass exodus from PA because of all the taxes this state has.

Name: Shelly L. **City:** New Oxford, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 5:44 PM – 48

Subject: In support of the School Property Tax Elimination Act

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement

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Name: Doug S. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 5:53 PM – 49

Subject: School Property Tax

Message: School costs might be going up but so do the employees wages. Illegal immigrant get more from my government than I do being on disability. Cannot afford the taxes

Name: Anne R. **City:** Plymouth, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 5:58 PM – 50

Subject: School Taxes in Pennsylvania

Message: I am a 76 year old life long Pennsylvania resident who is having problems paying my school taxes which I have been doing since buying our home over 40 years ago and I have one child that went to public school and now I'm still stuck with paying these taxes which I feel are unjust and too high for those of us on Social Security to afford! I see new multi million dollar High School Stadiums and our School had a 40 million Dollar surplus not too long ago and now it has turned into an 70 million dollar Deficit ! Please consider a new way to fund the insane or to curb to frivolous spending! These taxes are chasing us out of Pennsylvania!

Name: George P. **City:** Carnegie, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 6:36 PM – 51

Subject: School Taxes

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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Name: Scott S.

City: Slatington, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 6:45 PM – 52

Subject: Dear members

Message: I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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Name: Nicholas G. **City:** Levittown, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 7:19 PM - 53

Subject: eliminate school taxes

Message: Help to save many senior citizens from losing their homes.

Name: Jean E. **City:** Dallas, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 9:03 PM – 54

Subject: School property tax elimination

Message: CALL TO ACTION: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a

solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Arthur H. **City:** Perkiomenville, PA

Sent: Monday, August 28, 2023 11:01 PM – 55

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023, Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through the "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at the county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. 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in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Barbara B. **City:** Lehigh, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 6:52 AM – 56

Subject: Property Tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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Name: Carol Y. **City:** Quakertown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 7:36 AM – 57

Subject: Property tax education funding

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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Name: Deborah K. **City:** Palmerton, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 7:37 AM – 58

Subject: The School Property Tax Elimination Act

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. 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Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Kevin S. **City:** Radnor, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 7:39 AM – 59

Subject: Funding Education

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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Name: Marjorie K. **City:** Nesquehoning, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 7:45 AM – 60

Subject: School Tax Elimination Act

Message: I'm elderly am I going to have my home stolen from me for taxes? Just wait a few years and you'll own it anyway. In the mean time maybe you can have the schools account for all the taxes they keep raising every year. They should be held accountable and be able to show where out tax money is going, every penny of it.

Name: Aida T. **City:** Albrightsville, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 7:59 AM – 61

Subject: School/ property taxes

Message: Too many people in Pennsylvania are losing their homes due to the taxes imposed on their property. The Economy is bad enough but to force people out of their homes because of a school tax is ridiculous. Eliminate the property taxes now.

Name: Karen C. **City:** Shade Gap, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 8:14 AM – 62

Subject: Property/School tax elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military

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Name: Shelly L. **City:** New Oxford, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 8:23 AM – 63

Subject: property tax reform

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act

expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Emily G. **City:** Quakertown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 8:30 AM - 64

Subject: Eliminate school tax

Message: There should be a bill where school tax we should not pay.

Name: Kathy K. **City:** East Stroudsburg, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 9:00 AM – 65

Subject: School taxing

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement

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Name: Les S. **City:** Sciota, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 9:04 AM – 66

Subject: School property tax elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on

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Name: Candace B. **City:** Leighton, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 9:27 AM – 67

Subject: School property tax elimination fund

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many

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Name: Suzanne M. **City:** Lehigh, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 9:32 AM – 68

Subject: September 14, 2023 Philadelphia Hearing

Message: Good Morning Commission Members. I would like to sign up to speak at the September 14, 2023 hearing in Philadelphia. I know these things fill out quickly and do not want to be left out of such an important discussion concerning children, especially since, I believe, the School District of Philadelphia has missed out on funding. Thank you for helping me to register to provide testimony.

Name: Cecelia T. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 9:35 AM – 69

Subject: Property tax elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in

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Name: Judith M. **City:** Hatfield, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 9:45 AM – 70

Subject: What

Message: I would like to keep abreast of what my taxes pay for in the CSD. Thank you

Name: Sheila V. **City:** Blue Bell, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 9:51 AM – 71

Subject: Property Tax Elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the

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Name: Mike D. **City:** Boyertown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 9:59 AM – 72

Subject: School taxes

Message: Sorry on last submission I sent before finishing. I as a senior citizen still do not know why I have to pay school taxes when I have paid them my whole adult life. Not having an income that I have control of on how much I make now makes no

sense to why I should be paying the same or at all. In the commonwealth we should have one tax a year which includes everything and consider the retired on fixed income as well. I know it cost a lot to run a school and what goes in to it and I am not against paying the teachers what they deserve I do not see why athletes cost so much when the booster clubs fundraiser for items and coaches for kids. Let's get back to basics and let the teachers teach basics of math, English, writing, CIVICS as well as geography. History of this country of how it really came about and stop worrying and curtailing to very groups. Teach the adults of today how to be an adult that can take it! Not the wimps we have out there now.

Name: Sheila V. **City:** Blue Bell, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 10:02 AM – 73

Subject: School property tax

Message: My school district is one of the absolute HIGHEST taxed (I pay 2000 p year for a property that's 12.6 x 90) my child doesn't even go to the public schools because Columbia is so horrible and it's not right for any of these kids to have to deal with what they do

Name: Misty F. **City:** Columbia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 10:05 AM – 74

Subject: School property tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively

lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Misty F.

City: Columbia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 10:09 AM – 75

Subject: Property tax elimination for seniors

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation

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Name: Thomas R. **City:** Blakeslee, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 10:11 AM – 76

Subject: Education funding

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security

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Name: Hanna T. **City:** Hanover, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 10:11 AM – 77

Subject: Eliminate Property Tax

Message: I am in agreement with the act to eliminate school property tax.

Name: Christina G. **City:** Fleetwood, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 10:11 AM – 78

Subject: Property Tax Elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but

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Name: Lynn P. **City:** Reading, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 10:14 AM – 79

Subject: Basic Education Funding Commission

Message: Done

Name: Kerry H. **City:** Sinking Spring, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 10:15 AM – 80

Subject: Education Funding

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds

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Name: Salvatore Z. **City:** East Stroudsburg, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 10:21 AM – 81

Subject: Property tax

Message: We need your help to make a difference! The School Property Tax Elimination Act is a crucial step towards improving education in our state. Things are starting to heat up as we get close to the fall legislative season. We are making progress toward school property tax elimination. Your involvement is mission critical right now as we move forward with I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those

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Name: Wendy C. **City:** Kunkletown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 10:48 AM – 82

Subject: School Tax

Message: If you don't have kids in school, I don't think you should have to pay school taxes!!

Name: Emmy M. **City:** Fayetteville, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 10:51 AM – 83

Subject: School Tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in

Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Emmy M. **City:** Fayetteville, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 10:55 AM – 84

Subject: School Property Tax Elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold

Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Selina C. **City:** East Stroudsburg, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 10:58 AM – 85

Subject: School Property Tax Relief

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks

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Name: Michael W. **City:** Levittown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 11:09 AM – 86

Subject: Elimination of School Property Tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures “all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education.” The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically “Hold Harmless” policy

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By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Victoria T. **City:** Champion, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 11:12 AM – 87

Subject: School property tax elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in

education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically “Hold Harmless” policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania’s state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through “Hold Harmless” policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. 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Name: Clark M. **City:** Hanover, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 11:16 AM – 88

Subject: School taxes

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Name: Jennifer S. **City:** Alburtis, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 11:18 AM – 89

Subject: School Property Tax Elimination Act

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the

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Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Amos V. **City:** Clarks Summit, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 11:25 AM – 90

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a

significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures “all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education.” The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically “Hold Harmless” policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania’s state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through “Hold Harmless” policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. 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By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Gary B. **City:** Telford, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 11:48 AM – 91

Subject: School taxes

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record.

The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. 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By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Scott L. **City:** Palmerton, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 11:51 AM – 92

Subject: PROPERTY TAXES

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, > > I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School

Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. >> The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. 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Name: Catherine B. **City:** Muncy, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 12:36 PM – 93

Subject: School Tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures “all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education.” The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically “Hold Harmless” policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania’s state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through “Hold Harmless” policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. 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By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Diane K.

City: Auburn, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 12:41 PM – 94

Subject: Ever increasing property taxes are really hurting those of us on a fixed income.

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, >> I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. >> The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. >> A particularly notable proposal is the “School Property Tax Elimination Act,” introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. 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By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state

Name: Richard H.

City: Muncy, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 12:45 PM – 95

Subject: Property tax elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Barbara B. **City:** Williamsport, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 12:46 PM – 96

Subject: School tax elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, >> I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. >> The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures “all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education.” The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically “Hold Harmless” policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania’s state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through “Hold Harmless” policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. >> Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned “Hold Harmless” rule and the currently debated “Level Up” measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. >> A particularly notable proposal is the “School Property Tax Elimination Act,” introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. >> The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person’s ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low-income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! >> Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the “School Property Tax Elimination Act” would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. >> The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the “School Property Tax Elimination Act” this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: William S.

City: Montoursville, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 12:47 PM – 97

Subject: Property taxes are crippling us.

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, >> I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. >> The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Cynthia L.

City: Hughesville, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 12:52 PM – 98

Subject: PTCC

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Howard B. **City:** Shrewsbury, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 12:57 PM – 99

Subject: September 14, 2023 Philadelphia Hearing

Message: Good Morning Commission Members. I would like to sign up to speak at the September 14, 2023 hearing in Philadelphia. I know these things fill out quickly and do not want to be left out of such an important discussion concerning children, especially since, I believe, the School District of Philadelphia has missed out on funding. Thank you for helping me to register to provide testimony.

Name: Cecelia T. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 1:00 PM

Subject: Property taxes/ curriculum – 100

Message: These taxes have been deemed unconstitutional by the courts. How long do the legislators and school districts think we are going to wait for reform? It's way past time this was taken care of. Parents and students should have a choice where they go also. We the taxpayers are fed up. School boards and teachers unions should be disbanded. It's legalized organized crime. It's also time we start teaching kids actual history and not political motives that try to rewrite history. Common core math is also a joke. As is the race and gender crap. That's not education, that's brainwashing. The youth of our society are being dumbed down and controlled on purpose. This all needs to stop.

Name: Donnie H. **City:** Barto, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 1:07 PM – 101

Subject: School Property Tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, > > I am a member of the Lycoming County Patriots group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. > > The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. > > Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. > > A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. > > The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will

struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low-income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! >> Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. >> The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Ron S. **City:** Williamsport, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 1:13 PM – 102

Subject: Property tax elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social

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Name: George R. **City:** Myerstown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 2:06 PM – 103

Subject: Education Funding

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Name: Gary S. **City:** Northampton, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 2:21 PM – 104

Subject: Property tax elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement

tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Marilyn S. **City:** Penn Run, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 2:23 PM – 105

Subject: School Property Tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales

tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Rose S. **City:** Kutztown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 2:44 PM – 106

Subject: Property Tax Shift

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but

careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: George M. **City:** Lehigh, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 3:34 PM – 107

Subject: School Property Tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school

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Name: Tamika G. **City:** Woodlyn, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 3:47 PM – 108

Subject: School tax relief for seniors

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military

retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Jennifer R. **City:** Elizabethtown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 4:37 PM – 109

Subject: School Property Tax Elimination Act

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act

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Name: Stephen M. **City:** Pottsville, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 5:32 PM – 110

Subject: End property tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county.

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Name: Jason W. **City:** Wrightsville, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 5:54 PM – 111

Subject: School Tax

Message: Why can't there be a straight flat tax per household (renter's included) for school tax instead of people like us paying \$9k as empty nesters?

Name: Joyce M. **City:** Sarver, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 6:48 PM – 112

Subject: Tax elimination

Message: Tax elimination for Pa

Name: Angela S. **City:** Hanover, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 7:29 PM – 113

Subject: Eliminating school property taxes in PA

Message: This is so archaic. You gotta want to make change to make this state desirable

Name: Rick C. **City:** White Haven, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 8:00 PM – 114

Subject: Property Tax elimination

Message: Please help us senior citizens on fixed income..

Name: Peter F. **City:** Schuylkill Haven, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 8:09 PM – 115

Subject: School Property Tax Elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the

Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Sally W.

City: Hanover, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 8:20 PM – 116

Subject: School Funding

Message: Another way has to be found to fund schools other than property taxes. The schools are filled with children who's 'parents' do not own property.

Name: Lynne H.

City: Pottstown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 8:54 PM – 117

Subject: PA School Tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, >> I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. >> The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Kevin M.

City: Trout Run, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 9:57 PM – 118

Subject: Secure in our assets. Unconstitutional taxes

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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Name: Daniel M.

City: Carlisle, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 10:11 PM - 119

Subject: Taxes

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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Name: Vince R.

City: Cogan Station, PA

Sent: Tuesday, August 29, 2023 10:11 PM – 120

Subject: Fix the schools and stop taxing people out of their homes

Message: Stop the madness. People are losing their homes that they have worked and paid for, to support schools they don't have kids in. And the education stinks. It is not fair People on retirement can't pay these ridiculous taxes. Time for it to end

Name: Christine M. **City:** Montoursville, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 12:29 AM – 121

Subject: Property Taxation

Message: Please reconsider property tax elimination - Increasing taxes are hurting the elderly the most. No one should lose their home because of being taxed out of their home.

Name: Susan S. **City:** Lehighon, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 4:17 AM – 122

Subject: Eliminate the school property tax

Message: The school property tax robs seniors of a home the worked All their lives for. We need to eliminate this tax from property to a more fair consumer tax.

Name: Stephen G. **City:** Kunkletown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 5:51 AM – 123

Subject: Taxes

Message: Get rid of Taxes

Name: Nancy R. **City:** Hamburg, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 6:53 AM – 124

Subject: Property tax elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but

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Name: Timothy G. **City:** Lehigh, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 7:17 AM – 125

Subject: Eliminate school property tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school

districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Lori M. **City:** New Oxford, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 7:33 AM – 126

Subject: Eliminate school property tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military

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Name: Bradley S. **City:** Williamsport, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 7:47 AM – 127

Subject: School Taxes

Message: These taxes need to be eliminated for seniors with low fixed incomes. I can no longer support myself, they have gotten outrageous!

Name: Concetta M. **City:** Jenkintown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 7:53 AM – 128

Subject: Funding

Message: Sandra M.

Name: Sandra M. **City:** Hillsgrove, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 7:58 AM – 129

Subject: School taxes

Message: Your killing us with these taxes. How about sharing the burden over all Pennsylvania's citizens? Do your job and adhere to the court case requiring Pa change its way of funding schools! Also school choice is a must! Get it done!

Name: Doug D. **City:** Myerstown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 8:01 AM – 130

Subject: Level Up

Message: The 'Level Up' bribe to allow CCA cyber corruption needs to stop.

Name: Edward B. **City:** Shickshinny, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 8:19 AM – 131

Subject: Taxes

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, >> I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. >> The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania’s school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Linda H.

City: Williamsport, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 8:31 AM – 132

Subject: School taxes for seniors

Message: Seniors should not have to pay school taxes, in fact, township and county should not be raised for seniors. Pa. Taxes are ridiculously high for the return. Texas, for instance, freezes taxes on seniors. My friend moved to Texas 17 years ago, her taxes remain the same. Many states have less taxes than the so-called poor state of Pa. Being facetious.

Name: Wilma B. **City:** Springfield, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 8:32 AM – 133

Subject: School Property Tax Elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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Name: Robyn S. **City:** Tobyhanna, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 9:12 AM – 134

Subject: Property tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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Name: Holly T. **City:** Fleetwood, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 9:13 AM – 135

Subject: School Property taxes

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Name: Stephanie F. **City:** Lykens, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 9:41 AM – 136

Subject: Property tax elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. 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This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax

Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Craig W. **City:** Womelsdorf, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 9:44 AM – 137

Subject: Property tax elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. 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addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state. S

Name: Scott S. **City:** Shunk, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 9:51 AM – 138

Subject: Basic education property tax and funding

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this

demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Deb K.

City: Palmerton, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 10:42 AM – 139

Subject: Education funding and school property tax reform

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Property Tax Elimination in Pa. Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B

in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Kristen H. **City:** Manheim, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 10:47 AM – 140

Subject: School Funding and Property Tax Elimination Act

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group, and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and its recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023, Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. So a complete change in approach is needed. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well, but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction, and many are now supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions.

The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed, but it does so in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this important demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state. Please email, call or text me if you have any questions or need any additional information. Thank you in advance for your attention to the above.

Name: Edward W. **City:** Allentown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 11:12 AM – 141

Subject: Retired on Social Security 😞

Message: I am a 76 year old woman struggling to pay bills with only living on my social security!! I really think seniors should be give a break from paying school taxes so we can pay for food, utilities, medical etc. It is a hardship paying these taxes and I have no children in school 🙄

Name: Bonnie M. **City:** Red Hill, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 3:39 PM – 142

Subject: Taxes

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school

districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Edward H. **City:** Jim Thorpe, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 4:01 PM – 143

Subject: School funding

Message: Property tax elimination

Name: Rodney W. **City:** Temple, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 8:09 PM – 144

Subject: Property tax elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the BIPARTISANS FOR SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX SHIFT Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the

concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Anne G. **City:** McSherrystown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 8:45 PM – 145

Subject: BEF Funding Input

Message: Dear Members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am writing to express deep concern about specific issues regarding the February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court Order concerning the inequitable school funding lawsuit, and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. The Act will resolve some of the most vexing issues facing the General Assembly with regard to the Court Order. For full disclosure, I am a member of the School Property Tax Working Group that previously submitted input. While the Court Order does not explicitly mandate the General Assembly to eliminate or reduce reliance on school property taxes, the opinion clearly highlights the absurd funding disparities that arose from heavy reliance on local property taxes to fund schools. This is a primary reason the Court sided with the plaintiffs. The funding disparities are so nonsensical that there is simply no way to rectify the current funding model(s). To demonstrate how extreme these disparities are, please refer to the data in Tables 1 and 2. Table 1 displays the five lowest school districts' "local property tax/RE tax" revenue as a percentage of all funding sources for each district. Table 2 displays the five highest school districts' "local property tax/RE tax" revenue as a percentage of all funding sources for each district. The tables were created in word and pasted into this form. I had to re-align the columns. I hope the columns will appear and print correctly. Other than send a word document to the commission, this is the best I could do. There is no option to submit attachments nor is there a U.S. Mail address.

Year	County	SCHOOL	DIS	RE TAX	LOCAL	STATE	FEDERAL	OTHER
2021-22	Allegheny	Duquesne	City	SD	5.43%	5.71%	75.61%	13.25%
2019-20	Allegheny	Duquesne	City	SD	6.07%	4.05%	84.85%	4.72%
2021-22	Berks	Reading	SD	6.57%	9.93%	72.27%	10.00%	1.23%
2019-20	Berks	Reading	SD	6.88%	10.03%	75.90%	6.84%	0.33%
2021-22	Cambria	Blacklick Valley	SD	7.20%	6.51%	49.79%	2.32%	34.18%
2019-20	Cambria	Blacklick Valley	SD	9.91%	8.44%	68.94%	12.35%	0.36%
2021-22	Blair	Altoona Area	SD	8.63%	7.56%	35.51%	7.98%	40.32%
2019-20	Blair	Altoona Area	SD	15.97%	13.47%	65.61%	4.96%	0.00%
2021-22	Clarion	Union	SD	9.26%	5.86%	2.15%	9.90%	22.83%
2019-20	Clarion	Union	SD	13.27%	8.74%	74.74%	3.25%	0.00%

Table 1 RE TAX: % Real Estate Taxes of Total Revenue OTHER LOCAL: % Other Local Revenue of Total Revenue STATE: % State Revenue of Total Revenue FEDERAL: % Federal Revenue of Total Revenue OTHER: % Other

Revenue of Total Revenue OTHER YEAR COUNTY SCHOOL_DIS RE TAX LOCAL STATE FEDERAL OTHER 2021-22 Montgomery Lower Merion SD 79.49% 5.37% 14.18% 0.96% 0.00% 2019-20 Montgomery Lower Merion SD 80.87% 4.04% 14.55% 0.54% 0.00% 2021-22 Delaware Haverford Township SD 77.95% 4.02% 17.93% 0.10% 0.00% 2019-20 Delaware Haverford Township SD 77.44% 4.37% 17.55% 0.65% 0.00% 2021-22 Chester Tredyffrin-Easttown SD 77.93% 6.17% 15.05% 0.85% 0.00% 2019-20 Chester Tredyffrin-Easttown SD 77.57% 6.60% 15.08% 0.74% 0.00% 2021-22 Delaware Radnor Township SD 76.77% 5.99% 14.57% 2.65% 0.02% 2019-20 Delaware Radnor Township SD 76.82% 6.51% 15.10% 1.55% 0.01% 2021-22 Delaware Garnet Valley SD 76.73% 4.09% 18.32% 0.81% 0.05% 2019-20 Delaware Garnet Valley SD 76.69% 4.33% 18.55% 0.43% 0.00%

Table 2
RE TAX: % Real Estate Taxes of Total Revenue OTHER LOCAL: % Other Local Revenue of Total Revenue STATE: % State Revenue of Total Revenue FEDERAL: % Federal Revenue of Total Revenue OTHER: % Other Revenue of Total Revenue

The data used to calculate the percentages was extracted from the PDE Detailed AFR revenue website. I initially conducted this analysis using the 2019-20 data and recently updated it with the 2021-22 data. Please note that the data entries are not thoroughly verified, so there could be some inherent small level of error. To ensure accuracy, I strongly recommend the BEF to request an analysis of this data from the Pennsylvania Independent Fiscal Office if any concerns arise. As you can observe, some property owners contribute less than 10% of overall school funding for their districts, while others contribute over 75%. These disparities are far beyond unreasonable; there are simply no adequate words to describe the level of injustice. The excessive reliance on property taxes, combined with "Hold Harmless" funding, has led to an unsolvable predicament. The current funding model cannot be fixed. The overarching mandate of Court Order is to provide equal opportunity for all students across the commonwealth. This cannot be accomplished with such irrational funding. A funding system that guarantees equal opportunity, fairness, and equity for all students must, by definition, also encompass those funding the system. The only way this can be accomplished is to tie funding revenue to a person's ability to pay. Moving to replace school property tax funding not only satisfies the Commonwealth Court's inescapable conclusion that Pennsylvania relies too heavily of property taxes, it moves replacement funding to a system that is likely as close to a person's ability to pay as feasible. The current funding system essentially functions as a "Rob Peter to pay Paul" scheme, which is deeply problematic. The second concern I wish to address pertains to the extension of personal income tax to some retirement income that is proposed in the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I recently came across a response by the BEF Co-Chair, the Honorable Senator Kristen Philips-Hill, to a member of a school property tax elimination Facebook page. The member had reached out to Senator Kristen-Hill about the School Property Tax Elimination Act and included an Op-Ed by the Honorable Senator Lisa Boscola titled "Harrisburg Needs to End Reliance on School Property Taxes." In Senator Kristen-Hill's response, she began with, "I completely share your sentiment. Senator Boscola has been one of the strongest supporters of school property tax elimination. We may be from different political parties, but we see eye-to-eye on this effort." Senator Kristen-Hill also touched upon the School Property Tax Elimination Act brought up as a solution for elimination. Senator Kristen-Hill stated, "The biggest roadblock that bill ran into was the fact that it would tax retirement income in Pennsylvania, which is currently not taxed. Many senior citizens complained that it would increase their tax burden, forcing them to pay income tax for the first time on their retirement accounts." I understand the hesitation of legislators when it comes to taxing retirement income. Indeed, when the School Property Tax Elimination Act was first introduced, it sparked considerable debate. We witnessed this firsthand on School Property Tax Elimination Act Facebook pages, other social media platforms, and in discussions. In response, an education campaign was initiated along with creating an impact estimator (calculator). The calculator can be accessed at www.noprop.tax. I assure you that when the School Property Tax Elimination Act was reintroduced in 2022, the opposition was more akin to a faint murmur than a resounding roar. Through education and the calculator, the vast majority of seniors realized that their tax burden would decrease. While it was estimated that seniors would pay approximately \$1.9 billion in retirement tax, they would also save around \$3.5 billion in eliminated school property taxes—a substantial financial gain of over \$1 billion. Again, I encourage the commission to seek confirmation from the Pennsylvania Independent Fiscal Office. Even those who may initially break even or experience a financial loss will eventually transition to a favorable position. Why, you might ask? The intrinsic annual revenue growth of personal and sales taxes generates the necessary revenue to consistently increase funding for schools. In fact, these revenues often surpass funding requirements, allowing for the establishment of a reserve fund to weather economic downturns. While school property taxes are almost guaranteed to increase annually, increases in personal and sales taxes occur over decades. A clear and unambiguous solution exists that addresses both concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court and this letter, the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I strongly urge you to seriously consider this comprehensive solution during your deliberations.

Name: Robert K. **City:** Leighton, PA

Sent: Wednesday, August 30, 2023 9:08 PM – 146

Subject: Taxes

Message: Please help eliminate school taxes....as a senior citizen I need 1/4 of my income for taxes to stay in my house.

Name: Kim S.

City: Jim Thorpe, PA

Sent: Thursday, August 31, 2023 7:00 AM – 147

Subject: Property Taxes

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Pennsylvania Taxpayers Cyber Coalition (PTCC) Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures “all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education.” The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically “Hold Harmless” policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania’s state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through “Hold Harmless” policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person’s ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Eran H.

City: Gibsonia, PA

Sent: Thursday, August 31, 2023 7:46 AM – 148

Subject: School tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, >> I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. >> The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures “all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education.” The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically “Hold Harmless” policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania’s state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through “Hold Harmless” policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. >> Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned “Hold Harmless” rule and the currently debated “Level Up” measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. >> A particularly notable proposal is the “School Property Tax Elimination Act,” introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. >> The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. 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By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Geraldine T. **City:** Montgomery, PA

Sent: Thursday, August 31, 2023 11:05 AM – 149

Subject: education hearing to be held in Lancaster on 9/21

Message: At the Lancaster hearing, as well as all of the hearings, please allow time for parents, students, and teachers to speak. They are the ones who are on the front lines and they have much firsthand experience to offer. How can it be called a public hearing if the public may not speak?

Name: Pat A. **City:** Lititz, PA

Sent: Thursday, August 31, 2023 8:19 PM – 150

Subject: Property Tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I know you have been sent a 7 paragraph letter comprised by administrators of this group by several members. I do not want to waste your time in reading through that again but would like to express my support for elimination of property tax and suggest to you that the contents of that letter are well intentioned and thought out and more than worthy of your consideration. I think it is critical to note that supporters of this cause are not looking to deprive schools of financial support but rather are interested in finding an alternate way to do so other than property tax. Thank you for your time.

Name: Dan M. **City:** Collegeville, PA

Sent: Friday, September 1, 2023 1:20 PM – 151

Subject: School Property Tax Elimination Act (formerly HB13)

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures “all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education.” The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically “Hold Harmless” policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania’s state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through “Hold Harmless” policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security

and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Daniel W. **City:** Williamsport, PA

Sent: Friday, September 1, 2023 9:58 PM – 152

Subject: Unfair Property Tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to

make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Roger and Kathryn S. **City:** Ephrata, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 2, 2023 7:42 AM – 153

Subject: Education funding

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social

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Name: Markus M. **City:** Canadensis, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 2, 2023 7:52 AM – 154

Subject: School Tax

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's

retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Dawna M. **City:** Muncy, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 2, 2023 10:00 AM – 155

Subject: School Funding

Message: I do not live in a piggy bank. The school property tax is completely unfair and unconstitutional, because it violates the Article 1 right to own property. It harms the very people that free public education is to help.....the day a student graduates, they now owe the system over a million dollars in property tax, the college debt can be paid back, but the property tax can never be paid back. A young couple can't buy a home anymore. The yearly tax increase wipes out the equity, which puts home ownership and mortgage default at risk. This is a state legislation problem, that they have shifted the state responsibility to the home owner. The State has never raised the PA school tax of 6%, but instead have diverted the revenue to the general fund to be wasted. Any school funding must be a reflection of economical success. The sales and USE tax is the proper vessel. The solution is to tax ALL transactions, including food and clothing with no exceptions. WE ALREADY TAX FOOD and CLOTHING in the hidden cost of business property tax, which is a pass through (with markup) to the consumer. Rent is also taxable, but there is an exemption for property rent over 30 days. Home ownership is declining, this leads to the deterioration of society. Home rent should be taxed. Renters currently DO NOT pay SCHOOL tax, it's a business expense paid by the property owner and as all expenses added to the overhead. By law landlords are not tax collectors. So we have cities like Reading where home ownership is in decline, less than 33% of families own their home. This is a huge problem, rent needs to be taxed 6%. This is the only fair way and will promote home ownership. So, not only do I pay my property tax of over 16,000 for my 2 homes, but every time I walk into a store, I am also paying their property tax, on top of the 6% sales tax (which is the school tax). This is double taxation. The only way to get education expense under control, and STOP them from using our homes as a PIGGY BANK is to pass a Constitutional Amendment banning schools from taxing property. Once this is accomplished, the school district should get a percentage of the 6% tax collected in their district, and the State shall then distribute the remaining sale tax revenue to the school districts to ensure that all students get an equally good public education. That is what the PA Constitution demands. Also it would be both in the public and school's interest to provide an education to spur economical growth within their district and the State overall. It's alarming that so many of our children, after getting a PA education leave the State, because SCHOOL PROPERTY TAX makes it impossible to live here. I'm 67, I plan on living to 100....I'm semi retired, I will still need to come up with another half a million to pay my property tax. My entire Social Security will go to school tax. And finally, adults who get sick, can't work, should not lose their homes. Young mothers should not be forced to work, instead of staying home to raise good children, this is a benefit to society. THIS IS CRAZY. MODERN DAY SLAVERY.

Name: Thomas M. **City:** Alburtis, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 2, 2023 11:10 AM – 156

Subject: School Property Tax Elimination Act

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures “all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education.” The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically “Hold Harmless” policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania’s state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through “Hold Harmless” policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. 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By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Steven T.

City: Palmerton, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 8:46 AM – 157

Subject: Property Tax Elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, >> I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. >> The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. 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Name: Lucia P.

City: Linden, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 5, 2023 10:25 AM – 158

Subject: Funding of public schools

Message: I would encourage the Commission to do a thorough meeting and not only hear from the experts on education, but also the families, teachers, parents and students who are most impacted by the current funding of our schools. You need to get all the facts not just the ones you think are important. Our children are the future of this country and you our legislators need to do a better job where there are concerned. Please open the hearings so all can have a saying on the education of our children. Do the right thing.

Name: Jeanette B. **City:** Ephrata, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 6, 2023 12:05 PM – 159

Subject: Pennsylvania Public Education Funding

Message: Thank you for your willingness to tackle the complicated issue of educational funding in Pennsylvania. Reaching out to parents, students, educators, and taxpayers as part of the process is commendable. My perspective on this issue comes from working as a teacher and administrator in rural, urban, and suburban school districts for over 30 years. It's an issue that was explored as part of my experience with the Education Policy and Leadership Center back in 2016, which I've updated in light of recent information. Here is the link to the summary in case any of the information may be at all helpful with your critically important mission: <https://bit.ly/paschoolfunding>

Name: Tracy S. **City:** Macungie, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 6, 2023 2:47 PM – 160

Subject: Underfunded Philadelphia School District

Message: As the parent of two young children who are just entering full time school for the first time this year, I am afraid of what the future will be like for them if funding isn't adequately provided to those in need. With limited options in our area and the massive expense of private schools, I worry every day about whether the local schools can provide the full education that my children and all those in Philadelphia need and deserve. Please make sure funding goes to the districts most in need and quick. Thank you.

Name: Brian K. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 6, 2023 8:01 PM – 161

Subject: Fair school funding

Message: I am concerned about the disparity in funds available to public schools. I want public schools to remain strong. Please follow a funding formula that is equitable, adequate, and delivered in a timely manner.

Name: Marilyn L. **City:** Lititz, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 6, 2023 8:04 PM – 162

Subject: BEFC in Chester Upland

Message: Good evening- I am serving as a PA ED Voter Fellow this year and am also an advocate for parents and students in the Chester Upland School District. I would like to have the commission come to meet with the parents and students of Chester Upland to hear from this community.

Name: Tasliy M. **City:** Chester, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 7, 2023 5:30 PM – 163

Subject: Commission Hearings

Message: I am dismayed and disappointed that you are 1) refusing to hear public comment on this critical issue and 2) not holding a hearing in one of the most egregiously inequitably funded areas - Montgomery County.

Name: Liz B. **City:** Norristown, PA

Sent: Friday, September 8, 2023 11:25 AM – 164

Subject: Support of the School Property Tax Elimination Act

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the MARCH ON HARRISBURG! Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The

February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures “all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education.” The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically “Hold Harmless” policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania’s state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through “Hold Harmless” policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person’s ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Stuart S. **City:** Harrisburg, PA

Sent: Friday, September 8, 2023 12:30 PM – 165

Subject: Full and Fair education funding

Message: I am writing to urge you to create a funding formula that not only provides for the needs of every child to have an effective education, but also stops discriminating against poor and Black and Brown students. When my children were in the local (underfunded) school, their Middle School often had a trash can in the hall to catch the rain that came in through the roof. When I advised an 11-grader, who would be a first generation college applicant, to talk to his guidance counselor, he had

no idea who that was. He had never seen him, had only received emails with his course schedule occasionally. When I tutored a refugee who had had little education in her refugee camp before coming to the US, she couldn't benefit from her non-ESL classes because there weren't enough ESL teachers to help her. She started learning math when she was able to transfer to a suburban school where she had a small class with two teachers. That just wasn't a possibility at McCaskey. This is personal to me because I have worked for racial justice all my adult life, ever since moving from the South where "segregation academies" were still the norm. I will follow your work with interest this year, and am expecting the General Assembly to enact a formula that provides for ALL students.

Name: Beth R. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Friday, September 8, 2023 12:47 PM – 166

Subject: Thank you!

Message: Looking forward to learning more about the ways PA divides up Educational funding.

Name: Joanne B. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Friday, September 8, 2023 2:29 PM – 167

Subject: Fair Funding for our schools

Message: I am very concerned about the funding formulas for our public schools where schools that can't be as well funded from their communities do not receive a fair amount of school funding. They should receive more money than schools where their communities and parents have the financial capability to fund the programs they want their schools to have. Communities with lower incomes do not have that ability yet want to and should have similar programs.

Name: Elaine B. **City:** Lititz, PA

Sent: Friday, September 8, 2023 5:22 PM – 168

Subject: Basic Education FAIR Funding

Message: I count on your creating a funding formula that provides sufficient resources for every child to have a good education and doesn't discriminate against poor or Black and Brown students, i.e. Full and Fair funding. It is shameful that crumbling school buildings are threatening our children's health and safety. As long as our children are at risk, our spiritual well being is threatened and the strength of our community is fractured.

Name: Anne W. **City:** Lititz, PA

Sent: Friday, September 8, 2023 5:55 PM – 169

Subject: Public Comments for BEFC

Message: I am a retired school teacher/administrator from the SDP and have personally seen the disparities between the well-funded, whiter, suburban districts and the poorly-funded, majority Black and brown Philadelphia School District. My own children had the privilege of attending the Wissahickon School District just a 30-minute ride from the school where I taught, Olney High School. The once beautiful Olney building had been neglected and one episode will tell you the story of the difference between the haves and have nots. Our building was a hub for students with special needs and these students performed every year in a special holiday show. As I sat in the audience with the students singing their hearts out, I realized that not only could I not see any of their faces because none of the stage lights worked, but also, the sound system was non-existent. This would never have occurred in our suburban public school! I am fortunate to be married to a business owner and when I shared with my husband how frustrating it was for me to not be able to see or hear these beautiful children who had worked so hard on this show, he sent his company electrician over to the school to fix the lights that could be fixed. He then donated money to the theater teacher to buy stage lights and a sound system. After that, the school was able to present plays just like in a normal school! Imagine how many school buildings throughout Philadelphia have the same problem! Ask the teachers and parents; they can tell you what programs their kids are missing out on because of facilities in poor repair. The children in those schools are no less deserving than my own children, yet they continue to suffer. The money is sitting in a "rainy day fund." Use it! The time is now! As far as academics, the solution is simple: children not reading by 3rd grade need intensive intervention! Don't let them get to Middle School without being able to read or do math! The payoff will be great if you don't let a single child slip through the cracks! An extra \$2,000 per child, the amount that many children in the state are being short-changed, would go far in hiring reading and math specialists. Do it now and in 10 years the dividends will be reaped when these same children graduate with proficient reading and math scores. Our Black and brown children are worth the investment. Adequate and fair funding needs to be in place by the 2024-2025 school year! Level Up funding needs to be released to high poverty school districts immediately! Do the right thing!

Name: Elizabeth L. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Friday, September 8, 2023 9:50 PM – 170

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: I am a retired school teacher, and very aware how important education is to help children and youth develop a sense of self, engage with their world, and reach their potential. Every student deserves a good education, and I strongly encourage you to support Fair Funding so that students of color or students who live in poor neighborhoods are offered the same opportunities that white students or those living in wealthy communities have. All schools should have equal funding for all their students. I know that wealthier districts raise more money from property taxes, but less privileged districts need to be compensated for this difference so that all students are equally funded. Please support Fair Funding. I was shocked to read the statistics about unequal funding for schools in PA. We can do much better.

Name: Helen M. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Friday, September 8, 2023 9:53 PM – 171

Subject: Education Funding

Message: I am writing today to urge you to create a funding formula that not only provides sufficient resources so that EVERY child can have a good education and also doesn't discriminate against poor or Black and Brown students--Full and Fair funding. Aside from the fact that this is the right thing to do, I would think that you would want to invest in Pennsylvania's future by making sure all our children are well-educated. We have labor shortages and skills gaps to fill! Investing now will pay dividends later!

Name: Kimberly H. **City:** Lititz, PA

Sent: Friday, September 8, 2023 10:45 PM – 172

Subject: Fair Funding of public schools

Message: Please work to level up funding for the poorest school districts in Pennsylvania. This is a long term investment toward eliminating poverty in the state.

Name: George M. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 9, 2023 11:30 AM – 173

Subject: fair funding for schools

Message: Please consider plans for equitable, adequate, and timeliness in considering school funding that will pass in the PA Supreme Court. Perhaps combining the formula adopted in 2015 with new dollars directed to schools will be more equitable.

Name: Elaine B. **City:** Lititz, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 9, 2023 2:34 PM – 174

Subject: Fair Funding for PA Schools

Message: Hello- I am writing to ask that the Education Committee create a way to fairly fund PA schools. Students deserve an excellent PUBLIC education since we, the public, will depend on these kids to be our future. We deserve well-founded schools that ensure every child as an equitable basic education. We can not continue allowing poor students to receive less money for education than wealthy students- that's what's been happening and we've already determined this is unconstitutional. Please advocate for poor kids to get excellent educations and create a formula to make sure every school is equitably funded. Thank you!

Name: Angie C. **City:** Denver, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 9, 2023 5:37 PM – 175

Subject: education funding

Message: The quality of a child's education should not depend on where he lives, who his parents are, or what language he speaks at home. All children should go to school in safe buildings, with qualified teachers and up to date materials. Each one should have the best opportunities to reach his potential. We need children prepared to find jobs with livable wages, to participate in civic matters, to engage in healthy social interactions. Full and fair funding for all schools doesn't mean each one gets the same funding. It means doing the work of assessing each school's needs and supporting each one with the funding it requires to support all students. I am a parent and former educator.

Name: Kathy S. **City:** Lititz, PA

Sent: Sunday, September 10, 2023 6:33 PM – 176

Subject: Fair funding

Message: I am writing to urge the PA state legislature to act on the Commonwealth Court ruling in February requiring fair state funding of public education in the Commonwealth of PA. This ruling was final as of July 31st, 2023, so it is time to provide equitable funding for all public school districts in PA this school year (2023-24). Please act now!

Name: Kim V. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Sunday, September 10, 2023 8:35 PM – 177

Subject: SDOL needs fair funding

Message: My son is struggling with social emotional issues this year at school. So far his school had to shorten their days 4 out of 11 school days due to high heat and no air conditioning. His school needs adequate facilities, and adequate staff and student support to help address the social emotional issues that resulted from the pandemic and from the persistent poverty in Lancaster. Please help adequately and fairly fund our public schools.

Name: Marianne S. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Sunday, September 10, 2023 9:05 PM – 178

Subject: fair funding

Message: I am writing to urge you to create a funding formula that provides sufficient resources so that EVERY child can have a good education and also doesn't discriminate against poor or Black and Brown students--Full and Fair funding. As a member of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Lancaster, and as a parent of children and graduates of SDOL, this is an urgent and significant issue. Please consider this responsibility carefully.

Name: Andy P. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 5:53 AM – 179

Subject: Modernization Separations Act

Message: Ladies and Gentleman, We have participated in Construction Contracts with School District as a General Mechanical Electrical and Plumbing Prime. On every occasion there has been one member of the Team that is unwilling to participate equally as a team member. We always look to the School Board to supplement the project by reimbursing us for the School Board's decision to Contract with each of the members. By modernizing the Act the School Board can better spend their time and money Educating the Children rather than be embroiled in the physical construction of their facilities.

Name: Robert L. **City:** Bellefonte, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 6:54 AM – 180

Subject: Funding for Public schools

Message: I am concerned that taxpayer concerns are not being considered in the evaluation of fair funding for public schools. While I totally agree we need a strong, viable and fairly funded public school system for our children, I do not believe relying on property tax is a sustainable way to fund public schools. Property taxes, especially for seniors is burdensome and never seems to stabilize. My taxes have consistently increased by almost \$300 per year for the last 10 years. I believe the commission should look at alternatives to funding such as increases to income tax and sales tax. Thank you for your consideration and work to develop a more equitable solution for PA public schools.

Name: Karen F. **City:** Newmanstown, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 9:23 AM – 181

Subject: Basic Education funding

Message: This should be totally funded by the state so that where a child lives does not affect their education. Raise the state income tax if necessary!

Name: Joanne M. **City:** Glenside, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 9:54 AM – 182

Subject: School Construction

Message: This past weekend I submitted my comments related to school construction and how an archaic procurement law results in our public school construction projects to overpay for construction and renovation projects. After posting it I received an error message. Hopefully my first post went through. The gist of it is that Pennsylvania should modernize its

Separations Act to allow tax dollars to spent efficiently and effectively. If my message did not go through, please let me know.

Name: Jon O. **City:** Dillsburg, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 10:00 AM – 183

Subject: separations act

Message: The Separations Act is an antiquated law that predates the need for sophisticated contractors in the every evolving built environment. With each passing year the complex of construction and integration of technology in the construction industry as a whole requires a greater level of integration of the design and construction field. The Separations Act is by far one of the biggest obstacles to a clean coordinated construction effort. It requires the Schools/ Government to become experts in a short time in contract and building sciences and ultimately the arbiter once the litigation begins between the parties. The efficiency of other project delivery methods that are widely used in PA and in other Government sectors across the country have been proven to reduce cost and increase quality on construction project.

Name: Andrew N. **City:** Camp Hill, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 10:12 AM – 184

Subject: PLEASE FULLY FUND OUR SCHOOLS

Message: I live in the Owen J. Roberts School District. It is ranked in the top 10% of all PA Districts. HOWEVER, our local taxes have to cover almost 80% of all school funding because we are being DENIED over \$3.5 Million Dollars per year from the state. If the 2016 Fair Funding Formula were used fully our PA State annual state Basic Education allocation would increase drastically. We are not getting our fair share of the current state budget!

Name: John B. **City:** Chester Springs, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 10:19 AM – 185

Subject: Separations Act

Message: PA has neglected its education financial support for too long. Among the casualties is the neglect of facilities, which leave students with fewer resources and school districts with mounting deferred maintenance and obsolescence costs to come. The legislature must allocate more funds for construction AND do what it can to reduce wasteful spending on construction. The latter is difficult for legislative action but one simple first step would be to modernize or eliminate the Separations Act requirements on public construction. The impact of the Separations Act - especially on the administration of construction after bidding - is 15-25% additional charges due to claims incurred after construction begins. These claims are the result of the lack of a coordinated line of responsibility that puts the onus for managing construction on the school boards and the district administrations that are untrained in such work.

Name: Jeff B. **City:** Allison Park, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 11:42 AM – 186

Subject: October 11 Meeting in Pittsburgh

Message: No specific information (Time/Place) was provided for the October 11 Meeting in Pittsburgh. Will public comment be heard? If so, what requirements.

Name: Gary E. **City:** Murrysville, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 11:42 AM – 187

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge parent/taxpayer. We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Thank you did your consideration.

Name: Alexandra R. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 11:45 AM – 188

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge parent. We are a School that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small, forgotten, one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of Schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: John P. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 12:03 PM – 189

Subject: Old forge school district

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge parent. We are a School that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small, forgotten, one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of Schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades.

Name: Nicole K. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 12:09 PM – 190

Subject: Old Forge school district

Message: I am writing as an concerned citizen of Old Forge We are a School that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small, forgotten, one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of Schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades.

Name: Matt P. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 12:11 PM – 191

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge school district employee and taxpayer, and as an Old Forge Borough Councilman. Our school district has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades.

Name: Rick N. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 12:20 PM – 192

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: Hello, I am writing as an Old Forge (grand)parent/employee/taxpayer (pick one or more). We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: Kellene H. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 12:21 PM – 193

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: Hello, I am writing as an Old Forge (grand)parent/employee/taxpayer (pick one or more). We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: Jacob H. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 12:22 PM – 194

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge grandparent//taxpayer . We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Please strongly consider my plea for help for our school district! Thank you for your time & consideration!

Name: Diane N. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 12:30 PM – 195

Subject: PA school property tax

Message: One time I refinanced and did not realize the same mortgage company did not pay the school tax. Within a few months, I was told my kids and I would have to get out of our home. As a single mom, I had to borrow money to pay an unfair tax. I have been paying school taxes for over 25 years. I have paid my fair share. I also pay income and sales taxes, amounting to duplicate taxation. As long as PA homeowners can be extorted by unfair taxes, I will recommend against home buying here. End PA Property taxes now!! Yesterday!!! Taxpayers are not respected nor appreciated in PA.

Name: Julia B. **City:** Collegeville, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 12:33 PM – 196

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge grandparent/taxpayer. We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: John Z. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 12:43 PM – 197

Subject: Property taxes

Message: Eliminate these taxes and have funded by the state. I can't afford to retire or lose my house.

Name: Mary B. **City:** Coatesville, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 12:44 PM – 198

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge taxpayer. We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts

because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades.

Name: Timothy N. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 12:56 PM – 199

Subject: School funding

Message: Hello I would just like to ask for fair funding from local sources, we need to eliminate the school property tax and have a level tax that everyone pays based on what they can afford ie—raise the sales tax and maybe tax additional items. The other issue that I feel should be a part of this is pension plans, eliminate these are go with a 401k plan like most working Pennsylvanians have had to do.

Name: Tammie F. **City:** Harleysville, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 1:08 PM – 200

Subject: School funding

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge parent. We are a School that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small, forgotten, one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of Schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades.

Name: Candice G. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 1:20 PM – 201

Subject: Old forge school district

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge parent. We are a School that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small, forgotten, one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of Schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades.

Name: Carly P. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 1:47 PM – 202

Subject: mental health access in schools

Message: Hi, My wife and I adopted two children from foster care. They moved from Norristown to Ambler (i.e. Wissahickon school district) We learned through this process that mental health access is a wild patchwork, but the most high quality we have experienced has been accessed via the public school system. Here are some observations: 1. Our kids have a lot of trouble with their feelings as a result of significant trauma. "Social emotional learning" curriculum has been a big help to them. 2. Montgomery county funds counselors in schools through a company called Aldersgate. They offer a low level of mental health support (less than a therapist) 3. Montgomery county pays those same counselors to fund a program that provides a 1-hour training for parents on how to navigate mental health services. 4. Wissahickon school district has access to a psychiatrist, who can do IEP evaluations. She bills around \$400 to private patients, but we got what we believe to be 1-2 days of her time evaluating our child for free through the district. 5. Wissahickon has an in house therapist who visits one of the elementary schools. Note that this required our student to get a special assigned bus route to go to that elementary school. 6. When we attempted to access mental health services funded by medical access (Merakey) during the pandemic, we found their offices to be nearly empty - the only person in the building was a psychiatrist. We waited four months to be assigned a therapist, and it was someone who had never done therapy before. 7. There is a separate layer of services (wraparound services) that provide therapists + behavior specialists to foster children. We've never been able to get a therapist who stayed in their job more than two sessions, which I believe to be caused by the pay. In conclusion, it feels like our school district is able to provide really incredible services to our kids, but they are a) filling in a gap for other mental services that are underfunded b) this only

happened because our kids were moved from one of the most under-funded districts in the state (Norristown) to one of the more funded ones (Wissahickon).

Name: Gary S. **City:** Ambler, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 2:30 PM – 203

Subject: Funding

Message: Why is it in Pennsylvania? Only the homeowners are held accountable for educating our youth. It is absolutely unfair to hold homeowners accountable to educate all the youth in our state. There has to be a way for everyone over the age of 18 regardless if they own a home or not helps pay for the youth in the state of Pennsylvania.

Name: Kevin C. **City:** Drexel Hill, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 2:53 PM – 204

Subject: Taxing homes

Message: Since PA school funding has been ruled unconstitutional, does it not make sense to change the source of funding from local to State? How can it be considered as constitutional to keep taxing one group of people for public schools, charter schools and cyber schools? To fix a problem, you must get down to the root cause. Eliminate taxing homes now!

Name: Jenna S. **City:** Collegeville, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 3:02 PM – 205

Subject: Eliminate Property taxing

Message: Taxing paychecks, sales and homes is duplicate taxation and should be illegal. Taxing homes is flat out extortion and unconstitutional. PA people are taxed to no end. High gas tax, all kinds of fees, car registration, expensive tolls, inheritance tax. PA lottery money and casino money should be sent to pay back homeowners for outrageous taxation. Stop stealing the homes of PA Seniors, families, single moms, etc. Sales tax only!!

Name: Danielle S. **City:** Collegeville, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 4:00 PM – 206

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: Hi, I am writing as the current board president of the Old Forge School District. The funding formula is not fair to our very small school. The formula actually reduces our enrollment because of the number of apartment buildings or the taxable property to number of households ratio. We have been underfunded for way too long from the state, passing all of the burden onto our taxpayers and it isn't fair. I am a teacher at a different school district that is actually funded properly, and it makes me sad to think of my daughter entering Kindergarten next year and the lack of opportunities available to her as compared to other local schools. It sickens me that children born in 18518 zip code have less educational opportunity than children born down the road. PLEASE take some time to research our district. Feel free to reach out to myself or the business manager or superintendent. We have so much data compiled on this "fair" funding formula and where we fall and why. We spend most of our time at board meetings discussing how to keep the lights on and what legislators to contact to beg for money instead of how to improve curriculum and instruction, mental health resources, etc. We have the same mandates as large school districts, but none of the administration staff to do it. And none of the money to pay our employees a living wage. It's just a terrible situation for our kids. PLEASE HELP.

Name: Alisha H. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 4:29 PM – 207

Subject: School taxes HB13

Message: Please stop the school taxes in Pennsylvania. I will not be able to pay for much longer. I'm 80 years old. And my son is 60 years old and a cancer partner in recovery right now. We will not have a place to live if you keep raising the.

Name: Rebina B. **City:** Bristol, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 4:34 PM – 208

Subject: Support for Fair Funding of public schools in Penna

Message: I wish to register my support for the fair funding of public schools in the state of Pennsylvania. 1) I do not support the elimination of local property taxes as a funding source. I believe it is important that local communities continue to pay a significant portion of the costs of their local public schools. However, it has been true for a long time that property tax revenue cannot pay for all the expenditures of local schools. Therefore, state government funds are also needed. 2) Let's use the

formula that has been supported in the courts system (and is presently in use for NEW state funds directed to public education). All we would need to do would be to apply that formula to the TOTAL funding of public schools. 3) We are now 60 years since Martin Luther King Jr.'s 1963 speech at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom. It is time to adopt a system that is more fair to minority students also.

Name: Lawrence R. **City:** Lititz, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 4:35 PM – 209

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge parent. We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: Alyssa G. **City:** Duryea, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 4:37 PM – 210

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge grandparent and taxpayer. We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: Debbie B. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 5:01 PM – 211

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge parent/taxpayer. We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Old Forge ranks #454 in per pupil spending out of PA's 500 school districts. Our kids deserve funding equity.

Name: Ashley S. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 5:01 PM – 212

Subject: Old Forge School District Funding

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge parent. We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Old Forge ranks #454 in per pupil spending out of PA's 500 school districts. Our kids deserve funding!!!

Name: Amiee F. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 5:04 PM – 213

Subject: Old Forge School Funding

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge (grand)parent/ employee/ taxpayer (pick one or more). We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Old Forge ranks #454 in per pupil spending out of PA's 500 school districts. Our kids deserve funding!!!

Name: Dennis F. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 5:08 PM – 214

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge parent/aunt/taxpayer/school board director. We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades.

Name: Shannon E. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 5:12 PM – 215

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge parent. We are a School that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small, forgotten, one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of Schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. We need help our students need help! As a person that works in our town and at a local college in Scranton I can tell you Scranton pa gets everything!!! We need to remember the out layers around and how much our students are suffering and forgot about! Thank you for your time!

Name: Angela F. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 5:28 PM – 216

Subject: Funding for Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge (grand)parent/employee/taxpayer .We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Old Forge ranks #454 in per pupil spending out of PA's 500 school districts. Our kids deserve funding equity.

Name: Sandra M. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 5:30 PM – 217

Subject: Eliminate school property tax

Message: We need the school property tax eliminated. It's an unfair tax. Many seniors are losing their home. Make it fair to all Pennsylvanians and have all of us support our schools.HR 13 seems like a good plan.

Name: Calvin M. **City:** Dunlevy, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 5:45 PM – 218

Subject: Please help our state live up to the definition of the word "commonwealth"

Message: Hello, First of all, thanks for your service to our state and this committee. I am a mom to a 4th grader in the School District of Philadelphia. My daughter Avery goes to a small catchment school (Kirkbride) since second grade. In that short time, I have quickly learned that neighborhood wealth most definitely affects the quality and resources of the school. Kirkbride has a majority-minority, predominantly low-income student body. Our Home and School Association has been raising funds for seven years to upgrade our playground. It's been a slow and arduous process, with partial completion. The pandemic did not help and the original estimate for completion is now out of date and it is obviously much higher. We have a few years to go... Contrast that with Greenfield, the Rittenhouse Square catchment. Wealthy. They have a remodeled playground. They are able to raise \$100,000 in one fundraiser. (I'm not kidding.) Their school has air conditioning. My child is walking out of school red as a beet. Her classmates have heat rash and headaches from sitting in their classrooms on 90+ degree days. Why is this ok? It's absolutely not fair or equitable. I mention this Philly specific example because it can be extrapolated throughout the state. Wealth brings money, resources, and parents with spare time to give. I am not sure why, as a Commonwealth, we feel some children are not as deserving as others. (Which is fairly ironic since a commonwealth is any political community that's focused on providing resources for ALL of its residents to THRIVE. A community that has a vision to maintain the "common good." Can we not live up to that?) I cannot look my daughter in the eye and say, "our state has the money to help, but our legislators don't want to." Could you? I'm a nurse and my husband is a firefighter. We help patients in proportion to how much help they need. One wouldn't see a person with an open head injury and give them the same amount of care as one with a sprained ankle. Here in Philadelphia we need more help. Our school buildings are toxic and literally affecting the health of Pennsylvanians. Our kids are falling behind academically. It isn't because our teachers care less, or students are innately less intelligent. It's because the majority of the 197,000 students have less access to resources. It's not the children's fault so please don't let them suffer. Let's live up to our designation as a Commonwealth. Thank you for your time.

Name: Kimberly C. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 5:57 PM – 219

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge parent. We are a School that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small, forgotten, one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of Schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades.

Name: Catherine P. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 6:02 PM – 220

Subject: Public education needs to be funded equitably

Message: The Basic Education Funding Commission is mandated to propose how education will be funded beginning with the current school year. Thank you for moving expeditiously in this matter. The school year has already started, and funding is needed now. I am not a parent, but I am a taxpayer, and I believe that public state funding should be equitably distributed, especially to public school districts that are currently underfunded – in other words, equity of resource allocation over simple equality of distribution that does not take into account the wide variations among communities in terms of property values and other resources. I hope that the Commission's work will result in formulas that will provide the needed dollars for public school districts in which other sources of funding are currently less than adequate.

Name: Daniel E. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 6:16 PM – 221

Subject: The School Property Tax

Message: I have tried to do my best over the years to promote the elimination of this terrible tax. It has always seemed to me that it is common sense that this tax should be eliminated but we have not had enough courageous politicians to make it happen. I am not going to list the many benefits that elimination would bring to the State. Maybe the State's politicians will act when only poor seniors are left and 50,000 home owners lost their home each year. Clearly, 10,000 per year is not enough. The courts have spoken, the people have spoken and now we need the politicians to act; to do the right thing. We do not need to hear more excuses. ACT. And by the way, I just this year, I submitted to Northampton county for a reassessment. I have not

done this for the last 10 years for the fear that the tax would go up. So I had my hearing on 8/10/2023 and my assessment went from 109,000 to 95,000 and this is when the home values have been going through the roof. So I now should have a \$1,025 savings per year. So just think of the extra taxes I had to pay over the last 10 years. Can I get those dollars back? Of course we know the answer to that. The system is fundamentally unfair. Please ACT.

Name: Paul A. **City:** Bethlehem, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 6:18 PM – 222

Subject: Taxes

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge taxpayer. We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades.

Name: Courtney B. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 6:21 PM – 223

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge (grand)parent/employee/taxpayer (pick one or more). We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Old Forge ranks #454 in per pupil spending out of PA's 500 school districts. Our kids deserve funding equity.

Name: Maggie G. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 6:28 PM – 224

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge parent. We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Old Forge ranks #454 in per pupil spending out of PA's 500 school districts. Our kids deserve funding equity.

Name: Kathryn K. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 6:32 PM – 225

Subject: Old Forge Funding

Message: Old Forge school district should be treated fairly , as compared with surrounding districts. We are a one town district , whereas most around us being multiple town districts. Our state funding is shrinking, we deserve a level and equitable.

Name: Mark E. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 6:34 PM – 226

Subject: Property Tax Reform

Message: It is past due that the funding for Pennsylvania schools be eliminated from the backs of home owners. It is illegal and unconstitutional. Homeowners should never be forced out of their homes because of the inability to pay illegal taxes. The burden especially is hard on senior citizens. Also, the way schools are funded is discriminatory.

Name: Kimberly L. **City:** Sinking Spring, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 6:38 PM – 227

Subject: School funds

Message: Our school district has been denied enough funds to keep the school running. Neighboring school districts receive more funds than us and they're bigger districts with more tax revenue than us. We are one of the smallest school districts in the state of Pennsylvania. As a town of just over 8,000 people we cannot continue to tax our residents of which most are elderly. Please look into this matter ASAP. We appreciate any assistance we receive on this matter. Thank you very much.

Name: Andy B. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 7:01 PM – 228

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: As a taxpayer and parent I firmly believe that our district is underfunded and would ask this commission to reconsider the funding guidelines so small schools can get the funding they need to get the resources to help educate our children.

Name: Francis P. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 7:11 PM – 229

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: Hello, I am writing as an Old Forge parent and taxpayer. We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all district- s fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Old Forge ranks #454 in per pupil spending out of PA's 500 school districts. Our kids deserve funding equity.

Name: Maria W. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 8:13 PM - 230

Subject: Old Forge School

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge taxpayer, a grandparent, and a parent of a teacher at Old Forge. Our school relies mainly on our taxpayers for the majority of funding. Less resources are able to go towards education because residents will be overtaxed. We get less state funding than other districts due to Our smaller size. The needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre take precedence over our needs. We would like voice to help express our needs. Please look at the needs of Old Forge school district and others our size experiencing the same problems.

Name: Linda B. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 8:47 PM – 231

Subject: Old Forge Funding

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge Grandparent. We are a school that has relied on it's overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of it's funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades.

Name: Susan V. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 8:49 PM – 232

Subject: Property taxes

Message: It's about time that HB13 gets passed. There are too many people on fixed income and are just barely getting by. I'm retired and these taxes are a burden on me. Please get rid of property taxes.

Name: Patricia L. **City:** Montoursville, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 9:06 PM – 233

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge parent. We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: Marissa B. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 9:07 PM – 234

Subject: My Goal for the BEFC

Message: I feel that the BEFC's job is not just to tweak the Fair Funding Formula, but to create a blueprint for the General Assembly to follow the order of the Commonwealth Court in the school funding lawsuit, which means creating adequacy targets for each school district, creating funding targets for important items like special education, pre-K, and school facilities, identifying fair targets for the state share of education funding for districts, and creating a reasonable timeline to meet these goals

Name: Greg V. **City:** Bethlehem, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 9:08 PM – 235

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge grandparent/taxpayer. We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: Marie H. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 9:12 PM – 236

Subject: Funding for Old Forge School District , Pennsylvania

Message: Please help in consideration with funding for our school district so our children can have the best education, tools, environment, etc. We deserve to qualify for the same grants/money that the other school districts receive in our area. Our school district is small but we have a big heart for traditions and values. Please help support our school. Thank you, (graduate & parent of 4 children)

Name: Ashley A. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 9:31 PM – 237

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: Please consider funding our district. Being funded and placed in 494 is unacceptable and not fair to our students.

Name: Kathy S. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 9:50 PM – 238

Subject: School taxes

Message: SWSD Hanover, PA Remodel high school cost over \$68 million How does that impact me- in 5 years on a media home our school taxes will increase over \$600. My home is double that so my school taxes will increase from \$6300 to over \$7500 per year in 5 years. Inflation, daily living expenses, school taxes. Everything is increasing except my pay. I have 3 children and our oldest has autism. Because of his needs my wife has been unable to work. We are a single income family. There are other ways to find schools. Pennsylvania is one of the lowest that contributes to education but one of the highest that collects taxes. Let the public vote is we want elimination. HB13 is the answer. Why will you not entertain the idea. Don't want to hear that elders don't favor taxing retirement because it is already taxed. Please consider HB13.

Name: Robert M. **City:** Hanover, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 10:57 PM – 239

Subject: School Property Elimination Act

Message: To The Members of the Basic Education Funding Commission My name is Dawn Nichols, and I am a resident of Caernarvon Township, Lancaster County and I am writing to all of you today to please take seriously the harm funding schools with property taxes is having on most homeowners and the students of Pennsylvania. I am a disabled widow whose only income is social security and have no other means of making money. My school taxes alone this year are \$6,000.00 and that is not fair. School taxes have risen every year faster than inflation. This may be the last year I can afford to pay for them. Two years ago, I went without heat all winter because I couldn't afford to have my heating system repaired because of my school taxes. I certainly am not the only one to go without essential items. There are thousands of seniors making decisions about whether they can afford food, medicine, electricity, heat, etc. or pay school taxes just to try and save a home they worked for years to pay for. The court even found that the state relied too heavily on property taxes. We need to change the way we fund schools. Replacement funding should be based on the ability to pay, and this can only be done by moving 100% away from taxing properties to fund schools. This fall the School Property Tax Elimination Act will be introduced and it addresses both concerns raised by the Court and is a solution for elimination. Please take the time to read it and give it serious consideration. The Court Order clearly states that students must be granted equal and equitable opportunity. The order is hyper focused on fairness. Fair and equitable must also be applied to those funding the schools. This cannot be accomplished by taxing properties for the purposes of funding schools due to extreme disparities in local economics. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Name: Dawn N. **City:** Honey Brook, PA

Sent: Monday, September 11, 2023 11:17 PM – 240

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge grandparent, retired employee, and taxpayer. We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. It is essential that the Old Forge School District receive the necessary funding to continue to offer the exemplary level of education to the children of the district.

Name: Roseann B. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 7:30 AM – 241

Subject: Eliminate School Property Tax

Message: It's time that the people are heard. Do what is right and eliminate the current method of taxing my property to fund schools.

Name: Eugene B. **City:** Cranberry Township, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 10:08 AM – 242

Subject: OLD FORGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Message: I am a 1942 Old Forge graduate, current grandparent & taxpayer my entire life! Our school district has relied solely on its immense residential tax base for the majority of its funding throughout my lifetime. Our graduates are an integral part of society! We are seeing less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents and still keep up with costs and mandates. Most of our developers now choose to construct apartment complexes which attract transient citizens who are not required to add to our tax coffers. Our district does not have an influential voice at any level of government as we are overshadowed by the needs of our neighboring cities ,Scranton & Wilkes Barre. I plead to each committee member when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools , that it remembers that not all school districts fall within an acceptable range of any outcome. Old Forge School District has been on the extreme low end for more than 2 decades! Thank you for your time & consideration of this matter that is so important to our community & children. They are our future good citizens!

Name: Madlyn L. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 11:54 AM – 243

Subject: Poverty rate in pa

Message: PA has lost a congressional seat due to a relative decline in population. Rural population in PA has also declined. People move to where there are good schools. All people want good schools for their kids. Is a study linking the economic growth in a state to the quality of it's primary and secondary schools? Intuitively, you would expect that.

Name: Ardith T. **City:** New Hope, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 12:24 PM – 244

Subject: basic education funding

Message: please stop playing politics with this. Public schools that are in economically deprived areas deserve funding to support the children. Vouchers are not necessary.

Name: Lance B. **City:** Lincoln University, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 12:25 PM – 245

Subject: The Issue with "Historic" Funding Increases

Message: To the issue that some members have noted regarding "historic" funding increases, the issue is a bit of misdirection. Given the ruling of the court, the state has historically and continues to underfund its schools. Therefore, the reality of historic funding can be contextualized in this way: If Allentown needed \$100 to be fully funded in 2015 and the state was providing \$30, but now is providing \$40 in 2022—this is indeed a "historic" increase. However, time and inflation has driven the cost to \$125. The funding gap has not been closed; yes, more money has been injected but it has actually still fallen farther behind the rising costs. This creates the straw-man argument that we can say more money than ever is being invested but we don't see the returns. This is because the increase has not kept pace with the need. One additional point that needs to be made is that questions have been directed at school leaders and others as to how more money can be brought into the system. Such questioning seems to inappropriately shift the responsibility of legislation and taxation from legislators to school leaders. It is the legislators' responsibility to determine how to adjust funding and—if necessary—to increase the flow of funding.

Name: Tim M. **City:** Newmanstown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 12:31 PM – 246

Subject: School based health center

Message: As a School-Based Health Center Nurse Practitioner, I see firsthand the benefits of having accessible, welcoming, and holistic care. Benefits include: 1. Increase school attendance. 2. Help eligible students enroll in health insurance. 3. Connect students' family members with health coverage. 4. Provide reimbursable health services in schools. 5. Offer services that support at-risk students. 6. Promote healthy school practices through nutrition, physical activity, and health education. 7. Improve wellness policies and health programs. 8. Build local partnerships to support expanded health services. 9. Reduce emergency room visits. 10. Create a positive school climate that fosters learning.

Name: Elena D. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 1:44 PM – 247

Subject: Fair & Equitable Funding & Trauma

Message: I am a long time Philadelphia resident with an educational and professional background in early childhood education, whose children were educated in the Philadelphia school system. I am now retired and a grandparent and continue to be passionate about how essential it is to fund our school adequately and equitably. This is a MORAL issue for me and I have been working for more than 10 years as a volunteer leader with POWER Interfaith to fight for this change. Now, the Commonwealth Court has listened to months of testimony and come to the same conclusion: that the funding for PA schools is inadequate and that the unfair way we fund them is inequitable and, in fact, unconstitutional. Here in Philadelphia, schools throughout the city regularly close in the middle of a school year because of asbestos, lead, mold and a host of other toxic conditions. Parents of these same children are fearful of whether their kids can even GET to school safely because of gun violence. They are impacted by inadequate and unsafe housing, pollution that is considerably worse in poor neighborhoods, lack of access to medical care and counseling. The topic for the hearing in Philadelphia is Trauma – and it is an apt. choice! Nearly ALL of the school libraries have been closed and the librarians laid off. Our Superintendent optimistically creates a 5 year plan with priorities that he admits he doesn't currently know how he will fund. The list goes on. All of the members of this Commission will nod their heads – they've heard it before. Yet Federal dollars sit in a Rainy- Day Fund while the roofs of classrooms in our city leak so it rains IN our schools. Tax surpluses are not applied to this critical need. There is no justification

for the discrimination and inequality experienced by children and families in poor districts like ours. It must STOP NOW! We need to FINALLY make the changes that will adequately and equitably fund ALL of our schools. This time, you MUST create a fair formula and put ALL the basic education dollars through it. Increase the total budget for education – you will find no better investment. Don't throw up your hands and say that the schools are failing, so let's write them off and rescue a few kids with vouchers to private schools. It's not the schools that are failing –it's the inadequate and unfair funding throughout our state. I am asking this Commission to step up and recommend what is truly needed for the children in my city in time for the 2024/25 budget so that NEXT September, things will really be different.

Name: Andrea M. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 1:50 PM – 248

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: Taxpayer provided education resources within Pennsylvania should be evenly distributed on a per capita (child) basis regardless of school district, municipality, and public schools should receive the majority of tax payer / property tax resources. Similarly, charter, private, and/ or religious schools require more extensive oversight to ensure tax payer funds are being used appropriately and NOT for advertising, recruitment, religious or administrative purposes.

Name: Julie M. **City:** Carlisle, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 2:08 PM – 249

Subject: Fair funding of Pennsylvania public schools

Message: Now that the courts have ruled that the state must have a fair method of funding our public schools we can accomplish this goal and a couple of other needed goals at the same time. As I see it, the only way to equalize the funding of the state's public schools is to eliminate the local share - otherwise the districts with high property assessments will always have more funds than the low-assessment districts. That means that the state should take responsibility for school funding. It also means that high-assessment districts will gain major breaks in their real estate taxes. In order for the state to obtain the needed addition revenues I suggest that the state switch to a graduated income tax, like the federal government uses. This will generally increase income taxes most heavily in those districts with high real estate values because there is usually a relationship between high-income districts and high-assessment districts. The net result (other than fair school funding) would be to shift taxes from real estate to income. This would also result in taxes based on those who could afford them - also a good idea.

Name: Rob K. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 3:21 PM – 250

Subject: Revision in Public Education

Message: I agree that Pennsylvania has not pulled its fair share in funding. Nothing happens without politics and I fear that the BEFC could be swayed by politics (their own or others). What are the checks and balances for BEFC? My second thought is how can a fair funding system be put in place WITHOUT reforming the number of school districts in Pennsylvania? In my county, there are schools that offer 4 foreign languages, several advanced math and science courses, and tremendous post-secondary educational offerings while others are so small that they struggle to offer foreign languages, cannot offer more than just graduation requirement classes, and nothing in post-secondary offerings let alone vocational training. Simply put, we have too many school districts. If we consolidate with student benefits in mind, the funding can be used more effectively!

Name: Beth S. **City:** Aliquippa, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 4:14 PM – 251

Subject: Separations Act

Message: Hello, I am a School Director for the Cumberland Valley School District in Cumberland County PA. I am also a Township Manager for West Hanover Township in Dauphin County PA and I am the incoming president of the Pennsylvania School Boards Association. I have spent nearly 25 years in Township Administration and 10 years as a School Director. The Separations Act is antiquated and costly to school districts as well as local municipalities. In a time when local governments are desperately trying to find cost savings while keeping public buildings functional and modern the Separations Act continues to be a significant burden on local governments. It is time this antiquated Act be at least made an option for local governments to explore while evaluating other more economical ways to construct public projects. Lets make this a local decision instead of an expensive inflexible unfunded mandate. When the Separations Act was enacted in 1913, coordination of trades was relatively simple. But today electrical, plumbing, HVAC, and heating systems are much more complex requiring a high level of coordination; and this coordination is crucial for constructing high performance buildings. A single prime contractor has the

ability to control this complicated construction process and make sure there is only one construction schedule. ● A multiple prime system requires municipalities, school districts, and other public entities to manage several contracts, scheduling, day to day budget and scope: causing project delays, increasing costs and contractual disputes. ● Forty-nine (49) states are not limited to one project delivery system for construction of public buildings, nor is the federal government. ● Flexibility to choose the most effective and efficient project system will enable governmental entities to control costs on public building projects and ultimately save taxpayers money. Conservatively, the Separations Act adds at least 10% to each public construction project.

Name: Michael G. **City:** Mechanicsburg, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 4:33 PM – 252

Subject: LISTEN to the public on Basic Education Funding!

Message: I am an educator, resident of Philadelphia and a member of POWER. I have seen with my own eyes the inequities of funding, down to the very ability to BREATHE during the worst of the pandemic, to lack of high level educational demands in the Philly schools--my own children and godchildren were a part of that system. You MUST: Develop a system for fully and fairly funding all PA public schools that will provide excellent education opportunities to ALL PA students regardless of zip code, color or family financial status. Complete the work of the commission by December 2023. Have a constitutional, equitable, adequate school funding system in place for the 2024 school year. Listen to the public. Have public comment opportunities at all your commission public hearings. If you want a functioning public, you must educate. Fix the problem you have been told to solve--with input, and now.

Name: Hannah A. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 4:46 PM – 253

Subject: Public School Funding

Message: A strong educational system for all citizens is key to a strong republic. We need to be sure that our public schools are well funded for all children ensuring a well educated country. Please ensure that our public schools are funded adequately. Thank you.

Name: Gary H. **City:** Newport, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 6:13 PM – 254

Subject: Parent's need to get involved with their children's school work.

Message: Why don't parents get involved with their children's education. They need to put down their cellphones, and help their child if they are struggling in school. My parents helped, and I helped my son. How many parents these days, take the time to go over their child's spelling words every night, or make flash cards to help them with Math? I don't think it's the school districts job to make sure children can, read, write, and do math. IT is the parents job. Number two, schools waste way too much money building new stadiums, tracks, tennis courts, etc.. Kids are there to get an education. And I am not against school sports, but have you seen how much these schools waste on that stuff? Number three, money isn't the issue with learning. There was an article in the paper about 6 months ago, showing that, Windber School District only received \$16,000 per student, and their students were 79.6% proficient, compared to Philadelphia School District, who received \$23,000 per student, and they were only 2.5 proficient. More money isn't the answer. Parent involvement is.

Name: Sheree J. **City:** Youngwood, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 6:41 PM – 255

Subject: East Penn School District Real Estate Tax

Message: The school tax is an onerous burden for senior citizens on fixed incomes and/or low-income individuals, who want to remain in their homes, but often cannot, due to the property tax. Please consider: 1. Establishing an oversight committee that school boards must answer to when deciding tax matters that affect community residents. 2. Exempt senior citizens who have no children in the school system from paying school real estate tax. Or, 3. Allow seniors to pay half of the school tax, or less. Thank you for the opportunity to share my input.

Name: Veronica J. **City:** Macungie, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 7:02 PM – 256

Subject: Fair Funding of all schools

Message: Dear Commission members, I am a taxpayer in Cheltenham School District and I work in education visiting schools in the Philadelphia School District. My children attended both Philadelphia Schools (through middle school) and Cheltenham

Schools (middle and high school). The current system of school funding is unfair and leaves many children out. Develop a system for fully and fairly funding all PA public schools at the level of excellent education and educational opportunities regardless of zip code, race, or family financial status. Complete this work by December 2023 so for the school year of 2024, we have a constitutional, equitable and adequate school funding system in place. As you make decisions about funding systems, have more public comment opportunities. These are our children and our future, education must be equitable.

Name: Dorothy B. **City:** Glenside, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 8:44 PM – 257

Subject: Full Funding for Public Schools

Message: Our present system of funding for public schools is discriminatory and biased. I live in a school district with a low tax base. Right now, our schools are understaffed, cannot get substitute teachers or paraprofessionals (who make less than cashiers at the gas station). My grandsons are in overcrowded classrooms and are not getting the special needs teachers they both require. They are falling further and further behind and nothing can be done! Their future is being sorely compromised and even threatened. Statistics show that such districts as ours have \$4800 less to spend per student (on the average) than our wealthy neighbors. Districts with the most students of color are the most short-changed. The Commonwealth Court decided in February that this funding system is not only immoral, but is also unconstitutional. I couldn't agree more! If we want to give all our children a chance for a decent education and a positive future, we MUST provide fair funding for each child no matter where he/she lives or what his/her ethnic background happens to be. That is FAIR.

Name: Home C. **City:** Red Lion, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 9:10 PM – 258

Subject: Please allow public comment

Message: I have two children in public schools in the School District of Philadelphia. I and my congregation are part of POWER. We ask that you allow public comment to decide about funding for schools. We ask that you hold hearings in Philadelphia and other districts who receive less funding for education, so that you can hear from those most affected by this bill. Thank you for caring for those with less resources and making a decision to fully fund poorer districts.

Name: Melissa B. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 9:58 PM – 259

Subject: 100 million dollars wanted to go for vouchers

Message: Public school education is currently underfunded, parents have charter schools as a second. Charter schools siphon monies from districts to follow charter students. The Republican legislature wants to give a vouchers to students to attend private schools a third option. We have an obligation to provide a solid public education to the states children. Vouchers for private schools a third option is not needed. Senior citizens, and PA has lots are taxed to send kids to religious schools when the legislature don't provide adequate funds to meet seniors medical or medical transportation needs. CART , Bedford, Fulton, Huntington raised fare rates by 25%. Those 100 million the Republicans have set aside for vouchers (a third educational option) could be used elsewhere in solving inequality in PA

Name: Mike A. **City:** Schellsburg, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 10:02 PM – 260

Subject: Listen to ALL the Public in ALL Communities

Message: Develop a system for fully and fairly funding all PA public schools that will provide excellent education opportunities to ALL PA students regardless of zip code, color or family financial status. Complete the work of the commission by December 2023. Have a constitutional, equitable, adequate school funding system in place for the 2024 school year. Have public comment opportunities at all your commission public hearings. Listen to the public. I am in the Philadelphia county district and a supporter of POWER Interfaith.

Name: Frann S. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 10:16 PM – 261

Subject: Legislative Information Packet

Message: On September 6, 2023 a Legislative Information Packet was delivered via USPS to Co-Chairs Senator Kristen Phillips-Hill and Representative Mike Sturla. This packet was mailed by me with the requirement that a signature was required upon delivery. The cover letter to this packet be entered into the record of the Basic Education Funding Commission. When talking to Rep. Sturla after the hearing today he stated he didn't know anything about it but MAYBE his staff has it. I requested

it to be entered into the record so EVERYONE on the committee could see it. Please let me know if and when it gets entered into the record.

Name: Ron S. **City:** Williamsport, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 5:10 AM – 262

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge parent. We are a School that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small, forgotten, one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of Schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades.

Name: Anthony D. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 5:40 AM – 263

Subject: School Property Taxes

Message: I have been retired for ten years. As a senior citizen you know we are on a fixed budget. My school property tax has been a real drain on my finances. I live in the East Penn School District. The property taxes are ridiculously high. If they keep going up I will have to sell my home and find a new place to live outside the East Penn School District. I also find that I pay for teachers health care and pensions. This needs to be adjusted. Every several years when teachers union contracts are up the threat of strike is always in the forefront. I resent the fact that I am being threatened by a group of people I have no interest in. Make the right for teachers to strike illegal in the State of Pennsylvania.

Name: Art P. **City:** Macungie, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 7:23 AM – 264

Subject: Property tax

Message: I'm a 53 year old divorced man struggling to keep my home of 18years you people need to get your money elsewhere instead of single people over 50 we raised our kids and paid our taxes. I don't care how you do it but make these people pay for their own kids. The ridiculously stupid idea of property and school taxes being put on older people just because they own property is unfair and asinine. News flash we aren't rich!!! Trim the fat and increase sales tax that might get people to be less promiscuous if they actually had to pay for their own kids schooling.

Name: Jared B. **City:** York Springs, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 7:54 AM – 265

Subject: Equity in Funding for Schools

Message: All students have constitutional rights to an equitably funded education in the state of Pennsylvania. The recent lawsuit determined that the system of funding for education in Pennsylvania is unconstitutional. The current system fails to recognize that some districts have greater need than others. This is not news to you or anyone who has cared about the education of students in Pennsylvania. Some of you have been working on this with passion for many years; some of you have been standing in the way of equitable funding with passion as well. Please remove the politics in this issue and look at the students. Identify the need and fund appropriately, taking into consideration: poverty, the need to learn English, mental health, the effects of food and housing insecurity. I realize that asking to remove it from politics may seem naive to you. BUT by keeping it there, using it as bait to get something you want you are hurting children again and again, year after year. You had the chance to have equity in funding in 2016 and you did not put that in place. Do you know how many children have passed through the education system harmed these past seven years!!?? You can find out what that number is and it is a travesty. The other thing that I am aware of in considering this issue is that this is a place where we as a state can address a system of racism that has been in place for years. I do not think this is a system that you have put in place but it is one that you keep in place by not finding an equitable system. The schools that are in the greatest need of funding for their students are schools of higher percentage of black and brown students. White people (of which I am one) often say we don't know how to fix systems of racism. Here is one right before us and you have a chance to change it! Please do that. Vouchers are not the answer to this inequity. Education is too expensive to be covered by the voucher amount you are proposing and the public schools will be in worse shape than they are now. Please give your attention to equitably funding education!!! Thank you for this work. I know it is a challenging task - and opportunity!

Name: Martha K. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 8:19 AM – 266

Subject: Separations Act

Message: The Basic Education Funding Commission should vote to modernize the Separations Act for several important reasons. The Separations Act governs Pennsylvania and prevents public construction projects from having a choice in how they want to award and manage the project. The Separations Act is outdated and inefficient in today's construction landscape. Here are some key reasons why modernization is necessary: **Cost Efficiency:** Modernizing the Separations Act can lead to cost savings in public construction projects. Under the current system, public projects require separate contracts for design, construction, and supervision, which can lead to redundancy and inefficiency. Streamlining the process by allowing for single-source contracting or design-build contracts can reduce administrative costs and speed up project completion. **Time Savings:** The Separations Act can lead to delays in public construction projects due to the sequential nature of the process. Modernization can allow for concurrent design and construction phases, reducing project timelines and getting critical infrastructure built faster. **Enhanced Collaboration:** Modernization can encourage greater collaboration between architects, engineers, and contractors throughout the project's lifecycle. This can lead to more innovative and cost-effective solutions, better coordination, and ultimately improved project outcomes. **Risk Management:** The Separations Act can lead to disputes and finger-pointing between contractors, architects, and engineers when issues arise during construction. Modernization can allow for a more integrated approach to project management, reducing the potential for disputes and better addressing any challenges that may arise. **Quality Assurance:** Modernization can include provisions for better quality control and assurance throughout the construction process. This can help ensure that public buildings and infrastructure meet the highest standards of safety and durability. **Responsiveness to Changing Needs:** The construction industry has evolved significantly since the Separations Act was first implemented. Modernization can enable the public sector to adapt to changing construction practices, technologies, and project delivery methods, ensuring that taxpayer dollars are used efficiently and effectively. **Competitive Bidding:** Modernization can still maintain the principles of competitive bidding while allowing for flexibility in project delivery. This can help ensure that taxpayers get the best value for their money while also considering the expertise and qualifications of contractors. **Alignment with Industry Standards:** Modernizing the Separations Act can align public construction practices with industry standards and best practices, making it more attractive for qualified contractors to bid on public projects. In conclusion, modernizing the Separations Act is crucial to improving the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and quality of public construction projects. It can bring the public sector in line with contemporary construction practices, enabling better collaboration, cost savings, and timely project delivery while still ensuring transparency and accountability through competitive bidding processes.

Name: Brandon F. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 9:21 AM – 267

Subject: Fair Funding for PA Public Schools

Message: As a longtime public school teacher (40 years), I can attest to the importance of a good education for our state and country. Please do the right thing and equally fund all school districts so the citizenry of PA is equipped to think critically and be aware of propaganda. Thank you for doing all you can to help all the people of PA.

Name: Cynthia H. **City:** Lansdale, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 9:25 AM – 268

Subject: Simple Solution

Message: Break down the funding on a per student basis.

Name: Stephen K. **City:** Allentown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 9:47 AM – 269

Subject: Fair Funding for All

Message: I am a member of the UUCDC congregation in Media and have tutored children in Chester who lack opportunities for education that are provided to the children in my neighborhood in Haverford Township. We have also mentored a young man who came out of the Chester schools, graduated from Cheyney University and is now working full time. Education was the key in this young man's life but he had to make up a lot of ground in college because of the deficits of the Chester public school system. I passionately support this issue, as a retired teacher. Children in rural communities in Pennsylvania, Children in urban settings whether rich or poor, children in small towns and suburbs - it should not matter where they live. It should not matter how much their parents make. It should not matter, but it does. Fair funding across the state is the ONLY fair future for the children of Pennsylvania.

Name: Mary K. **City:** Havertown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 10:40 AM – 270

Subject: Providing Fair Funding to Pennsylvania Public Schools

Message: Dear Members of the Basic Education Funding Commission. I live in Havertown, Pennsylvania, where we have a good, well-rated public school system. But I am also aware that many children within Delaware County, in Philadelphia, and throughout Pennsylvania who live in school districts, both urban and rural, where families have lower average income and house values have children whose education has been short changed. My wife and I have tutored young kids Chester, PA. This was a wonderful experience, but it also made us more aware of the big gap between education in that community and our own. There are complex social and economic reasons for such gaps, but it is clear that getting a good education, in classrooms with manageable student-teacher ratios, and subjects taught by well-trained and supportive teachers is one of the most important ways to help children develop self-esteem, awareness of their capacity to learn on their own, and serve as a springboard to a better life for themselves and for the communities in which they live, for our state, and for our country. It is important to create a more level playing field for all students in our state, not by reducing the quality of more highly rated districts, but by raising the funding and support systems for less well funded and under-performing schools. As the court decision that found the current state funding system unconstitutional stated, "In the 21st century, students need more than a desk, chair, pen, paper, and textbooks." I strongly urge you to develop a more fairly funded public school system that will help all students to have better chances to lead productive and decent lives, creating a better society for all. To recall words from our founding documents, it helps give students the chance to pursue their life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, while providing for the "general welfare" of our country.

Name: Jeff K.

City: Havertown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 10:42 AM – 271

Subject: Full, fair funding

Message: I'm writing to ask that you develop a system for fully and fairly funding all PA public schools that will provide excellent education opportunities to ALL PA students regardless of zip code, color or family financial status. All PA Education funding should go through the Fair Funding Formula. Additionally, I hope the commission will complete it's work by December 2023 to have a constitutional, equitable, adequate school funding system in place for the 2024 school year. And you must listen to the public: have public comment opportunities at all your commission public hearings. You should be holding public sessions in the most impacted, underfunded districts. Thank you for your time.

Name: Lena G.

City: Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 11:41 AM – 272

Subject: Please take action for full and fair funding for public education

Message: I am a proud graduate of the Marple-Newtown School District in Delaware County, and now live in the Cheltenham School District in Montgomery County. I am so grateful for the quality education my brothers and I received in a Pennsylvania public school. My older brother went on to pursue an MD/PhD and my younger brother now works in philanthropy and nonprofit work, often interfacing with our Philadelphia public schools. As a clergy person who works with children, teens, and families, I am committed to ensuring that students in every corner of Pennsylvania still have access to a quality public education like we had, and that schools have adequate funding to pay their teachers and provide enrichment such as arts education and foreign language instruction. I am urging you to ensure that the full and fair funding legislation comes to the floor this year.

Name: Leah B.

City: Elkins Park, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 11:57 AM – 273

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: Thank you for being willing to serve on this committee! We appreciate your efforts, and have very high hopes! We also hope that your work can begin to be implemented with little delay, as the need is so great, as you well know. We urge you to use the best there is in terms of quality, evidenced based metrics to create a system that puts the needs of our kids foremost and sets up an equitable system. Our future literally depends on the best and brightest of our kids getting what they need!

Name: Tina S.

City: Havertown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 12:19 PM – 274

Subject: Should we increase funding for PA education even if it increases taxes?

Message: I am a volunteer at my local school district (Freeport Area School District) and donate several hundred hours of my time per year since 2014 to assist the music and performing art programs. While we have an excellent program that is only possible because the full time paid staff and other volunteers like myself also donate many hundreds of hours of time above and beyond the job description, and have a level of love and care for the student body which frankly, is inspiring. BUT.. I see firsthand, and every day, the end results of what chronic underfunding has wrought. Small subtractions and lack of budget mean that some children cannot participate, or if they do participate, their experience is much less than it could/should be. I would be willing to support a modest increase in education funding in the Commonwealth, even if the revenue would have to come from increased property or income or sales taxes. However, I want some reassurance that the money is being spent wisely and fairly. At the same time I am not a fan of any unnecessary increase in red tape. I would propose that the amounts proportioned to school districts be transparent and disclosed to the public, and school districts should be accountable for what the funds are spent on. Did we hire more teachers, raise salaries to retain quality people? Expand programs? Which programs and what are the teachers teaching? Were facilities updated or renovated? Which facilities, etc.. Thank you for asking for public opinion. We need to fund our education system better because our children are our future.

Name: Steve K. **City:** Freeport, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 12:59 PM – 275

Subject: Public Hearings

Message: I am a supporter of POWER Interfaith, and I applaud their efforts to ensure the upcoming hearings about fair education funding include public comments AND an opportunity for a public hearing in Philadelphia, which is a county with one of the greatest inequities in funding. How is it that the county with the largest population does not have any opportunity to comment without having to travel to another county?! Please change your schedule and policies for these hearings.

Name: Gail B. **City:** Elkins Park, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 2:30 PM – 276

Subject: Fair Funding for all PA schools

Message: I live in the Ephrata School district. It is an underfunded school which qualifies for Level Up Funding. I am part of Power Interfaith, and a member of the Akron Mennonite Church. After decades of unequal funding to PA schools, the Commonwealth Court affirmed that the current system of school funding violates PA's state constitution and the rights of our students. The Judge recognized there is an abysmal lack of equity in PA schools. I am asking the Commission to finally create a funding formula that provides sufficient resources so that every child can have a good education. It needs to be adequate, equitable, and delivered in a timely manner. PA ranks 45th in the nation for state share of school funding - about 38%. The rest of the money comes from local revenues from property taxes. This system has failed the students from low wealth districts. Districts with the most students of color are the most shortchanged. Inadequate and inequitable school funding in PA has resulted in wide achievement gaps in our students and loss of opportunity for students in our low wealth districts. Proposing school vouchers for students from poor schools does nothing to meet what the state constitution requires and only takes money away from our already hurting schools. PA has an aging population. Our students are our future and will be our next generation of leaders. All our students, no matter what district they live in, deserve a good education and our constitution requires that. PA schools need adequate and equitable school funding as soon as possible.

Name: Rosalind E. **City:** Stevens, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 2:30 PM – 277

Subject: Adequate And Equitable School Funding Must Happen NOW!

Message: I am the parent of two adult children who attended public schools in Haverford Township. I am also the 2023-24 co-coordinator of POWER Main Line, a component of POWER Interfaith. POWER has been involved in the effort to obtain adequate and equitable school funding for all of our districts for more than a decade. My children received a fine education through our public schools and went on to high achievements in college and beyond (including graduating Phi Beta Kappa at U. of Michigan and obtaining an MBA from Northwestern). What is needed at this critical juncture is not vouchers that will privatize schooling and drain resources from public education; rather, we need substantially increased funding for underfunded districts, and a more equitable method of funding public schools. The Commonwealth Court's recent ruling REQUIRES that action be taken to fulfill our obligation to our children. Now it is up to the legislature and the Governor to come up with a plan to meet that obligation - and promptly. We cannot tolerate years of foot dragging or evasion. We are losing kids everyday to hopelessness and anger that is the direct product of our failure to do right by them. We all pay a steep price for

this failure, in terms of the crime, violence and general sense of unease and disorder that directly results from treating people's lives as expendable, unimportant, and unworthy. As a citizen of this Commonwealth, and an active participant with POWER in pursuing social justice, I demand action be taken NOW, and that the voices of the people be heard. If you can't hear them, they are crying, "ENOUGH"!

Name: Lawrence S. **City:** Havertown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 2:54 PM – 278

Subject: Equitable school funding

Message: I am a resident of Malvern, PA, and our children were fortunate enough to attend Great Valley schools, a well funded school system. On Feb. 7, 2023, the Commonwealth Court found the present school funding system unconstitutional. Yet, I have not heard of any steps being taken to supplement the funding of schools in other districts. There are schools that have few or no extracurricular activities. Such a situation not only impacts the academic and social development of students; it also counts against them when they are applying to colleges. I urge the Commission to design and implement a plan to equitably fund ALL public schools in the Commonwealth of PA.

Name: Barbara Q. **City:** Malvern, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 4:13 PM – 279

Subject: Fund Philadelphia Schools

Message: My stepson is a fifth grader at Nebinger Elementary, a Philadelphia Public School. We love the teachers, the other students, and their families. What we don't love is that the building still does not have air-conditioning. Nebinger, like most schools in the district, was forced to close every afternoon the first week of school because of heat. Students in the wealthy suburban districts were able to stay in school and learn comfortably while Philadelphia parents scrambled to find last-minute afternoon childcare. Similarly, many of the Philadelphia Schools have asbestos and have been waiting years for remediation. Again, asbestos is not something that wealthy school districts with new buildings need to worry about. The unconstitutional underfunding of Philadelphia Schools cannot continue! Our kids and our futures deserve better.

Name: Erin S. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 4:41 PM – 280

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: Dear Commission Members: I live in the Norristown School District. The need for better education in this district is very much needed. Young people are our future. There needs to be fair funding for all of the schools. In Philly most of the buildings are very old, needing air conditioning, librarians, libraries and need much repair or need to be replaced. Adults would not like working all day in buildings in these conditions. Early in the 2000's funds were found to help build four new stadiums in the state. One student in Philadelphia indicated that the state cares more about sports than children's education. These conditions have not happened over night and have needed to be addressed long ago. Why should where a student live determine the condition of the buildings, text books, extra curricular activities and other opportunities? The state should feel shame on how children and mainly children of poverty are treated. Our government long ago made it so we have such areas of poverty and it is time for Pennsylvania to step up and think about how all in charge would feel if their children had to be in such deprived situations. Children mainly those in poverty know they are not valued especially when they see how children are given such opportunities in more affluent areas of the state. For example old textbooks, no counselors, drinking fountains contaminated with lead. Is this fair? Please look into what New Jersey has done with their funding of schools and how they value the children in regard to education. Thank you for considering what needs to be done and value Pennsylvania children in all areas of the state. Let's become a model showing our love of children.

Name: Mary C. **City:** Norristown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 4:51 PM – 281

Subject: School funding

Message: It is time for there to be equity in funding across the state and the only way I see this is for the state to enact a school tax and pass legislation that would have local Townships and Boroughs, etc pay into it.

Name: William S. **City:** Gettysburg, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 5:08 PM – 282

Subject: Educational Funding system

Message: Dear Commissioners, I appreciate the hearings you are holding in your congressional districts to discuss the Commonwealth court ruling that the education funding system is unconstitutional. I am concerned that none of the hearings are planned for the Philadelphia Metro area, leaving 2.5 million people out. Also concerning is that there is no priority placed on the counties of greatest funding inequity across the state. The biggest problem is your refusal to allow public comment at any of the hearings, despite multiple attempts by community leaders to change that. At these hearings the people most directly impacted will not be heard. As a member of POWER and resident of the Haverford School District, I am dismayed by your lack of inclusion. I urge you to ensure that full and fair funding legislation gets to the floor this year. Thank you.

Name: Rosalind S. **City:** Bryn Mawr, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 5:12 PM – 283

Subject: Incomplete Times & Places

Message: To the BEFC; The BEFC's list of places is incomplete as it does not provide all of the specific locations and times. In addition, you have not provided the parameters of these public meetings. Under the Sunshine Act, I would surmise that there would be an opportunity for public comment. The BEFC mission is looking to increase the public school funding by \$6.2 billion. So far, no funding source has been identified. The BEFC must recognize that homeowners cannot endure any additional property tax increases. I would be remiss not to mention the ramifications of HB 1415 & 1416. If passed, it would increase the teacher's unfunded pension liability that would result in increasing school property taxes. That said, I would like the opportunity to discuss the \$6.2 billion budget gap. Please advise.

Name: Gary E. **City:** Murrysville, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 8:37 PM – 284

Subject: Email

Message: Glad to help in any way

Name: Teresa R. **City:** Normalville, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 9:51 PM – 285

Subject: Fair Funding for PA Schools

Message: Dear Commissioners, Through my congregation, Mishkan Shalom, in Philadelphia, I'm a volunteer with POWER Interfaith. Having a public education system that provides good educational opportunities to all Pennsylvania students, regardless of zip code, race, or income is very important to me. It's important that the commission complete its work in time to provide and equitable, adequate school funding system for the 2024 school year. That means your work needs to be completed by December 2023. It's also vital that you get input from the public. Please incorporate public comment opportunities at all of your public hearings.

Name: Sharon W. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 9:59 PM – 286

Subject: Fund our Philly schools NOW! Our kids deserve better!

Message: I am the parent of two middle school students in the Philadelphia school district. Last year my son spent over half of the school year not going outside for recess because the school did not have enough climate staff to keep the students supervised and safe. This would never be acceptable conditions in any other school district in Philadelphia region. Why do we have to accept this?

Name: Zoe C. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 13, 2023 11:30 PM – 287

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: Retired Philadelphia elementary teacher. One of the prompts in this form asks, "How has underfunding impacted your children?" My answer is that it has not. I have the privilege of living in a school district that does not suffer punishing underfunding and discrimination. This made the glaring disadvantages in facilities and academic infrastructure in the Philadelphia SD, where I taught for thirteen years, so palpable. Why do we accept this? Where are our priorities as citizens in a democracy? I could relate to you so many examples of the impact of the disparity. From lack of basic supplies to unhealthy and dangerous facilities, the families of PSD are denied their basic human right in Pennsylvania; the right to fair and equal

opportunity to public education. Our children are everything. They are our future advocates for freedom and they should mirror our values and aspirations. Save our children, save us all.

Name: MJ S. **City:** Elkins Park, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 7:26 AM – 288

Subject: School Property Taxes

Message: Please consider a different funding method for schools. To continue taxing property, especially for seniors, is like them never owning their homes. It just isn't right. Considering that most of the funding is not going directly to the children, but for administrative expenses/salaries/retirement/new schools, etc. Please consider the people when deciding a new funding methodology. Thanks for your consideration.

Name: Eugene B. **City:** Cranberry Township, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 7:54 AM – 289

Subject: Taxes..(All Taxes). Twp and school

Message: Please consider our pleas in our area. Antietam! I'm on SS and disabled. Our school taxes alone are 46.2%. And is expected to go up another 2.2 % next year. I still have a mortgage...they are bleed us dry. Please help please. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

Name: Samar K. **City:** Reading, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 7:58 AM – 290

Subject: School Taxes

Message: It's about time we eliminate school taxes especially on her senior citizens, which is a great burden in their twilight years. This archaic tax has been a burden on all homeowners which was imposed in the 1830's. It's time to move into the 21st century. Raise sales tax and personal income tax to alleviate the school budget. We are tired of paying forever rent to the school district.

Name: Charles S. **City:** Milford, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 8:44 AM – 291

Subject: Fair Funding in Education

Message: I have seen the funding inequities with my own eyes as an educational researcher. I applaud the Power interfaith movement in the fight for fair statewide funding.

Name: Anna B. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 8:45 AM – 292

Subject: Separations Act

Message: I believe the Separation Act needs modernized, its current form is bad for all parties involved and wastes time and money in construction and taxpayers' money. Delivery systems in construction have moved forward in a way that collaboration is key to success, saving both time and money for all involved, and allowing successful projects happen in a much more efficient manner. Separate prime contracts lead to disagreements, lack of coordination and more costs on a construction project.

Name: Jennifer L. **City:** Allison Park, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 9:11 AM – 293

Subject: FAIR FUNDING FOR BASIC EDUCATION

Message: The Ephrata Area School District that my grandchildren attend is one of Pennsylvania's underfunded school districts still waiting for critical state funding. It appears that GOP state senators are more concerned about school vouchers for a relatively small number of students than ensuring that the school districts most in need can provide adequate educations to ALL their students. Funding ALL schools in dire need of resources is urgent! How can the proposed school voucher program for a few students be more important than the underwriting the many students in underfunded schools who have the greater need because they are living in poverty, have disabilities or require English language instruction? Disappointed that Governor Shapiro hasn't yet pushed for an increase in Level Up funding despite the Commonwealth Court ruling that students in economically disadvantaged schools are being deprived of equitable, adequate and timely education funding guaranteed by the Pennsylvania Constitution, I continue to advocate for the provision of the Level Up funding for ALL schools that was implemented in 2021 to address Pennsylvania's education funding inequities. It is unconscionable that that less than 30% of

the funding for education currently runs through the Level Up formula, while more than 70% gets allocated through the “worst in the nation” method. It is unjust that there are still schools in wealthy areas that spend nearly twice as much per pupil on educational opportunities as do their counterparts in poorer areas. No wonder the Commonwealth Court asserted last February that “the way the system is funded is failing its most vulnerable, traditionally underserved children.” As soon as possible Pennsylvania’s legislature needs to adopt a system of funding basic education that meets the requirement of the state’s Constitution. Private schools are not the answer because they can shut out students for almost any reason. Private schools have no obligation to provide needy students with the services they are legally entitled to receive in public schools. So, they can and do turn students away who struggle academically or behaviorally, LGBT students, students who follow the “wrong” religion, and more. In the end, the schools get to choose, not the parents. Private schools don’t fix the underfunding of public schools; they make it worse! EVERY child deserves a quality K-12 education that equips them for long-term opportunities and success! Let’s not further socioeconomically and racially segregate our education system. We must stand firm for strong public schools in every community. The Commonwealth Court has reminded the legislature that the state’s Constitution sets up one system of public schools, not one system for well off communities and another for the poor.

Name: Harold Penner **City:** Akron, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 9:18 AM – 294

Subject: Full and fair funding this year

Message: I am a parent of an 8th grader in the West Chester Area School District, Chester County. I am a supporter of POWER Interfaith and a member of Birmingham Friends Meeting (Quakers). I was disheartened to hear that first, no BEFC hearings would be held in Chester or Delaware counties (where funding disparities are significant district-to-district), and that second, no citizen voices would be heard in the hearings. As such, I am writing today with my perspective. There is no time to waste: bring full & fair funding legislation to the floor this year. Complete the work of the commission by December 2023 so that kids can have a great 2024 start of the school year. Furthermore, I urge you to develop a system for fully and fairly funding all PA public schools so that ALL PA students, regardless of zip code, color or family financial status, receive the life-changing benefits of a quality public education. Lastly, I urge you to allow public comment at the hearings, or provide separate time for public hearings so that parents and taxpayers' voices can be heard. Thank you for your time.

Name: Lauren B. **City:** West Chester, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 10:13 AM – 295

Subject: Adequate funding to our Public education for all

Message: I firmly believe that the American people deserve adequate public education and Not the funding of private schools!! If people choose private education that’s a choice- but in the egalitarian right for everyone to have a well funded education system that is fully funded per capita / per person in every region the same! This should not be less money available in poor and under resourced communities ! The reports are clear the rulings document the inequality- let’s use our human compassion to prepare all of our children to learn and thrive!

Name: Laura B. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 11:07 AM – 296

Subject: Educating for our future

Message: Good education for all means a healthy economy and a healthy community. I live in the Lower Merion school district, which is blessed to have high quality schools. But that does me no good if the school districts around me, including Philadelphia, Chester, and Pottstown are under-funded. An equitable distribution of State funds is necessary for the well-being of all, whether from a high-income area or a low-income area. Please do the right thing and ensure our children have an education that will provide them with a better chance to succeed, so that we all can live safely and comfortably.

Name: Alan T. **City:** Wynnewood, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 11:10 AM – 297

Subject: Modernize the Separations Act

Message: Flexibility to choose the most effective and efficient project system will enable governmental entities to control costs on public building projects and ultimately save taxpayers money. Conservatively, the Separations Act adds at least 10% to each public construction project.

Name: James D. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 11:49 AM – 298

Subject: Fund all districts fairly

Message: As the court ruled, it is time to correct the way education is funded in the commonwealth of PA. ALL districts need to be fully funded, regardless of zip code, race or economic status. Please complete this work by December 2023 and have a plan in place for the school year beginning in 2024. Lastly, be open and responsive to the people you represent. Allow public comments at your meetings.

Name: Jane G. **City:** Pottstown, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 12:10 PM – 299

Subject: Property taxes

Message: I will be retiring soon and will be unable to maintain my home once I do and will be forced to sell. My taxes are over \$4000 for a little 1960 952 sq foot house in Coatesville school district. There is a plan proposed that replaced the HB 13 to use sales taxes and retirement income instead of property tax to fund schools. Too many people are losing their home to this thievery. These taxes are unconstitutional. <https://www.inquirer.com/opinion/commentary/pennsylvania-school-funding-unconstitutional-commission-public-hearings-20230911.html>

Name: Mary B. **City:** Coatesville, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 12:55 PM – 300

Subject: Basic Education Funding Commission

Message: As a member of POWER through Mishkan Shalom Synagogue, 4101 Freeland Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19128, United States, I strongly urge the Basic Education Funding Commission to: 1. Develop a system for fully and fairly funding all PA public schools that will provide excellent education opportunities to ALL PA students regardless of zip code, color, or family financial status. 2. Complete the work of the commission by December 2023. Have a constitutional, equitable, adequate school funding system in place for the 2024 school year. 3. To do so fairly, the BEFC needs to hold open unrestricted public hearings to listen directly from affected constituents about equitable and fair funding of all PA schools. Listen to the public. Have public comment opportunities at all your commission public hearings!

Name: Andrew M. **City:** Cheltenham, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 1:58 PM – 301

Subject: Property tax

Message: Please , We can not afford to keep funding PUBLIC SCHOOLS with our homes. ELIMINATE Property tax. Let the state figure out how but get it off the homeowners!!!

Name: Holly T. **City:** Fleetwood, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 2:31 PM – 302

Subject: Full, fair funding

Message: I write in support of funding our public education system not simply adequately, but robustly. In order to make up for historic underfunding, we must infuse enough funds to pay instructors and other school employees equitably, update crumbling infrastructure, and provide students with the resources that will prepare them to be thoughtful citizens. I am not a parent and yet public education funding is a top priority informing how I vote. Though I do not have children, I recognize that we all depend on each other - and if we do not provide a strong education to all students in the commonwealth, we will be weakening our democracy and our society as a whole. Every child must have the opportunity to succeed - which means that every public school must have strong funding. Thank you.

Name: Kipp G. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 4:50 PM – 303

Subject: Increase public school funding by 6.2 billion

Message: I am a long time parent of a Philadelphia School student. The public schools need to be fairly funded & additional funds are needed. For teachers, resources and maintenance on our schools.

Name: Lisa H. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 14, 2023 5:42 PM – 304

Subject: Fair education for all Philadelphians

Message: Hello, I am a parent in Philadelphia, and I want to express my concern that all children are not receiving equal

education. We should be giving every child safe buildings and adequate funding to be able to learn and have opportunities for the future. This should not be dependent on zip code, financial status, race, or any other factor. Please address these disparities immediately and fairly fund schools this year. I am a voter and a part of Power interfaith. Thank you for your help and your service!

Name: Gemma M. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 5:08 AM – 305

Subject: equality in funding education

Message: Hello, I am writing to support fair and equal funding for school children in Pa. School districts with black or brown (or other children of color) students consistently receive far less funding than majority white or wealthy school districts. A good education is one way to help our future generations move out of poverty but we keep the cycle perpetuating with unfair funding. All children deserve access to quality education, especially in one of the wealthiest countries in the world. For 8 years my husband and I chose to live in southeast Lancaster, and that's where our 2 children started school. I witnessed firsthand the results of inequitable funding--very full classrooms, high turnover of teachers, lack of supplies, not enough resources for special needs students. My husband and I had the choice to move away (for reasons other than schooling) but many do not. I am sorry that we, collectively, have not yet found the courage or the heart to provide for poorer children the same kind of education that wealthy children receive. We can do better. I urge you to find a solution that supports the poor among us.

Name: Phyllis N. **City:** Stevens, PA

Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 8:33 AM – 306

Subject: funding

Message: I urge you to support full and fair funding for all of our state's children. We are all in this together! Poorer children and children of color should have equal school funding so that they can also succeed. We are counting on you!

Name: Barry K. **City:** Akron, PA

Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 10:07 AM – 307

Subject: Educational Funding

Message: 1. Cut state department of education by 50%. 2. Consolidate school districts to the county level. 3. Distribute vouchers to all students of school age. Equally! 4. Equity is anti democratic and unconstitutional. These actions would increase funding for all students without a tax increase and at the same time would increase the quality of education.

Name: Clifford B. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 10:09 AM – 308

Subject: BEFC Funding

Message: Senators & Representatives, I am writing in regard to your respective rolls on the Basic Education Funding Commission (BEFC) & Gaming Oversight Committee. I am perplexed to the State Court decision that ruled school funding formula was unconstitutional. This is in despite that education funding has increased in the previous 8 years under Governor Wolf and Governor Shapiro's record increase of \$567 million in his 2023-2034 budget. While exploring ways to fill the \$6.2 million gap, be mindful that homeowners cannot endure additional property tax increases for Basic Education Funding. Personally, I am at the breaking point as my school district has raised school property taxes 16 times in 17 years. I want to remind you of the 2004 promise by Governor Rendell. Slots Machines for property tax relief. Unfortunately, special interests had their hands in the revenue cookie jar before the first slot handle was pulled. A lot of this promise was siphoned off for economic development. The Commonwealth has more arms of economic development than an octopus. The Department of Community & Economic Development (DCED) has many programs as well as The Regional Capital Assistance Program Grants (RCAP). The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported on September 13, 2023, "Taking off: Price tag for airport modernization jumps 12% s costs for materials escalate" which illustrates how the promise of tax relief has gaming money diverted to this white elephant project, the airport re-construction. cite: <https://www.post-gazette.com/business/development/2023/09/12/pittsburgh-international-airport-terminal-modernization-christina-cassotis/stories/202309120095> I've noted Senator Phillips-Hill's comment, "desire to see the local tax structure that generates funding for schools change". We have that opportunity with the passage of the 2017 ballot question that provides a 100% homestead tax exemption which only applies to residential homestead property and not commercial property. This would make Senator Argall's "Property Tax Independence Act" possible. I would suggest replacing the education funding with an income tax and gaming revenue. Since 2004, Pennsylvania has expanded gaming to include; table games, video gaming terminals, keno, sports betting, internet gambling and increasing the number of casinos in Pennsylvania. The PA Gaming

Commission has reported record gaming revenue in excess of \$500 million a month. See:

<https://gamingcontrolboard.pa.gov/?pr=1029> The Legislature must keep the 2004 promise and start redirecting the record gaming revenues for property tax relief/education funding.

Name: Gary E.

City: Murrysville, PA

Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 10:14 AM – 309

Subject: Comments to the BEFC from Reach Cyber Charter School

Message: Submitted on behalf of Jane Swan, CEO, Reach Cyber Charter School. Good morning Honorable Members of the Basic Education Funding Commission. Thank you for taking the time to consider my written statement on the important topic of education funding. My name is Jane Swan, and I am the CEO for Reach Cyber Charter School (Reach), a statewide, tuition-free, online public charter school for students in grades K-12. In August 2016, Reach opened our doors with 16 staff members and 463 students with a mission to improve academic growth and cultivate curiosity through integrated STEM opportunities, K-12 personal instruction, and career exploration. Due to the popularity of public cyber charter schools and parent demand for robust, comprehensive virtual education, today Reach is educating 6,500 students across the Commonwealth and has over 800 staff members to serve our students. Reach serves a diverse array of students from every corner of the Commonwealth, from gifted students who seek an accelerated track, to competitive athletes and performers, pregnant and parenting students, students with disabilities or compromised immunities, military families who need to relocate often, and others who seek an individualized approach to education and a flexible schedule. Cyber charter schools are schools of choice in Pennsylvania whose demand has continued to increase dramatically over the past few years. Parents chose to leave a district because the district does not meet their child's needs or has failed their child either academically or from a relationship standpoint. Over 70,000 families have chosen cyber charter school in the Commonwealth for those reasons. The plaintiffs in the recent Commonwealth Court case argued that Pennsylvania's school system violates the constitution's equal protection clause, saying the kids in low-wealth districts are not being educated on a level playing field with those in wealthier districts. Cyber Charter Schools are uniquely able to level the playing field, providing all students with access to high quality resources, certified teachers, and opportunities for engagement regardless of their parents' income. They provide the ultimate scenario where all students are offered the same meaningful opportunities regardless of if the student lives in poverty or affluence. Cyber education is a different form of delivering learning that the established educational institutions do not yet understand. The delivery model is different, and so are the costs associated, but that does not mean that the costs are less than with traditional models. The unique cost considerations of Public Cyber Charter Schools include:

- Building and facility leasing for administrative offices, including registrars, pupil health, special education, enrollment services, technology support, and teacher office space.
- Technology equipment for students, staff and administration including distribution and reclamation.
- Shipping curriculum and educational support materials to and from students.
- Research, development, and implementation of innovative teaching design including all materials and resources.
- 24/7 Technical Support statewide.
- Learning Management and Student Information Systems.
- Enrollment Services statewide.
- Internet reimbursement allocation for in home services.
- Travel expenses for teachers and staff to fulfill State testing mandates, field trips, graduation, and other student and family support activities.
- Facility rental to comply with all State testing mandates.
- Family Supports and Services statewide.
- Contracting with various related services providers to meet individual student goals.
- Individual in home therapies including all travel related expenses.
- Coordination with various social services agencies statewide to provide in home support for students and families.
- Travel expenses required to maintain and enforce daily attendance mandates including truancy related court appearances.

Furthermore, cyber charter schools are a great value and save money! Under the current funding mechanism, for every student that attends a cyber charter school, school districts have additional money to support the students that remain within their brick-and-mortar building. On average, cyber charter schools receive just 75% of the per-pupil allotment for each student. School districts keep the remaining 25% that they can use for payments on debt, adult education programs, pre-K programs, transportation costs, and building and ground maintenance. In closing, I want to thank the Commission for holding a hearing on this important topic and for providing Reach with an opportunity to offer written testimony. Public funding is essential for cyber charter schools to give Pennsylvania families the right to choose the education that is best for their students.

Name: Brandie K.

City: Harrisburg, PA

Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 10:27 AM – 310

Subject: Committee goals

Message: Dear Basic Education Funding Committee: I understand that the goals of your committee are to determine "adequate" funding levels for the state's public schools, the state's share of this funding and a plan to meet this funding. I am sure that your recommendations will require considerable new state funding which must be passed the the state legislature. For your recommendations to be adopted you will have to "sell" them to the remainder of your legislative colleagues. I am not a marketing expert, but I would think that your "sell" will require a snappy tag-line or slogan. Maybe a little irony would help here. Pennsylvania is always competing with other states to be the best or first in this or that category - new business start-ups, per capita income, owner occupied housing, manufacturing shipments, etc. Maybe you can market your recommendations to the rest of the legislature with "striving to be adequate," or "Pennsylvania is adequate, " or "we (heart) adequate." I think many of your colleagues would be embarrassed if the public knew that the state's contribution to its public schools is so low. Pay on this to "sell" your recommendations.

Name: Rob K. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 10:31 AM – 311

Subject: Too old to pay property taxes!

Message: I am a retired person (age 78) who is on a fixed income which I need in order to pay my everyday expenses. I can little afford to have to pay my ever increasing school taxes with this limited income. I and numerous others in my age group need some other way for paying these exorbitant school taxes then is currently the way of doing business in Pennsylvania. We need help from our legislators and we need it now!

Name: John J. **City:** Scott Township, PA

Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 11:44 AM – 312

Subject: Philadelphia's lower income public school buildings and curriculum need significant state financial support

Message: As a volunteer with POWER Interfaith, I advocate for the full fair funding formula to be instituted for ALL public schools. My church, St. Martin in the Fields Episcopal, is building relationships with our local public schools, concentrating on Houston and Henry. We are intensely aware of the need for current textbooks plus a stocked and staffed school libraries. We are aware that these schools fare better than the poorer neighborhood schools. St. Martin's is a member congregation of POWER Interfaith. I understand taxes may need to rise to cover the cost of adequate education. I urge higher taxes for ultra wealthy citizens and corporations. I am not averse to my own taxes being increased. Philadelphia's and Pennsylvania's future hangs on a well educated population able to function in an increasingly sophisticated technological environment with disrupted weather patterns.

Name: Carol D. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 12:27 PM – 313

Subject: Fair Funding for PA Schools

Message: I'm a retired Downingtown teacher, a member of Saint Joesph's Catholic Church in Downingtown, and an enthusiastic supporter of POWER Interfaith. I've returned to substitute teaching, but I'm subbing only in the lowest performing schools in Chester, Montgomery, Delaware, and Berks counties. The contrast between the well resourced Downingtown schools and these "failing schools" is dramatic. The cause of these supposed failures is obvious -- lack of resources. Teachers in these distressed districts are at least as committed and creative and skilled as Downingtown teachers, but they're making bricks without straw, doing the best they can in tired buildings with tiny budgets, and receiving less per-pupil of public funds than Radnor and Lower Merion. If voucher system advocates would provide parents in Reading with transportation and enough money to pay tuition at Shipley or Episcopal Academy on the Philadelphia Mainline, perhaps these measures could be justified. But vouchers and charter schools do not address our fundamental problem in Pennsylvania: Ours is the most unfair (and most racist) public school funding system in America. Come on politicians! Restore public trust in our political system. Address these glaring inequities. And allow public comment at your meetings!

Name: Jeffrey S. **City:** Glenmoore, PA

Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 2:16 PM – 314

Subject: Basic Education Funding Meeting in Pittsburgh

Message: Dear Commission, How do I register to attend and speak at an upcoming meeting? I am particularly looking at Pittsburgh on October 11- location and time. Thanks.

Name: Ciminy S. **City:** North Huntingdon, PA

Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 2:56 PM – 315

Subject: School funding

Message: Hello; I live and work in Philadelphia. My children attend Philadelphia public schools. My partner and I are teachers in the school district of Philadelphia. Our schools are drastically underfunded. The court has found this dispensary to be inequitable and against our constitutional rights. Students in Philadelphia have deserved a fair shot with fair funding and adequate schools and education. Please get the appropriate funding to these schools as soon as possible. This should include back payments for all the years of unconstitutional funding to our district. Thank you.

Name: Amanda B. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 3:54 PM – 316

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: I am a retired public school nurse. I have seen firsthand the needs of public school students and the inability of schools to meet those needs if they do not receive sufficient funding. Please do not punish poorer districts and schools. Please provide the funding in a fair way so that all students have equal opportunity to learn.

Name: Jeanette B. **City:** Lititz, PA

Sent: Friday, September 15, 2023 7:20 PM – 317

Subject: school taxes

Message: you people are killing us seniors with your damn school taxes, how about doing something about that.

Name: Nolan L. **City:** Honesdale, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 16, 2023 4:06 AM – 318

Subject: Basic Education Funding Commission

Message: Let's try to spend the money for education. Knapp school was just renovated at a cost of 26 million dollars. Why would they put porcelain tile in the school. Already they had to rip some up and replace it. Would vinyl have been more cost effective. You are spending money for bells and whistles not on a better outcome for the kids. Back to basics people.

Name: Kathy A. **City:** Lansdale, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 16, 2023 10:05 AM – 319

Subject: Schools in Philadelphia

Message: I have volunteered in the Philadelphia public schools and am shocked at the lack of resources, especially compared to schools in Montgomery County . No libraries. Not enough guidance counselors. Very large class sizes. No school activities. This is what contributes to the school to prison pipeline. Fund our schools to reduce class size, provide adequate numbers of guidance counselors , at the very least.

Name: Carole W. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 16, 2023 11:14 AM – 320

Subject: School Funding Idea

Message: Good Day, First off, I am somewhat offended that the legislature has abandoned its constitutional duty to set taxes and establish budgets to the courts. In essence, the courts will declare any plan unconstitutional until they get a tax and funding plan they want, despite the evidence that spending does not correlate with educational success. But since we are here, I suggest the following: - Establish a fund that assigns a set dollar amount to each child, in part based on grade level (e.g., Kindergartener vs high school senior). This amount should include an allocation for the school buildings, extracurricular activities and technology. - All schools including religious schools should be eligible to receive this funding for the students enrolled in that school. - Establish a ranking system that shows how well individual schools perform. There is enough data to start with this now. - With the above information, allow the parents to select the school that the child will attend. - Set a minimum proficiency level before a child is allowed to go up to the next grade. Testing should be done using a system that removes all race and gender criteria from the scoring. There should be no set asides for equity. All students should be graded equally. - If a school fails to maintain a minimum level of success over a three (or five) year period, remove them from the list of schools the state will fund. - If a teacher fails to provide quality education as measured over a three (or five) year period, they should lose their license to teach. - The construction of schools should be the responsibility of the local school district or educational institution. A student does not need a palace to perform well. The state should not fund the construction of schools directly. It should come out of the per student funding. This is just an outline of a reasonable solution.

Name: Augusto F. **City:** Kingsley, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 16, 2023 1:21 PM – 321

Subject: Full and fair funding for public education

Message: I am a retired attorney and tutored as a volunteer in the Philadelphia public school system for several years. It is appalling how the lack of funding impacts education. Class sizes are too large and resources are too limited. It was not this way when my own children went to public school in the suburbs where I then lived. As a member of the Unitarian Society of Germantown, I support POWER's demand that a system be developed to fully and fairly fund all PA public schools, so that ALL PA students can receive an excellent education regardless of zip code, color or family financial status. I ask that the commission complete its work by December 2023, so we can have a constitutional, equitable, adequate school funding system in place for the 2024 school year. You also need to provide public comment opportunities at all public hearings. This is so important to our future. Thank you.

Name: Andrea P. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 16, 2023 9:57 PM – 322

Subject: Fair funding for public schools

Message: Pennsylvania's funding of public schools has been deemed unconstitutional and needs to change. I believe that fair funding is important because every child should receive a decent public education such that the zip code in which they live should not dictate their life's outcomes. In this country where "freedom is for all" that freedom includes education, and to deny any student the ability to gain that education is just plain wrong. For too long I have heard excuses about poor funding being the cause of poor quality public education in districts with a poor population. How about school funds be distributed equally per student so that those students in high population areas receive an appropriate public education. Sincerely, Paul Allen.

Name: Paul A. **City:** Strasburg, PA

Sent: Sunday, September 17, 2023 11:49 AM – 323

Subject: Property Tax isn't the way.

Message: To whom it may concern, The court order states that PA relies excessively on local property tax. This is obvious to anyone who owns a home in PA. It's not a sustainable model. It discourages people from owning, maintaining, and improving their property which impacts every community negatively. Obviously replacement funding is necessary, but it needs to be attached to an individual's ability to pay. How does it make sense to be able to take from a homeowner something they already own? In any other context we call that theft. The only way to base the funding entirely on a person's ability to pay is to do something entirely different. The current property tax is beyond repair. Additionally, equal and equitable funding CANNOT be achieved by basing it on local property tax. It will only keep underfunded school districts underfunded.

Name: Brian S. **City:** Stroudsburg, PA

Sent: Sunday, September 17, 2023 2:03 PM – 324

Subject: Full and fair funding for schools

Message: Dear Commission, I am a tax-paying resident of Lancaster City. While I do not have children myself, I care about education (and work in education) - and I urge you create a funding formula that provides full and fair funding for ALL students. The funding disparity of schools in Pennsylvania is tragic; students from black and brown communities have not received the level of funding wealthier/whiter areas have received. It is, frankly, unacceptable that this has been the case for decades. The wealth gap grows, and we have done nothing. While I acknowledge that a solution will not be easy, surely this is a challenge worthy of our best and most creative energy! You have an awesome opportunity to work towards and more equitable and thriving Commonwealth. I stand with many others in Pennsylvania urging you to take bold action on behalf of ALL students.

Name: Jennifer K. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Sunday, September 17, 2023 2:14 PM – 325

Subject: Fair Funding for our schools

Message: Please consider combining the new funds generated after the supreme court ruling with the former funds to make the funding of schools to be more fair. Under current circumstances - ruled unconstitutional - schools existing in communities with a low tax base do not receive the same funding as schools with a wealthy tax base. Also, a dream of mine would be to somehow include early childhood education with elementary and secondary education so that preschool teachers and daycare workers can get decent wages. Our children need this early education.

Name: Elaine B. **City:** Lititz, PA

Sent: Sunday, September 17, 2023 2:29 PM – 326

Subject: Fair Funding for Schools

Message: I support the fair funding of all of our student. All the state money for schools should be divided fairly, not just 6% of it!

Name: Janet S. **City:** Akron, PA

Sent: Sunday, September 17, 2023 3:28 PM – 327

Subject: Fair Funding Formula

Message: As a retired educator who taught in the Methacton School District and currently resides in the Springford School District, I would like to share my teaching experience as it relates to the issue of Fair Funding for all PA public schools. I taught in a well-to-do district that had high expectations for academic performance from students and teachers to make that happen. I never had to worry about having to buy basic school supplies for my students, having up to date curriculum and new textbooks every few years, or having technology provided to me or my students. Even though I supplemented my classroom with extra frills from my own pocket each year, our supply closet was always full; we never experienced a lack of basic supplies throughout the school year. My students and I were advantaged to be able to thrive in such an environment! When I received new students from outside districts my first question would be: Where are they from? If they came from a similar or higher income district, I was confident, that in most cases, the student would be able to keep up and/or excel in our curriculum without extra support. The opposite was true for those who came from lower income districts like Norristown, Pottstown, or Philadelphia for example. I knew I would have to pay extra attention to the needs of these students. In most cases, the students from the lower income districts had academic gaps that needed to be filled by support from me and/or by receiving extra remediation support for reading and/or math. Sometimes those students were so low functioning academically that they were identified as needing Special Education services. My district was advantaged to be able to afford remedial support classrooms as well as learning support classrooms for those with Individualized Education Plans (IEP's). I knew there was a discrepancy between our district and lower income districts, but I never really understood WHY until after I retired and became aware of the way public education is funded in Pennsylvania. The PA Supreme Court case that declared the current system of funding education in the Commonwealth unconstitutional taught me why. In response to learning the details of current funding practices in the Commonwealth, I am now a volunteer with POWER Interfaith trying to rectify the injustice that I saw firsthand in my teaching career. The data since the first Level UP money was distributed shows that fair funding WORKS! Test scores have risen, absentee rates have fallen, and graduation rates have risen. I implore you to live up to your responsibility and duty to rectify this disgrace and find a Fair Funding formula that will level the playing field for ALL students of the Commonwealth: 1. Develop a system for fully and fairly funding all PA public schools that will provide excellent education opportunities to ALL PA students regardless of zip code, color or family financial status. 2. Complete the work of the commission by December 2023. Have a constitutional, equitable, adequate school funding system in place for the 2024 school year. 3. Listen to the public. Have public comment opportunities at all your commission public hearings. Thank you.

Name: Sara K. **City:** Linfield, PA

Sent: Sunday, September 17, 2023 10:20 PM – 328

Subject: Support for major efforts to equal funding

Message: Hello BEFC, Thank you for the opportunity to tell you that even as an employed taxpayer who never had children, it is extremely important to me that Pennsylvania do what is right for students coming from districts with low real estate tax bases. Their education, and a high-quality education, should be their right, and an obligation of our elected representatives to provide. This will start with funding. The fair use of that funding can be debated later. Pennsylvania is in many ways a developed state, in a developed country. As a condo owner in Lower Merion Township and a wage earner in Philadelphia, I fully expect my taxes to increase for this, one of the most important efforts you can undertake. Pennsylvania should fund all districts in a way that the representatives can be proud of. Thank you for listening.

Name: Gary G. **City:** Haverford, PA

Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 10:47 AM – 329

Subject: Lifeline scholarships

Message: Please stop with these misguided efforts to give our tax money to private schools. We need to improve our public schools by investing more money in them, not sending that money to private institutions that don't need our help. I've seen this cycle happen in many organizations where I've worked. A department starts to decline, then resources are taken away from that department, thus the department declines further, this bolsters the idea that the department isn't important, so

more resources are taken away, eventually it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy and the department collapses. We can't do this to our education system. It is too important.

Name: Scott W. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 12:45 PM – 330

Subject: Fair funding

Message: As a retired teacher, I know the difference money can make in a school and in individual classrooms. Public education--education for all children regardless of language, income, physical disability—Is one of the foundational blocks of a stable democracy. And a democracy depends on an educated public. Please use your power to fund our public schools for the betterment of our children and families and our country.

Name: Marilou A. **City:** Elizabethtown, PA

Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 12:55 PM – 331

Subject: move away from property taxes as main education funding source!

Message: I am a member of POWER Interfaith and a (big) property taxpayer in West Chester PA. We have a fine school district, thanks to a strong local tax base (both property and earned income). Many PA school districts do not share our good economic status. They need MUCH more help from the state. PA needs a new state education funding formula that ensures an excellent education for ALL K-12 students in PA, regardless of where they live and applies across all funding (unlike the current hold harmless system). The formula should determine what it takes to educate a student in each district (including good care of school buildings, transportation, special ed services and school-based social support for high-need students, including pre-K). High poverty districts will need more funding. Once that funding level is set, then determine what the local district's ability to pay is (wealthier districts will have both lower per-student costs and higher ability to pay). If a local district wishes to pay more than its baseline "ability to pay," it should be free to do so. Other thoughts: you should take in-person public comments at hearings. Make all comments you receive (in person or written) publicly-available on your website. Stop letting charter schools scam extra funding by enrolling "special ed" students who cost little to serve but who carry a big extra funding boost. Charter school funding should reflect the actual cost of serving the student, especially for cyber-only (no brick and mortar) schools. Fast-track your work so that your recommendations are available to the new General Assembly that starts in January 2024. Thank you.

Name: Matthew Z. **City:** West Chester, PA

Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 1:37 PM – 332

Subject: Fair funding for all school districts in PA

Message: I am writing to you to urge the PA legislative body to enact legislation so that all school funding by the state be applied equitably not just the "new funding" which is only 6% of the education funding. It is appalling to learn that PA provides 33 % less moneys for poor districts when they are the ones that need it most and that PA has the most inequitable system of school funding of all 50 states. I am a tax paying citizen of the state and am concerned about our education system in the state. If we want to have a population that is capable of working and contributing to the state we darn well better make sure that the young people get all they need during these formative years, rather than setting them up for failure. That will only result in economic losses for all of us. I urge you to change the way moneys are allotted so that it meets the court decision of 2016 that instructs us to provide fair funding for all districts. Thank you.

Name: Sara W. **City:** Ephrata, PA

Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 1:45 PM – 333

Subject: Make education funding more equitable across PA

Message: Hello! I am writing to ask that the Commission recognize the funding needs shared at the Philadelphia hearings and take the bold steps necessary to dramatically increase state funding by next fall, and to distribute it in a much more equitable manner. My children attend a Philadelphia public school that receives additional funding from a university, and I have seen first hand how an additional investment of funds can have a dramatic effect on school culture and quality of experience for students and families. Last year was the first year that we received an additional \$820,00 from the university, and with that, we were able to hire an assistant principal, additional counselors, additional support staff, and additional specials teachers. This year, we also have an additional school-based teacher leader. The improvement in school culture has been dramatic -- largely because we now have sufficient personnel to support all students in the ways they need. I've seen numbers stating that fair education funding across PA could get a school like ours 2-4 times this yearly amount. When I think about how improved our school has been with just a single year of a relatively small amount of extra funds, I can't help but think about how all

students across PA could benefit in HUGE ways from increased public education funding and a fair, equitable funding formula. It could be a game changer for the entire state. Our kids deserve it, and I hope that this Commission closely considers how big an impact they can make in the lives of the most disadvantaged kids across our state.

Name: Stephanie F. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Monday, September 18, 2023 2:51 PM – 334

Subject: North Penn parent

Message: My mom is a proud retired public school teacher from Michigan and I loved my public school experience at neighboring district in Michigan. I've been a proud PA resident for 17 years and have an 11th grader and 8th grader at North Penn School District. Both of my kids have been in the district since Kindergarten and have thrived in the consistency and going to school with all of the neighborhood kids has provided a deep sense of community. I cannot imagine living in a school lottery system where our neighbors went to different schools. It would cause unnecessary division. North Penn is currently facing a short fall of funding for MUCH needed building renovations. The high school ceilings are leaking and crumbling, I hear directly from my 11th grader. And the middle schools do not have AC so during the early weeks of the school year when it was 90+ degrees the students had the options of virtual with some half days added because it was just too hot for the teachers to think straight. And this is North Penn and Montgomery county SD that has been historically well funded where there are plenty of parents who can adjust their work days to be available for kids. Philly, Pottstown and Norristown NEED, NEED, NEED more funding not just for buildings but to pay teachers who want to care a wage that communicates how valued they are.

Name: Megan B. **City:** Lansdale, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 11:16 AM – 335

Subject: Full and Fair Funding for Pennsylvania Public Education

Message: To The Basic Education Funding Commission, I live in Manheim Township School District. I encourage you to create a funding formula that: 1) provides adequate state funding for public education 2) fairly distributes that funding according to need, based on criteria developed and passed on a non-partisan basis in 2016. I am particularly concerned that the state funding is distributed fairly based on need. It is one way of providing opportunities to students in high poverty districts.

Name: Ken L. **City:** Lititz, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 1:59 PM – 336

Subject: Fair Funding of Schools

Message: I am in support of the initiatives that will provide funding for crumbling school buildings.

Name: Francine H. **City:** Lititz, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 3:21 PM – 337

Subject: School funding reform

Message: This appeared in the Allentown Morning Call recently. Good luck in your endeavor. Fixing Education: Propaganda Or Sound Policy Propagandists have long understood that the key to getting their message across to masses of people is to infuse the message with catchy, memorable, compelling, slogans, phrases and memes. Their purpose is not to invite analysis or criticism, but, in fact the opposite: to gain acceptance without systematic or thoughtful examination; to appeal to emotion. These tactics abound in the world of advertising. Coca Cola has produced dozens of catchy phrases over the years: "Coke: the real thing;" "The sign of good taste." New York City's slogan is perhaps the all time best: "I ❤️ NY." None of these statements invite analysis. There is no suggestion that the validity of these assertions should be established through objective research. The idea is to instill an impression of undeniability, obviousness. Hyperbole dominates. Such lines can be worth millions. Politicians engage in this exercise whenever possible. Propaganda relieves the public of difficult thinking. It's much easier to simply proclaim, "Make America Great Again," than it is to explain how or why this should or will happen. What citizen doesn't want America to be great? The current debate over education policy in the state of Pennsylvania suffers from similar trivialization. A popular current mantra is "School Choice." Another is, "Failing Schools." What could be more all-American than choice? Or noxious than failure? Or more simple and compelling than, "School choice will fix our failing schools." "Let the marketplace and competition fix failing schools." "Let parents decide." But a moment's analysis makes clear that these statements are nonsensical. We are talking about a universal public need, not breakfast cereal brands. If a school is really failing, how will opening another school fix it? The logic is obvious. If a car has a flat tire, do you park it in the yard and buy another, or fix the flat? If a public road develops a pothole, do we abandon the road and build a new one? It's not news that there are some schools whose students outperform others. But providing universal education, essential to a successful and prosperous democracy, is a complex challenge in the best of circumstances. And circumstances are often less than ideal: a

student's household may be impoverished; school district resources vary; effective teachers and staff are happenstantial; students vary in their physical and mental health. Some don't speak English. The list of variables that can affect outcomes is long. How many of these variables will be changed just by opening another school in the same circumstances? Wouldn't fixing the problems in existing schools where 90 percent of students attend make more sense? Education reform literature abounds with proven recommendations for how to fix schools: smaller class sizes; more relevant and effective credentialing of teachers; replacing seat time with competency standards; moving to year-round classes; meeting constitutionally mandated, equitable funding instead of reliance on property taxes. (And yes, teaching the difference between truth and propaganda.) The list is long, but not mysterious. It would mean abandoning the dominant factory model of batch processing students. The cost of providing alternative schools—school choice—in Pennsylvania is huge: over a billion dollars a year—producing questionable improvements in outcomes. On the other hand, educators universally agree that universal preschool would result in marked improvements in student performance throughout their academic careers. A billion dollars would go far toward providing this. In my county of Monroe, the four districts spend over a combined \$40 million per year for alternative schools. This one year installment for alternative schools would more than pay for converting the county career and technical school into a full service high school with enhanced programming, turning out sorely needed graduates in the trades. And to the point of improving student outcomes, it would eliminate the current necessity of busing students during academic hours in order to participate in the current half day program. Universal public education is expensive, not dissimilar from financing highways or the military. And as with those endeavors, these large expenditures inevitably attract profit seekers and opportunists. Fixing public education will only happen under the leadership of informed policy makers who are guided by objective research and analysis as opposed to being gulled by ideological, nonsense slogans and propaganda, spewed by opportunists and profiteers. There has to be a commitment to fixing all schools, not just ordering up new ones that could well suffer the same handicaps as the public schools. Policy makers must be committed to educating the next generation, not to appeasing propaganda spewing rent seekers whose primary purpose is to belly up to the public trough and enrich themselves at the expense of the taxpayers and students.

Name: Merlyn C. **City:** Stroudsburg, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 3:38 PM – 338

Subject: We need to invest more money in school districts where the population has lower income

Message: Pennsylvania needs to significantly increase funding to poorer school districts. We have lived for too long with an inadequate funding formula that relies too much on local taxes. In districts where the tax payers make less income the schools suffer from less funding. This leads to our poorest students living in underfunded schools. The new Fair Funding formula is not coming online quick enough to solve this problem. We need the Pennsylvania legislature to increase funding significantly now. This increase in funding should prioritize the poorest schools and should include special education and prekindergarten education. We must close the funding gap between wealthy and poor school districts.

Name: Perry H. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 6:51 PM – 339

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge taxpayer and retired elementary school teacher of the Old Forge School District where I taught for 35 years. In addition, both my children are graduates of the OFSD. Our school has relied on its overwhelming tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. When I was teaching, I spent my own money on things for my classroom and students because our budget wouldn't allow for the extras that were needed and I don't mean frivolous, expensive extras buy rather that which makes school and learning more interesting and fun. As a resident of Old Forge, my school taxes are becoming more and more of a burden to pay due to the increases in our millage, but yes, they do get paid because my knowledge of what is needed to bring comparable learning to our students is first-hand. State funding has decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. Therefore, we ask the committee, when calculating the general needs for a majority of schools that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome and that we have been on the extreme low end for over 20 years. Please take this into consideration. As a former teacher, I know how detrimental it is for our District and more importantly for our students.

Name: John A. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 7:04 PM – 340

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge taxpayer, parent of two Old Forge High School graduates and the wife of a retired teacher of the district where he taught for 35 years. We are a school district that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for the majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. When my husband was teaching, you can't imagine the amount of personal money he spent on his classroom and students. Now that he is retired, our school district taxes that continue to increase are becoming more and more of a burden to pay. As a former teacher, he knows the importance that school taxes are for our District and more importantly for our students. We have a lot of low-income families in our district and his focus is on making sure those students get what they need to get a good education so they can better their lives. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small one town district that is often forgotten. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes-Barre. We ask the committee, when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome and that we have been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Please take this into consideration. It is important to our students and also the overburdened taxpayers of our small town.

Name: Donna A. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 8:56 PM – 341

Subject: Philadelphia School Psychologist

Message: Greetings! I am school psychologist who lives and works in the School District of Philadelphia. I have been following the PA school funding case closely and am excited to get involved. As a stakeholder in this state, with expertise in many areas of education and systems, I would love to be able to be a part of upcoming decisions.

Name: Amanda R. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 19, 2023 10:09 PM – 342

Subject: Education

Message: It has been shown that many of our schools are failing to provide a truly great education, which our children all deserve. When all of our children are well educated we all benefit from their innovations, ideas, small businesses, taxes and well-rounded citizens. Please come to a fair and equitable solution to this most important problem.

Name: Mary G. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 20, 2023 2:08 PM – 343

Subject: Mental Health advocacy and allocation of state funds

Message: Hello, I represent the Association of School Psychologists of Pennsylvania (ASPP). I am writing to advocate for the allocation of state funding towards effective mental health supports. As a school psychologist, our training is comprehensive in matters of assessment, intervention, mental health support, education, and psychology. According to the National Association of School Psychologists, it is estimated that a ratio of 1 school psychologist to every 500 students is necessary to ensure effective provisions of services. Unfortunately, our current ratio of school psychologists to students across the Commonwealth is approximately 1 to 1040 students. Due to this, many school psychologists are stuck with the duties of solely evaluating and placing students in special education, where our training and expertise allow us to provide many more services. The allocation of state funding towards mental health supports can be used for school districts to hire more school psychologists, which in turn will improve school climates, improve student attendance, decrease special education numbers, and increase mental health supports for students/families who need it.

Name: Ronnie M. **City:** York, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 20, 2023 2:37 PM – 344

Subject: Unfunded mandates

Message: Hello, As Superintendent, I see one of the largest issues in this conversation is the requirements that get passed onto school district legislatively come to us with no additional funding. From PIMS reports, to data collections to the current extension of special education services. We get new requirements every year without funding attached. This needs to be part of school funding conversations.

Name: Brian U. **City:** Jersey Shore, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 20, 2023 6:17 PM – 345

Subject: We need adequate and equitable school funding

Message: I am a member of POWER Interfaith and a resident of Philadelphia. I testified live before the BEFC in 2014 to share my research demonstrating the systemic racial bias in the way Pennsylvania distributed its Basic Education funding. Sadly, 9 years later, this pattern persists. I urge the commission to recommend a funding mechanism that provides every district with adequate funding to provide an excellent education for all students. Please include a timeline that transitions to adequate and fair funding quickly, over the next few years. Don't let another generation of students miss their opportunity to learn and thrive.

Name: David M. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 20, 2023 6:34 PM – 346

Subject: Comment on fair funding

Message: I'm a retired educator who saw the effects of funding disparity in my work. I worked in a district with adequate funding which enabled us to provide specialized small group services to English language learners and academically struggling students. My district received many move-in students from the neighboring city district where resources were very stretched and inadequate to meet students' specialized needs, and many at-risk students were underserved. These students performed below grade level and had already lost so much ground academically when they came to us that it was extremely difficult if not impossible to provide enough intervention to help them gain enough reading skills in time to meet the increased reading challenges of upper elementary grades. As a result, the students were set on a path of frustration, failure, and increased risk for dropping out of school. We must find a better way to fund early intervention and specialized supports for students to succeed academically, especially for those learners whose parents are not equipped to assist them academically or provide opportunities that enhance their academic success. I would argue that fair funding is not equal funding. It is funding at higher levels that provides opportunities for economically disadvantaged and other at-risk students to succeed.

Name: Mary R. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 20, 2023 8:29 PM – 347

Subject: Level Up Funding

Message: Hello! I am from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where I reside in the Wilksburg School District. I'm here as a PA Ed Voter Champion Fellow for PA Schools Work. I am also a member of the Education Resource Network and 412 Justice. I am also School Board Director Elect in WSD, thus I am a resolution driven constituent. All of us are driven to ensure funding of our Public Schools remains constitutional and accessible to all scholars of PA. We ask for the allotted amount of Level up funding to be disbursed as soon as possible to close the funding gap. With your support we can make sure that underfunded schools get to resources they need to thrive!! Thank you.

Name: Sharmaine G. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2023 12:03 AM – 348

Subject: Need for An Equitable Funding Formula and Adequate State Funding

Message: Hello, I am a school director on the board of the Cheltenham School District. I do not speak for the whole board with this comment; I speak only for myself as one board member. While CSD appears to be adequately funded, it is only because we have the highest tax effort in Montgomery County. Seventy-nine percent of our income comes from local tax sources - primarily property taxes. The amount of state funding CSD receives has decreased steadily over the past decade as our student population has been diverse and the needs of our students have increased. We are now a "minority majority" school district. Approximately 55% of our students are Black, yet we have a significant gap between the achievement of our Black students and the achievement of our White and our Asian students. We need additional funding from the State have the services necessary to address this gap. In addition, three of our seven school buildings qualify for federal Title I support because at least 40% of the students in those buildings are considered to be low income, and a 4th building was just a hundredth of a percentage point off from qualifying for Title 1 assistance. Please consider district's like Cheltenham - which appear to be adequately funded, but are relying very heavily on local tax effort to fund their schools - when you are developing a new funding formula. Thank you very much.

Name: Jennifer L. **City:** Glenside, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2023 7:50 AM – 349

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: I trust that you recognize that all children are not born equal. Some live in middle and upper class homes with educated parents who can help them with schoolwork and some are born to parents for whom English is a second language who are not able to help their children. Some are born into poverty and others have more than they need. Therefore it is of utmost importance that the funding for education take these things into account so that all children have the resources that they need to succeed. It is for these reasons that although I'm a resident of Manheim Township I volunteer to help elementary children in the School District of Lancaster with reading two afternoons weekly. My children had many advantages and graduated from MTHS as my local grandchildren also have many advantages as do my local grandchildren and will graduate from MTHS. They have adequate resources while the children at Fulton Elementary School do not. They need additional funding to help make up the difference. Won't you please support fair funding so that every child in each school can have opportunities and the resources to support them to learn? Thank you.!

Name: Beth C. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2023 7:59 AM – 350

Subject: The future of PA's workforce relies on well funded schools

Message: As recently reported in the Pittsburgh Business Times, employers in Pennsylvania and throughout the United States must prepare for a "forever" labor shortage. The article conveys a bleak outlook: New projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show the labor force participation rate is expected to drop from 62.2% in 2022 to 60.4% in 2032. As a public school teacher partnering with local employers, I know that recruiting and retaining employees is harder than it has been in many years. Competition is fierce and there are simply not enough workers prepared to join and remain in the workforce. A high-quality public education for every child is essential to address our workforce development crisis. We cannot afford to have any students graduate from high school ill-equipped to continue on, whether their path takes them directly into the workforce, into an apprenticeship, or any number of other postsecondary educational opportunities. Without a stable flow of students prepared to participate in our workforce, we will have an increasingly difficult time finding businesses willing to locate – and stay in – Pennsylvania. The cycle of departure will become a spiraling, self-fulfilling prophecy if we do not consider a high-quality public education for all students as a foundational component of a thriving economy. We cannot afford not to make this investment, an investment for every child to thrive regardless of where they live. We simply don't have a child to spare.

Name: Faith F. **City:** Natrona Heights, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2023 10:10 AM – 351

Subject: Eliminating property tax

Message: Why are you all ignoring the homeowner in eliminating the property tax. We voted to be able to get that done in 2017 . Put it on the ballot again and word it a different way this time. We want elimination! It is not the property owners job to fund public schools.DO your job and the state should provide public education. Don't use my house as collateral!!!

Name: Holly T. **City:** Fleetwood, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2023 10:55 AM – 352

Subject: Education funding in PA

Message: We are in need of additional money overall but specifically in the districts who do not have the tax base to provide funding for teachers to reduce the teacher to child ratios, to provide additional ESL teachers and resources, to provide additional counselors as so many of our children are living with and through traumatic situations. We want to make sure all our children have access to technology (laptops, iPads, etc) and internet as they will be living with technology the rest of their lives. We need to make sure they have access to up-to-date knowledge (textbook or through technology) so they are accurately informed about the world we live. These children will be our future leaders and we need them to be competent to take on the roles and positions that will lead our nation. The research shows that this is not true in schools with higher poverty and more children of color. This has to change!

Name: Kathryn K. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2023 2:55 PM – 353

Subject: Public School Funding

Message: I am an advocate with Education Voters PA. I reside in Swatara Township and am school board director with Central Dauphin School District. 428 out of 500 school districts in PA are not receiving adequate funding from the Commonwealth. The burden of unfunded mandates is a very real problem for public education. Central Dauphin's shortfall per student is currently

\$3,540 (and I believe this figure is now higher with new information). I am very concerned cyber charter costs will continue to rise leading to a quite significant tax increase in 2024. The state has a constitutional obligation to provide fair and equitable funding for public school districts and BEFC must ensure the state does just that. We need to work together as a Commonwealth to meet this obligation in a reasonable timeframe. I am writing to respectfully ask you to fulfill your duty to support and fight for public education. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Name: Elisabeth S. **City:** Oberlin, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2023 2:58 PM – 354

Subject: PA taxes on homes

Message: It appears that PA legislatures are looking for someone to tell them what would be fair. State full funding students following the students would be fair. Eliminating school property taxes would be fair. Did you not notice all the people selling everything and leaving PA after the pandemic? Is it fair that some peoples taxes have doubled while others remained the same? Stop taxing homes. Homeowners already paid their fair share. Let homeowners talk. It is not fair to expect homeowners to pay tuition every year to fund public, charter and now cyber. Younger generations are leaving PA for fair tax states.

Name: Julia B. **City:** Collegeville, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 21, 2023 9:40 PM – 355

Subject: Support for Fair Funding of Public Schools in Pennsylvania

Message: To the State of Pennsylvania Basic Education Funding Commission I want to register my support for the fair funding of public schools in the state of Pennsylvania. I urge you to use the public education funding formula that has been supported in the courts system and that is presently in use for new state funds directed to public education. It seems to me that if we adopted that formula and applied it to the total funding of public schools then we would have a fair system that applied to all public school students in Pennsylvania.

Name: Melody R. **City:** Lititz, PA

Sent: Friday, September 22, 2023 9:10 AM – 356

Subject: school taxes

Message: Why is the burden for school taxes only on a homeowner when we have worked so hard to become one. Plenty of people who don't own their on home have children in school and plenty of homeowners never had children but are forced to pay taxes on a home. We are actually paying rent on a home to school districts that don't care how they waste our money.

Name: Joseph C. **City:** Forest City, PA

Sent: Friday, September 22, 2023 9:53 AM – 357

Subject: School Districts

Message: I completely agree that revamping the funding for education is a priority. However, the first step needs to be a complete restructuring of how school boards operate. Having a dozen different school boards with little enclaves cut out all over the place is wasteful in the extreme. Each county should have ONE school district and school board. This would streamline the entire operation and make the school boards much more accountable and efficient. I always hear the school boards crying about funding, but never hear what they are going to do about their spending. They will need to be FORCED to change I am certain.

Name: Tim W. **City:** Johnstown, PA

Sent: Friday, September 22, 2023 11:17 AM – 358

Subject: Panel Witnesses - Individual Schools

Message: There has been a lot of talk the last few meetings about "Local Control". Should we continue in the system we have, change that system, oversight of the current and potential future system? However, there is a lack of local school board members and their insights, even on a macro level by PSBA representatives testifying in front of the panel. There has been a lack of county level or regional township supervisors... who, while they don't directly impact "school spending", their oversight of how the counties in with the school districts reside and how their properties are overseen in terms of how they are assessed and seen by state generalities in a taxing formula (Lackawanna County hasn't had reassessed values since 1968). There seems to be a lot of "experts" being called and while great and extremely "wonky", don't have boots on the ground and haven't seen a majority of the 500 public school districts and their widely varying demographics, who have wildly different social aspects within those demographics. I'd love for the committee to find local advocates, local officials, any of those people who have been in this for a very long time and aren't looking to give "expert" testimony for those committee members to be able to use

as a reasoning for the potential final product.

Name: Robert N. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Friday, September 22, 2023 11:29 AM – 359

Subject: Per Pupil Spending

Message: Some of the smartest people in this state are Public School Business Managers... especially those who have been at their job for years and years. It is very easy to manipulate the data to show what Per Pupil Spending is per district (especially via the general budget). There needs to first be a generalized agreement on how you accumulate data and use it to determine what the actual needs are, and you can't keep relying on what someone else is telling you. Your staff's need to come up with as basic as basic categories that cannot be manipulated when funneling funding. There are many schools that can say there Per Pupil Spending is lower than others but still high achieving, but there is no factor for outside funding that comes into the district or outside enrichment that doesn't come in terms of "budgetary" allocations. And vice versa, there are some who are highly funded and lower achieving, and may not have any outside efforts on their behalf and the only things they get are from the school funding formula.

Name: Robert N. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Friday, September 22, 2023 11:34 AM – 360

Subject: Support for distributing funding based on need

Message: Hello, I am a resident and graduate of Columbia Borough School District, as well as a former school board member. Our school district is one of the most underfunded in the county and the state. In my time at Columbia Borough School District, I saw a lot. Columbia is a struggling community. We have entirely subsidized school breakfast and lunch. Daily we would have students waiting outside of school at 6 or 6:30 AM waiting for the doors to open because they didn't have a good meal at home. We had students that walked to school without a winter coat, and I grew up with friends that were bullied for having to wear the same clothes a couple times a week. Poverty affects performance and opportunity in more ways than one. Not only does it impact students emotional and mental health, but we can really see how underserved communities are operating at a severe disadvantage. The trauma alone of living in poverty requires additional support for students. Student Services personnel hold an important role in helping students persevere in the face of their home lives and other stresses outside of school. When I was in school I took part in a mentorship program in which a few of my mentees worked full time out of school, limiting their ability to study. It is hard to convince a student that experiences firsthand the consequences of a broken system to just put in the work and everything will be fine in the end. Even if they see it as important, it is hard for them to focus when they have more immediate concerns, like making rent, abuse, caring for siblings, etc. Other students have parents who never went to college or even graduated high school, so how could they ask their parents for help with their school work? In an underfunded school district with overwhelmed student services, few or no afterschool programs, high class sizes, high teacher turnover/inexperienced faculty, how are these students expected to compete with students from more affluent families and school districts? Public school is supposed to be the great equalizer. It is supposed to make the American Dream real. With it, any child should be able to grow up to achieve success if they work hard enough. But that goal has not been achieved. In order for that to be the reality, we need to take into account more than just enrollment numbers. The archaic model of using property taxes to fund school districts is inherently inequitable, and with the science around needs-based school funding showing us the way, we need a formula that takes into account things like school performance, poverty rate, homelessness, special education populations, facilities costs (both maintenance and renovation, and more. And we need it to weigh those factors more than it does now.

Name: Rob M. **City:** Columbia, PA

Sent: Friday, September 22, 2023 12:41 PM – 361

Subject: Funding

Message: Philadelphia desperately needs more funding to equalize opportunities and education for all of his students. It has a lower tax base and a much greater proportion of students with special needs and underprivileged backgrounds. Its facilities are aging and its class-size is totally out of proportion in comparison with other school districts. There are as many as 33 students in the classroom parentheses 30 in the first few grades.(30 in the first few grades) many of whom are not prepared and supported in their study. Their education is key to the future, not only of Philadelphia, but of Pennsylvania and of the United States.

Name: Barbara B. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Friday, September 22, 2023 2:17 PM – 362

Subject: Fair funding for public schools

Message: I am writing in support of fair funding for our public School systems. It is vital that our underserved communities receive the same opportunities and level of education in the public school systems, that wealthier districts are able to provide to their public School students. I do not support diverting funds from public schools to private education or charter Schools. Private schools do not require their teachers to have the same level of education, certification, and continuing education that is provided by our public School educators. Charter schools have even less regulation, and a history of misappropriation of funds in this state. Students with disabilities cannot attend private schools who do not have to follow the same regulations and requirements that public schools do. It is important that our state funds remain in our public School systems in order for each student to receive they are fair and rightful opportunity to the same meaningful education.

Name: Melanie Y. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Friday, September 22, 2023 3:55 PM – 363

Subject: Fair Funding for Philadelphia Public Schools

Message: I am a grandparent of a student at Masterman Middle School in Philadelphia. My grandson loved his 5th grade year, but this year due to cuts in funding and redistribution of funds, they are having a difficult time filling full time teacher positions. As a retired teacher I am concerned that teachers are dropping out of the system due to the physical conditions that they will have to teach in. Concerns such as: asbestos, unacceptable water supplies, heat and air conditioning, lack of support staff and supplies just to name a few. As the Commission visits the various districts throughout the Commonwealth, I hope you fulfill your promise to enact a remedy that will be expressed in the Budget of 2024-2025. Our schools hold our Future. We cannot fail in this responsibility that we have to all students and to all communities.

Name: Diane P. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Friday, September 22, 2023 4:11 PM – 364

Subject: Fair Funding Formula for our Public Schools

Message: Hello, I am a working mom that lives in Lancaster City Pennsylvania. My son is in 11th grade at JP McCaskey High School in the School District of Lancaster. I am writing to ask for one thing. Please fund our public schools fully and fairly. I'm sick of hearing some people say that certain schools are failing or underperforming, when the cause is quite easy to identify. The commonwealth refuses to fully and fairly fund our public schools. We do not need vouchers, charter schools, or other education schemes that divert money away from our public schools, which makes everything more difficult for students, teachers, administrators, parents, the community in general. Our public schools would not be underperforming if you did that, AND YOU KNOW IT. I know you are aware of all the disparities and inequity of the school districts that are underfunded-- not surprising they are the school districts that have the most black, brown and low income students, because let's be honest, if this was happening to a majority of mostly white schools, this wouldn't be an issue. The fact that Pennsylvania simply chooses not to fund our public schools fairly and based on need, is astounding and should be an embarrassment to every legislator in Pennsylvania. But most of them have NO SHAME so the fact that they would rather be sued than give what is owed to students of color is them telling on themselves. I am asking this body to do the RIGHT thing for our kids. Public education is the bedrock of the community, and so vital to so many children and families. Please fund it fairly and stop giving away our education tax dollars to private and/or unregulated entities. Thank you.

Name: Eliza B. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Friday, September 22, 2023 4:48 PM – 365

Subject: Education funding reform.

Message: It has come to my attention that there has been no movement on creating a constitutional funding process for public education in Pennsylvania. I urge everyone on the commission to take this seriously. Education is a basic human right and promotes a stronger work force. Our country will fall apart if we do not do something about the state of things. This is not the America my father spoke of and dreamed of.

Name: Daphne D. **City:** Hopeland, PA

Sent: Friday, September 22, 2023 4:50 PM – 366

Subject: Public Education Funding

Message: The way the public schools are funded (through property taxes) was previously voted upon several years ago, and the consensus was that it should be changed. Representatives make promises, they work on committees, leave their positions, and nothing gets done. This is totally unfair to the senior citizens who worked their entire lives to own a home and are seeing

almost yearly increases to their school real estate taxes. This is not sustainable for them. When will the will/desire of your constituents who pay your salaries be given any attention? It's high time!

Name: Kathleen C. **City:** Palmerton, PA

Sent: Friday, September 22, 2023 5:55 PM – 367

Subject: Equitable funding for low-wealth districts

Message: Sincere thanks to members of the Commission for working hard to find a way to provide adequate and equitable funding for our public schools. I attended the hearing in Lancaster yesterday and was impressed by the panels the Commission had lined up and then heard with close attention. Living comfortably in idyllic Manheim Twp., I find it easy to ignore the disadvantages parents and children endure who live in low-wealth school districts. But I do understand that my welfare is tied to the economic and social well-being of all Pa. residents regardless of ZIP code, race, ethnicity, or language. Since public education is the main determinant of how most of our children will live and thrive, it is in my own best interest that all children have the best schools and teachers. As we heard again yesterday, most Black and Brown students live in low-wealth districts and for years have received far less than Whites. Fair funding for public schools is indeed a racist issue and must be addressed if for no other reason. But the other issue on my mind is that I want to live peacefully in the Commonwealth with well-educated, happily employed individuals of all stripes. So, please, find a way to equitable public schools for all—and soon, not a decade down the road.

Name: Michael B. **City:** Lititz, PA

Sent: Friday, September 22, 2023 7:09 PM – 368

Subject: Increase Education Funding

Message: I am writing as a resident of Radnor Township school district. I also serve as the National director of the Association of Reform Jewish Educators, a national Jewish organization devoted to education. I am a lay leader with POWER Interfaith, an organization devoted towards social justice in our commonwealth. I am writing to ask that you do three things: 1. Develop a system for fully and fairly funding all PA public schools that will provide excellent education opportunities to ALL PA students regardless of zip code, color or family financial status. 2. Complete the work of the commission by December 2023. Have a constitutional, equitable, adequate school funding system in place for the 2024 school year. 3. Listen to the public. Have public comment opportunities at all your commission public hearings My children are among the best educated in the commonwealth and I can not stand by and know that our government continues to fund school districts in an inequitable and racist formula and distribution system. Education is the key to advancement. Education is a basic right for all residents of Pennsylvania. Our courts have determined that we are funding in an inequitable manner. Charter schools and vouchers are not the answer. Thank you for contributing to our democracy.

Name: Stacy R. **City:** Bryn Mawr, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 23, 2023 10:46 AM – 369

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: Please support fair and equitable funding for all of our public schools. ALL public school children in the Commonwealth deserve an outstanding equitable education regardless of what zip code they live in. The burden of this should not fall on local tax payers where incomes may vary dramatically from district to district. I am especially concerned about School District of Lancaster, but this issue is urgent and must swiftly be addressed across the state. It can not wait, as each year causes further educational loss to large numbers of the Commonwealth's children. Thank you.

Name: Roni J. **City:** Landisville, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 23, 2023 6:43 PM – 370

Subject: School Funding

Message: Dear Commission Members, I am a retired public school teacher. I am a member of Shir Ami Congregation in Newtown. The children in my area go to Pennsbury School District schools. I am a member of the POWER Interfaith Education Team for Bucks County. I taught for 32 years. It was hard work but also an honor to do such important work. I know that adequate funding matters. The commission must address the lack of sufficient and fair funding. All Pennsylvania students deserve a fully funding school. We will all be better off when ALL of our children have fully funded schools. What could be more important than that? Please act for all our students. The future depends on you to fully fund all of our public schools.

Name: Janis B. **City:** Yardley, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 23, 2023 11:27 PM – 371

Subject: School funding fairly

Message: I don't want low income communities, mostly currently Black and Brown students to graduate without a good education because I care about racial justice and equal opportunity for all.

Name: Jodi G. **City:** Columbia, PA

Sent: Sunday, September 24, 2023 10:26 AM – 372

Subject: Property Taxes

Message: As you know, the mil for property taxes continues to climb...worse than New York actually. So I hope you will take a close look at this. Many of us seniors (and probably others) are faced with the possibility of being forced to move because of these high taxes. One suggestion is to have people over a certain age pay NO tax or LESS tax. I appreciate that you are trying to address this issue. Seniors have worked very hard to contribute throughout their lives and need a break now that they are on limited income. Thank you.

Name: Yvonne W. **City:** Macungie, PA

Sent: Sunday, September 24, 2023 3:40 PM – 373

Subject: Education issues

Message: I would like to be able to ask questions

Name: Jasmine R. **City:** West York, PA

Sent: Sunday, September 24, 2023 5:09 PM – 374

Subject: State Funding for Education

Message: I am a school psychologist for a school district in the state. I am an Association of School Psychologists of Pennsylvania member (ASPP) and want to ensure funding allows for public education to meet all student needs. I am concerned that the recent PA Supreme Court ruling that deemed the state's current funding structure unconstitutional may lead to disruptions for public education. Public education is a crucial component to our society and needs to be properly funded to allow all students to have access to a free and appropriate education. I am contacting you to raise awareness on the current shortages being experienced in public education which includes both teachers and school psychologists. These shortages will only be exasperated by disjointed funding of public education in the future. I also want to ensure that state funding for school-based mental health services is utilized effectively towards the hiring of mental health professionals, such as school psychologists. Thank you for your time.

Name: Amanda F. **City:** Mechanicsburg, PA

Sent: Sunday, September 24, 2023 6:43 PM – 375

Subject: PA Basic Education Funding

Message: Dear Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a special education teacher in the Pottstown School District which is also the district in which I live and my own children go to. I have a daughter in 1st grade and a daughter in 6th grade who is special needs. My district in which I live in and work in needs to have a share funding like the other districts in Montgomery County. We need to develop a system for fully and fairly fund all Pennsylvania public schools that will provide excellent education opportunities to all Pennsylvania students regardless of their zip code, color or family financial status. Thank you for your time in my request.

Name: Catherine K. **City:** Pottstown, PA

Sent: Sunday, September 24, 2023 6:52 PM – 376

Subject: the power of faith of being part of something greater than ourselves

Message: Ladies and gentlemen of the bipartisan commission, who have made conscious choices to represent fellow Pennsylvanians and who made the conscious intentional choice to serve on the Basic Education Funding Commission: I reside in Lower Merion and my children attend public schools in the Lower Merion School District. I am a supporter of POWER Interfaith. I work in the City of Philadelphia. I was born and raised here in Pennsylvania. I know that people of all political and religious backgrounds want what is best for all the children in our state. Ladies and gentlemen of the bipartisan commission, who care about the future of our state: In our great endeavor to shape the future of our beloved Pennsylvania, let us dare to dream of a more just and equitable education system, one that transcends the constraints of zip codes, color, and financial status. (1) Imagine, if you will, a system that provides excellent educational opportunities for every Pennsylvania student, irrespective of their circumstances. In the spirit of Martin Luther King Jr., let us march forward together, hand in hand, towards

this noble goal. But time is of the essence. As Abraham Lincoln once proclaimed, "The best way to predict the future is to create it." (2) Let us resolve to complete the commission's crucial work by December 2023, so that we may proudly present to our state a constitutional, equitable, and adequate school funding system for the 2024 school year. Let your personal legacy be one of transformation and progress. Now, we find ourselves at a crossroads, where the voices of the people yearn to be heard. (3) Let us open the doors of opportunity for public engagement. Allow the citizens of Pennsylvania to contribute their wisdom and insights at each of our commission's public hearings. For in their collective wisdom lies the true path to a brighter future. Ladies and gentlemen of the bipartisan commission, who recognize that every day is a gift, that in the vast and complex systems of government and economy that we have created for ourselves, that we have choices and that whatever our background we have an opportunity to give voice to those who may have no voice, and to enable each child to discover opportunity to become the best person they can be: Let us unite in purpose, Together, we shall craft a legacy that will stand the test of time and benefit generations to come.

Name: Mijail S. **City:** Merion Station, PA

Sent: Sunday, September 24, 2023 6:54 PM – 377

Subject: Equitable Education Funding

Message: I am a resident of Philadelphia. Three of my grandchildren and three of their cousins attend Philadelphia public schools. Because they live in relatively affluent areas, they receive good educations in clean buildings with adequate supplies, supported by parents who can afford to provide the school with donations beyond what it can supply. For eight years, I worked at Episcopal Community Services where we serve several thousand children in afterschool programs in very different settings from those my grandchildren enjoy. I have seen dirty buildings, rooms without supplies, and teachers struggling to fill in enormous gaps. My sister lives in Pittsburgh and describes similar conditions. Our world is full of injustice. This is one that we in Pennsylvania can and are called, by whatever moral principles we live by, to correct. Before the pandemic, I joined a local march in support of this issue. Now, beyond marching, I am writing to the legislators in the Commonwealth to stand with the children and make sure that each one of them receives the education they deserve.

Name: Victoria S. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Monday, September 25, 2023 9:47 AM – 378

Subject: Adequate and Equitable Funding for schools is your responsibility

Message: I live in the Hempfield School district of Lancaster County and am an advocate for quality public education. I am concerned about the impact inequitable school funding is having not only in my own school district but also to districts all across Pennsylvania. As a current candidate for a school board director position, I am paying close attending to the process for funding public schools, as it will have real impact on my job to adequately provide a quality education to the taxpayers I will represent, as well as my own children who are students in the district. I found it shocking when I learned that Pennsylvania ranks 45th in the country in its state share of funding. I recognize the burden that a low state share of funding places on local districts to make up the difference to meet the needs of the district. In my children's own schools, full day kindergarten has not been implemented because of the high costs that programming would incur. We also saw decisions not to add recommended additional staff positions to address the social emotional needs of students in our district because it would require raising additional tax dollars. Mandates handed down by state and federal lawmakers are not matched with funding to make those new programs and requirements happen. Hempfield has the reputation of being a wealthy district, but has unique needs not reflected in that perception. For example, we have a high percentage of students who receive free and reduced lunch, and a large special education population. The resources needed to adequately educate our students are high, and currently we meet those needs by routinely raising local taxes AND by cutting or not providing programs. Our students deserve better options. The state must to more to assist to meet those needs. That funding should be both consistent and predictable so that local boards can make responsible long term planning decisions. I am asking you to support measures that will increase funding statewide to support our schools and ensure that a quality public education is a possibility for all children in Pennsylvania.

Name: Erin S. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Monday, September 25, 2023 9:57 AM – 379

Subject: Workforce Development & Public Education

Message: As recently reported in the Pittsburgh Business Times, employers in Pennsylvania and throughout the United States must prepare for a "forever" labor shortage. The article conveys a bleak outlook: New projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics show the labor force participation rate is expected to drop from 62.2% in 2022 to 60.4% in 2032. A high-quality public education for every child is essential to address our workforce development crisis. We cannot afford to have any students graduate from high school ill-equipped to continue on, whether their path takes them directly into the workforce, into an

apprenticeship, or any number of other postsecondary educational opportunities. Without a stable flow of students prepared to participate in our workforce, we will have an increasingly difficult time finding businesses willing to locate – and stay in – Pennsylvania. The cycle of departure will become a spiraling, self-fulfilling prophecy if we do not consider a high-quality public education for all students as a foundational component of a thriving economy. We cannot afford not to make this investment, an investment for every child to thrive regardless of where they live. We simply don't have a child to spare.

Name: Christine K. **City:** Beaver Falls, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2023 10:37 AM – 380

Subject: Fair funding for ALL students

Message: Vouchers for a few students do not address the needs of the remaining students who remain in schools with asbestos, heating and cooling issues. These infrastructure impediments to education are due to years of underfunding by the PA legislature. Keep taxpayer funding in public schools to benefit all students. You have it in your power to provide fair funding for ALL students, and not limit educational opportunities to a select few.

Name: Leon W. **City:** Lititz, PA

Sent: Tuesday, September 26, 2023 3:32 PM – 381

Subject: DIFFERENT FUNDING METHODOLOGY

Message: Please consider a different funding methodology besides property tax for our schools. Thanks.

Name: Vickie B. **City:** Cranberry Township, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 9:05 AM – 382

Subject: Funding

Message: It's worth noting that some school districts have external ways of getting funding (e.g. Wissahickon has an Educational Opportunities Fund, Dallastown SD does the same). On one hand it's great that schools are able to get private donors to fund things, but relying on this as a source of funding creates further inequity.

Name: Gary S. **City:** Ambler, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 9:11 AM – 383

Subject: BEC Meeting 9/21

Message: I must say I was expecting the lawmakers would have received the facts presented from members of the community who support the need for additional funding for the underserved children of our state. However, it is unfortunate that some of the lawmakers continue to carry the same "if I made it, then you can too" mentality. It was obvious that lawmakers still push back after hearing the well documented data as it applies to the underserved schools who lack the funding to assure our children attend a school with the basic fundamentals as well funded schools are receiving. David Lapp clearly provided scenarios of the inequities vs the adequacy differences between white privileged public schools vs poor black schools. We rank 11th in severe inequities and 44th in disparities by race. 50th in gaps between White students vs Black students. I also heard many references to historian Thaddeus Stevens and Horace Mann which certainly proved that we lack the understanding that we continue not to meet what these historians believed would be the benefits of equally funding public schools. Lastly, as I listed to the testimonies of others as it relates to immigration issues and such, I go back to Mr. Lapps statement that educating our children leads to better Jobs, Wages, Fairness, Economic Growth, and our Democracy. Your attention to removing your bias to the needs of our children who don't look or live like you must stop. You have to pull together and find the unprecedented decision to increase the fair funding so that the balances that Mike Sturla described no longer exist and the inequitable differences are improved.

Name: Karen L. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 9:12 AM – 384

Subject: additional funding sources

Message: When schools don't get the resources they need, a lot of costs get pushed onto parents and teachers, which either come out of pocket or force people to do fundraising that is very cost inefficient. This seems inherently inequitable, but also shows there are some costs that are not really being accounted for. Some examples from Wissahickon: - When school starts, parents provide many of the supplies for the class room - hand soap, etc (by contrast I know a principal in Philadelphia who does fundraisers for the school wide paper products, laptops, library books) - Teachers do some of the same. Teachers are using Instagram to do fundraisers for things the school doesn't provide. My work has done fundraisers to fill teacher's wish lists. - Our school HSAs run fundraisers, which cover supplies for gym, art, music. The fundraisers are run by private companies

that take half the money. - Our school's EOF runs fundraisers to cover larger projects for teachers (grants up to \$30k) in Pottstown, some of the churches have done a fundraiser to pay for bus passes for kids.

Name: Gary S. **City:** Ambler, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 9:30 AM – 385

Subject: The mandate to create a fair education funding approach in Pennsylvania

Message: Pennsylvania now has a mandate to provide fair and adequate funding to make a quality education possible for all children in the state. This is an historic opportunity to correct the unfair and unconstitutional funding practices of the past, and this Commission has the ability to recommend a lasting and meaningful approach for future education funding. I implore this Commission to find a long-term solution that will provide the best opportunities for education to all children, and to put that funding strategy into immediate effect. Thank you for your work.

Name: Todd J. **City:** Spring City, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 9:51 AM – 386

Subject: Final Report

Message: The Constitutional Responsibility for the this Commission is to provide a final report must address these items: 1) establish meaningful adequacy target for each school district; 2) calculate funding targets beyond basic education needs which are critical to a child's education-special education needs, mental health needs, facilities needs (\$ for asbestos removal), universal pre-K availability; 3) establish equitable and fair state funding for low-wealth districts; 4) establish reasonable timeline to meet constitutional mandate; 5) widely share results following completion of report on 11-30-23.

Name: Jenine C. **City:** Bala Cynwyd, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 10:17 AM – 387

Subject: Taxing homes

Message: It was never the responsibility of PA homeowners to fund schools. It is the responsibility of the State to fund public, charter, and cyber schools. The People of PA have spoken. Stop school taxing PA homes. PA homeowners are losing everything funding public, charter and cyber schools. How is this fair or constitutional? People of PA are supposed to have the right to homeownership. With the PA fair funding lawsuit, the time for legislative can kicking and stalling should be coming to an end. It is time for a tax overhaul. Time to stop taxing homes. Time for the State to step up to the plate and find our schools.

Name: Julia B. **City:** Collegeville, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 2:25 PM – 388

Subject: Fully and fairly fund all PA public schools

Message: I have recently become aware of the public school funding disparities in Pennsylvania I find this to be disturbing especially since a large proportion of those affected are students of color. Every child deserves to have a good education in a safe and healthy environment. Society as well as the children benefit from this. Please right this terrible wrong and give everyone the opportunities that you had

Name: Ann S. **City:** Pottstown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2023 9:48 PM – 389

Subject: School financing

Message: Didn't Illinois solve the problem by dividing the tax money per student?

Name: Linda S. **City:** York Haven, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2023 6:18 AM – 390

Subject: Tax reform

Message: I read an article indicating the States share needs to be evenly distributed. This is incorrect. The State is 100% responsible for funding schools. Stop stealing from homeowners. Stop kicking homeowners on the street and taking everything so that the rich may become richer. Step up to the plate and 100% State fund each student with the same amount per student and extra amount for special needs. That is a minimum. The student funds should follow the student because sometimes due to bad situations other options are needed. Stop taking from homeowners. Stop dumping on homeowners. Homeowners are the only ones losing everything to fund teachers pensions when they have none of their own. We have waited decades for tax reform why stalked with cost cutting measures. Do tell which costs were cut? Now, homeowners are paying for public, charter and cyber. Stop this nonsense.

Name: Julia B. **City:** Collegeville, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2023 8:41 AM – 391

Subject: Owen J Roberts School District

Message: Please fully fund our public school system.

Name: John B. **City:** Chester Springs, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2023 9:12 AM – 392

Subject: Tax reform

Message: I have not seen Taxpayers getting acknowledged nor respected. Currently, only homeowners are being punished with tax increases and seizures. Tax lien sales are benefitting others plus paying for others pensions. Besides that what is the cost of keeping the status quo going? Stop taxing PA homes. This could have been addressed years ago with 76 but the wishes of PA residents were ignored.

Name: J. S. **City:** Collegeville, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2023 1:56 PM – 393

Subject: Today's meeting

Message: I'm watching this hearing on line now Its people who make a lot of money asking questions of other people who make a lot of money who can afford school taxes making decisions on this matter. There is no concern for property owners at all No mention of equity for homeowners. Not a peep about creating a new way to fund public schools without using our homes. do something about us losing our homes. People who claim they're for elimination certainly are not bringing it up at this meeting!

Name: Julia B. **City:** Collegeville, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2023 2:18 PM – 394

Subject: Fair Funding for all

Message: The only way to fund schools fairly is to eliminate the school property tax. You will never have a fair and equitable solution funding schools by homeowners. Families should not be made homeless due to only the inability to afford ever rising school taxes. That in itself is unconstitutional to deprive a person their right to own property and I can't fathom how you even think that its okay to take a person's home they worked their whole life or by a school district that never put a dime towards that home. Our homes do not make us an income. You have the opportunity to make this right so please do it. All I see at these meetings are people who make a lot of money and can afford school taxes asking questions of other people making a lot of money making decisions for people who don't make half of what they do and don't have a clue the hardship they are putting on homeowners who don't make that big money.

Name: Dawn N. **City:** Honey Brook, PA

Sent: Thursday, September 28, 2023 7:50 PM – 395

Subject: Integrity in Fair Funding

Message: It is critical that you hear from district teachers, families, and constituents in the most underfunded districts while you're considering what you do to close the funding gap as mandated by the February Supreme Court decision. As a resident of Norristown, I hear constantly from senior citizens who are paying inflated property taxes while they see their local schools struggle. I see kids working with poor materials or participating in sports with poor equipment, or worse yet, unable to participate because the pool cannot be used. The kids see the differences between them and their richer peers in neighboring districts. And it wounds them and that wounds me. It has been decided that PA's funding formula is unfair. Unconstitutional. Do the right thing and hear the voices of those most disenfranchised. Now.

Name: Liz B. **City:** Norristown, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 7:35 AM – 396

Subject: Stop punishing homeowners

Message: Step up to the plate and 100% State fund PA Schools. Stop punishing homeowners with tax increase and seizures. Stop tax lien sales that get bought up by businesses so the rich may get richer and the poor get poorer. Homeowners need to fund their own pensions. Stop the hypocrisy. Homeowners have paid enough. The People of PA have spoken. Time to listen, Time to change the funding source.

Name: Julia B. **City:** Collegeville, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 7:48 AM – 397

Subject: Stories of progress with more funding

Message: Dear members of BEFC, Thank you for your service to this important commission. I am a resident of Phoenixville and a parent of two children who received an excellent education in our local schools. But I know resource constraints meant choices had to be made and I worry that my kids may have benefits at the expense of others in the same school who did not get all the resources they needed. And as was discussed at the open meeting on Pottstown last night, when kids get resources, they thrive. The level up program is having success. Help PA stay the course and ensure so students have access to great education with the resources they need. Sorry you weren't able to join us at this meeting and thank you for listening to our voices, too.

Name: Shannon M. **City:** Phoenixville, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 7:59 AM – 398

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: Dear members of the basic education funding commission, last night I attended the people's hearing on BEFC at Pottstown High School. I was shocked to learn that Pottstown, one of the most underfunded school districts in the state, has the fifth highest tax rate in the state, simply because they are trying so desperately to educate their children adequately when an equitable amount of state funding is not flowing in. Although they have received level up funding recently, it is still not nearly enough. As I understand it, their students are still underfunded according to the fair funding formula by \$3,000 per student!!! As the parent of public school students in the Phoenixville district and as a neighbor of Pottstown, I feel a deep sense of shame that our state has allowed this situation to continue for decades. Please take action now to fully and fairly fund all school districts across the state according to the fair funding formula.

Name: Jenifer M. **City:** Phoenixville, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 9:02 AM – 399

Subject: Full funding for public education

Message: It is your responsibility to carry out the findings of the court regarding education funding in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Please fulfill your duty and finalize a plan to equitably fund education across the state. Please come up with a solution for the unconstitutional funding system and a plan to fully implement it by the school year 2024-2025. Thank you for your time and for your attention to this matter.

Name: Jane G. **City:** Pottstown, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 9:03 AM – 400

Subject: Fair funding

Message: Recommend full funding for public schools Equitable funding across Penna Solutions to decades of chronic underfunding

Name: Jody C. **City:** Berwyn, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 10:51 AM – 401

Subject: Solution/Plan for Basic Education Commission

Message: Full and equitable funding for all Pennsylvania public school students is a constitutional mandate and a moral and ethical absolute! Every day that passes without redress to Pennsylvania's unequal funding of public education is a day of shame!

Name: Allen C. **City:** Berwyn, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 12:09 PM – 402

Subject: fair funding

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge parent and taxpayer. We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Old Forge ranks #454 in per pupil spending out of PA's 500 school districts. Our kids deserve funding equity.

Name: Michelle B. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 12:15 PM – 403

Subject: Old forge school district

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge family member to students and a taxpayer. We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Old Forge ranks #454 in per pupil spending out of PA's 500 school districts. Our kids deserve funding equity.

Name: Dana M. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 12:16 PM – 404

Subject: Funding

Message: I am writing as an Old Forge parent. We are a school that has relied on its overwhelming residential tax base for a majority of its funding and have seen less and less resources able to go into education because of the inability to overtax our residents to keep up with costs and mandates. State funding has actually decreased comparable to our neighboring districts because we are a small forgotten one community district. We don't have an influential voice at any level of government because we are overshadowed by the needs of Scranton and Wilkes Barre. We ask the committee when evaluating the general needs for a majority of schools, that it remembers that not all districts fall within an acceptable range of any potential outcome, and that we've been on the extreme low end for over two decades. Old Forge ranks #454 in per pupil spending out of PA's 500 school districts. Our kids deserve funding equity.

Name: Albert B. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 12:21 PM – 405

Subject: Fair funding

Message: Support fair funding to all schools in PA

Name: Jody C. **City:** Berwyn, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 1:23 PM – 406

Subject: Education Funding

Message: Dear members of the basic education funding commission, last night I participated in the Pottstown people's hearing on BEFC. I was very distressed to hear that you are not holding public hearings in the very communities that have been most negatively impacted by the inequitable funding system for education in the Commonwealth. This does not sound like democracy to me. And, as a member of the United Church of Christ at Valley Forge, it does not resonate with the theology I have grown up with wherein we are taught by Jesus's example to love our neighbor as ourselves. In this case, this translates to me as loving our neighbor so much that we want each and every child to have equitable access to education that affords them the same opportunities to learn at the same lev as their counterparts in wealthier school districts - many of which are receiving much more than is called for by the fair funding formula. I am imploring you to find a solution to the current unconstitutional funding system and to implement a timeline for compliance within the 2024-2025 school year which addresses the problems created by the decades of chronic underfunding in many of our school districts.

Name: Jenifer M. **City:** Phoenixville, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 1:36 PM – 407

Subject: closing the education funding gap

Message: The Commission has the opportunity to recommend state funding levels for education that would close the unacceptable gap between what school districts that serve predominantly white students receive and what those that serve Black and Latino students in poor communities receive. Current funding levels perpetuate the disadvantage and discrimination that public education was founded to address. Offering families vouchers to enable their children to leave failing public schools is not the solution, giving those schools the resources they need to help their students succeed is. What kinds of resources can make a difference? Examples include up-to-date textbooks and technology, additional support for English language learners, preschool programs, even air-conditioned classrooms. Please give ALL our children the opportunity that they deserve for a bright future through a high quality education.

Name: Lynn A. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 1:44 PM – 408

Subject: Fair Funding for PA schools- support Public Education from the top

Message: Greetings, I am writing as a parent and clergy member, seeing that much of the fighting on our system surrounds the funding of our schools. Pennsylvania should be a place of excellent education being offered and funded fairly, where every child receives the same resources because they are in a PA public school. It should not be defined based on the wealth or poverty of where someone lives. Please stop mandating things you are not willing to fund from the top. Please fully fund our schools in an equitable way.

Name: Amy S. **City:** Elizabethtown, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 2:08 PM – 409

Subject: Education & Workforce Development

Message: Honorable Commission Members, The importance of adequately funding public education can't be overstated. Not only do the lives and futures of Pennsylvania's children depend on the task you have before you, so does the economic future of our Commonwealth and its employers. Before considering how much money our schools need, how to allocate it, or how to raise it, please ask yourselves this: How many more companies that might be scouting locations, as Amazon was five years ago, do we want to see going elsewhere? And how many of the employers already operating in Pennsylvania do we want to see relocate? That's what's at stake. Companies seeking new locations—whether for headquarters, research centers, factories, or distribution hubs—always ask first where they'll find enough workers and whether those workers are adequately skilled. Pittsburgh and Philadelphia were on Amazon's short list for a second headquarters location. A Washington D.C. suburb won out largely because of a workforce advantage. If we were at a disadvantage then, it has only grown worse. With an aging and declining population, we face headwinds achieving even adequate numbers of workers. Our labor force participation is projected to drop from 62.2% in 2022 to 60% in a decade. If we fail to adequately fund education so that our graduates are well-prepared to enter and thrive in the workforce, the Commonwealth and its citizens will pay a high price for having fewer employers and fewer high-skilled, high-paying, tax-generating jobs. As an organization that facilitates partnerships between businesses and schools, we hear that many employers we work with are already facing workforce shortages, a mismatch between applicants and skills, or both. It's also not sophisticated technical skills they worry most about. In addition to general academic preparedness, what they want—and often fail to find—are skills like communication and problem-solving, that all employees need, from entry-level on up. What that means is that Pennsylvania can't afford to let a single student slip through the cracks and far too many currently are. The recent Court order notwithstanding, it would be foolhardy from a standpoint of workforce development and economic competitiveness to allow the funding disparities we currently see between lower income and more affluent districts to persist. Students in our affluent districts almost invariably begin from a position of advantage. Students in our lower income districts typically start from behind. Given that, we would argue that the Legislature would do well to consider weighting factors that adjust funding upward for higher levels of poverty. The economic well-being of this state and every one of its citizens, regardless of their zip code, would benefit from increased investment in these schools and their students. Whatever your ultimate course, I urge you to weigh heavily the extent to which Pennsylvania's economic destiny depends on its K-12 schools. The cost of not investing in public education is high. Studies show that lower education levels portend fewer jobs, lower wages, and more social problems. Higher ones translate into higher employment, better wages, fewer social strains, and stronger tax revenues. We can meet our constitutional obligation now or all of us will most certainly pay more later. Thank you.

Name: Jackie F. **City:** McKeesport, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 2:34 PM – 410

Subject: Courage, Compassion

Message: Dear members of the basic education funding committee, I am wondering, in this time, when you carry the future of education for each and every child of the Commonwealth in your hands, what scares you about the changes you would have to make to fully implement the fair funding formula. What questions are you asking yourself? Have you ever made a decision where to buy a house based on the quality of education your children would receive? What if you had no choice but to live in a district that was underfunded and had to watch your children manage with only a fraction of the resources made available to those children being educated in the neighboring district? Where are you feeling compassion? How are you being called to courageously act? What seems morally right to you? Are there any political forces at play that impact your ability to navigate compassionately and courageously to carry out the task you've been given as a member of the basic education funding commission? You must be in a very difficult situation, having to balance the priorities of the diverse group of people living here in Pennsylvania. May you find the compassion and courage to make the decisions which you feel are truly in benefit of each and every child who lives in this great state.

Name: Jenifer M.

City: Phoenixville, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 2:34 PM – 411

Subject: full fair funding for all!

Message: I urge the commission to (1) listen to communities and the impact of years of underfunded schools, and (2) implement a full, fair funding formula for ALL school funding, for ALL districts.

Name: Hannah A. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 2:40 PM – 412

Subject: In the arena

Message: Dear members of the basic education funding commission, I am wondering why you are holding only a limited number of public hearings and excluding public commentary from places like Philadelphia, Pottstown, Norristown, Reading and so many other school districts that are underfunded per our state's fair funding formula. I hope that the people who walk into the arena of the schools and those districts everyday - the teachers, the parents, the students, the principles, the superintendents, the school board members - will eventually be heard with the open and compassionate hearts and minds that I assume are part of each of you.

Name: Jenifer M. **City:** Phoenixville, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 2:51 PM – 413

Subject: Fair Funding for each and every student in Pennsylvania

Message: As a citizen living in the Owen J Roberts School District, I am disheartened and embarrassed to see the disparity in funding that is provided to the students in our neighboring district of Pottstown. I understand that the Level Up funding has provided some relief, but the situation for the students is far from equitable. The taxpayers in Pottstown are overburdened and yet the students still do not receive equal funding for their education. School vouchers are not the solution, in fact, they would only make the situation worse. Please find an equitable solution by funding each student in Pennsylvania at the same level. Disconnect property taxes from school funding and find a better way. Quality of education should not be tied to a student's zip code. If we want our cities to be vibrant and hopeful places in which to live, we need to fix this inequity now!

Name: Susan M. **City:** Pottstown, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 3:31 PM – 414

Subject: Fair funding

Message: Support full funding for public education.

Name: Jody C. **City:** Berwyn, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 3:53 PM – 415

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: DO NOT TAX PROPERTY OWNERS TO FUND SCHOOLING!! THIS HAS BEEN STUDIED TO DEATH...JUST FIND A WAY THAT EVERYONE WHO HAS CHILDREN IN SCHOOL PAYS FOR THEIR OWN CHILDREN. OTHER STATES DO IT PA CAN TOO! I AM RETIRED AND HAVE NEVER HAD A CHILD IN PUBLIC SCHOOL BUT HAVE HAD TO PAY SCHOOL TAX FOR 30 YEARS, TO ADD INSULT TO INJURY, I AM NOW RETIRED AND STILL HAVE TO PAY WHEN I CAN LEAST AFFORD IT. STOP IT! I ALSO BELIEVE THAT IF TRIED , IT WOULD BE FOUND UNCONSTITUTIONAL.

Name: Paul C. **City:** Felton, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 3:56 PM – 416

Subject: SCHOOL FUNDING

Message: STOP THE UNCONSTITUTIONAL SCHOOL TAX ON PROPERTY OWNERS !!!!

Name: Paul C. **City:** Felton, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 4:17 PM – 417

Subject: Equitable Education Funding

Message: Equitable funding must consist of two components to be truly equitable. The first component is equality in funding for the educational component, typically done on a per pupil basis. However, typically underperforming districts should be allocated additional funding to provide resources to help bring students in that district up to acceptable levels. The second component should be based on physical plant needs. Districts which have aging buildings that may contain asbestos or other harmful materials, lack air conditioning and functioning heating systems, do not have elevators in multi-floor buildings, do not have fully functioning restrooms, lack adequate food preparation facilities and are in dire need of physical plant upgrades to

provide a healthy and encouraging learning environment should receive more funding for this component than districts have more modern physical plant facilities and systems until such time as the quality of the physical facilities are equal across districts.

Name: George S. **City:** Newtown Square

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 4:26 PM – 418

Subject: Every Pennsylvania school needs full, and fair funding now!

Message: Every Pennsylvania student and every Pennsylvania school should have fair, full, adequate funding!! We are investing in our future by enabling all of our children!!

Name: Ann D. **City:** Ambler, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 5:54 PM – 419

Subject: School taxes For seniors in retirement.

Message: School taxes for seniors in retirement is totally wrong and Pa is among very few states that do this.

Name: Lloyd K. **City:** York, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 6:16 PM – 420

Subject: Equity and equal opportunity

Message: The quality of education you get and the opportunities you can access should never be tied to how expensive houses in your school district are. All children, regardless of their family's income and ability to buy an expensive house should receive a quality education and the same opportunities as any other child. Only children with special needs should receive more if that's what it takes for them to access the same opportunities as other children. How will you ensure equal opportunity education for all children?

Name: Johanna J. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 6:26 PM – 421

Subject: POWER'S PEOPLES' HEARING

Message: On September 27, 2023, POWER Metro, a faction of POWER Interfaith, held a true "people's hearing" to allow members of communities most impacted by inadequate and inequitable school funding the opportunity to air their views - something this Commission has largely failed to do. Moreover, this hearing was held in Pottstown in part because the Commission is only holding hearings in the districts of its members, thereby excluding a large portion of the commonwealth's population living in the four collar counties of Bucks, Montgomery, Delaware and West Chester. The hearing is well described in this linked article, which all members of the Commission should review. <https://www.pottsmmerc.com/2023/09/29/public-stands-up-to-be-heard-on-fair-school-funding/>. A recording of the full hearing is also provided at the following link, which is posted on POWER'S Facebook page: <https://fb.watch/nmOrcyV8CX/?mibextid=cr9u03> I urge each and every Commission member to review the full hearing (which begins about 6 minutes into the video) and to heed the voices of the people of this Commonwealth.

Name: Lawrence S. **City:** Havertown, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 6:27 PM – 422

Subject: Level up public school funding so that rural and urban school district graduates have improved education resources needed to prepare for better jobs

Message: Many urban communities have lead in the water pipes in low income home housing. So the poorer urban school districts end up with many children from low rent districts with impacted brain development. It takes a lot more tax payer resources for expensive teachers of special needs students. The schools are impacted on reductions to music and arts programs since available limited resources are redirected to teachers for special needs. Many urban school districts also have crumbling school building with no air conditioning. This is a difficult situation for learning. Wealthy suburban districts have arts and air conditioning. level up funding would help rural and urban school districts educate students for the jobs of the future. As a retiree in a retirement community I want to see more local high school graduates qualifying to serve in our community's medical services and hospitality services. Society can not afford to waste any student's opportunity due to poor and unequal public school funding. Our rural and urban public school districts need the Commonwealth to increase state allocation for level up funding for underfunded public school districts. The Courts have spoken.

Name: Karen S. **City:** Mechanicsburg, PA

Sent: Friday, September 29, 2023 9:41 PM – 423

Subject: I believe in the power of a good education...

Message: ... and that is why I am urging the commission to consider equal funding for minority school districts. I am a former educator, now retired. I am a grandmother and would like to see, not only my grandchildren, but All the grandchildren of my community have access to a solid education through well-funded schools. It is their right. Thanks.

Name: Marai T. **City:** Akron, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 30, 2023 7:54 AM – 424

Subject: Property tax elimination

Message: Please consider Frank Ryan's bill that he and a group of others worked so hard to write to eliminate property taxes. You don't have to work out any formula, the formula is already worked out! It's fair for everyone across the board, and school funding is no longer just on the backs of property owners.

Name: Shelly L. **City:** New Oxford, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 30, 2023 7:56 AM – 425

Subject: school taxes

Message: I am a senior and I am on a fixed income and the school taxes are very hard on me I think we should eliminate them and make the sales tax a little higher and give that to the schools that way every body that buys something pays for the schools too you know a part of the sales tax goes to the schools and that can be equal funding to all of the schools.

Name: Patricia Y. **City:** Folsom, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 30, 2023 8:09 AM – 426

Subject: School property tax

Message: The school property tax is taking away homes people paid for over a 30 year period in their life. The school property tax has been found to be unconstitutional also. There are different methods to fund the schools and not any tax at all on seniors or property tax on anyone. Consumer tax on goods, tax more items, legalize recreational Marijuana and tax the proceeds, and the gambling funds totals seem to be a bit shy of reality when the casinos rake in billions. Thank you for your time.

Name: Stephen G. **City:** Kunkletown, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 30, 2023 8:55 AM – 427

Subject: School tax property tax

Message: Why should people who own their home and have no kids going to the schools be paying school tax? While parents who renting and have umpteen children don't pay any taxes at all. Doesn't seem right. Plus from what I seen on tax slip is that I have till Dec. 31 to pay taxes but if I pay in Dec I have a 10% penalty how is that even remotely fair? If I pay after Dec 31 I should then have a penalty not before. This tax crap on hard working Americans is way out of control. People pay outrageous amounts in taxes and where is it going cause the roads are horrible and when you call township to cut trees that are in the roads and or fix the bumps in the roads they too busy meeting at the local gas station for their daily meeting! If I paid for this property why the hell should I pay taxes every year? Like when you buy a car I don't pay taxes on that every year!

Name: Elizabeth K. **City:** Leesport, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 30, 2023 8:58 AM – 428

Subject: School Property Tax

Message: I have lived in my home 40 years. My children are now in their late 40s. Taxes have escalated over the years to the point people who are retired and on fixed incomes have trouble paying their school tax. The rebate offered to people is totally inadequate. There needs to be an alternate method to fund schools. Income and Sales tax increases would be fundamentally more equitable. Seniors who are long term residents should not be subject to the present regressive and unfair tax.

Name: Steve H. **City:** Swarthmore, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 30, 2023 10:28 AM – 429

Subject: School property tax elimination

Message: Dear BEFC Members: I'm a member of multiple FB groups advocating the elimination of School property taxes. Home owners only should not be responsible for the largest percentage of school funding. Thousands of homes are being sold at Sherrif sales every year. Has your group considered the effect on not only fixed income seniors, but the cost to all low income

families. School funding should be shared by all citizens. The HB13 authored by Frank Ryan does just that. Please consider that bill in your group. Save thousands from losing their homes and draining budgets due to this horrible tax! Thank you!

Name: John L. **City:** Gibsonia, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 30, 2023 10:38 AM – 430

Subject: School property taxes

Message: Is there any consideration for the elimination of schools not being funded by property taxes. My wife and I will retire next year and the current school tax will be a significant portion of our yearly budget. And I believe there are a lot of seniors in far worse shape than we are. I never felt like property is the correct way to base how much you can afford. It isn't logical. Why shouldn't the funding of schools be shared by everyone? It is terrible seeing people forced to sell their homes or move because of property taxes. This issue has been kicked down the street for a long time and it's time to address it. Thank you.

Name: Ed W. **City:** Wernersville, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 30, 2023 11:01 AM – 431

Subject: Fully and fairly fund public education

Message: Our education system is in crisis after decades of being underfunded. We need to invest in our children, in our schools, by fully and fairly funding public education. This is the foundation of a healthy society and democracy. I am a teacher and parent who's children attend public school in Delaware County. The district we are in is considered a "good school district" and still our administration is forced to make difficult decisions and cuts to programs, bussing, and expand class sizes because we do not receive the funding from the state that our children deserve. Every child should have access to a quality education and that is only possible with the money to fund it. For too long the government has relied on the unpaid labor of teachers and parent teacher organizations to fill in the gaps where there isn't enough money. It's time to pay up!

Name: Sarah M. **City:** Ardmore, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 30, 2023 12:19 PM – 432

Subject: Stop Funding Schools With Property Tax !

Message: Please Stop Funding Schools with Property Tax. This process robs people of their Right To Own Property. It steals a person's home, especially after they retire, and can no longer afford the ever increasing "Blood Money". It is a Protection Racket of the worst kind. It is totally Regressive, to charge people more, every year, if they have a nice home. It is discriminatory to people in the Home Building and Remodeling industry. It also allows a Pork Barrell free for all in all parts of school renovation/construction. STOP FUNDING SCHOOLS WITH PROPERTY TAX !

Name: Brian Z. **City:** Lower Burrell, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 30, 2023 1:33 PM – 433

Subject: Property taxation

Message: Shelter is a basic necessity of life. So is water, so is fresh foods. You don't tax the last two. Taxation on real estate has become a runaway train, for everyone. Rents have grown ridiculous, new families can't afford to start here. Elderly live in poverty to pay more and more to the schools. Make a common sense decision, find funding based on a fairer source, or sources. Leave basic human necessities alone!

Name: Rodney H. **City:** Dover, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 30, 2023 3:28 PM – 434

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: As a PA citizen and POWER advocate, I strongly support Fair Funding for every district; every child in our state.

Name: Ann B. **City:** Exton, PA

Sent: Saturday, September 30, 2023 9:43 PM – 435

Subject: SWSD Meeting

Message: Senator Hughes I would like to point out that while our buildings are beautiful it is a huge burden on our taxpayers. Dr. Burkhart mentioned that our high school renovation will cost \$68 million dollars. This is due to an increased need but also unnecessary cost that our school board approved. For instance, our school board approved to raise the roof in the cafeteria for "natural sunlight" at the cost of \$900,000 to the taxpayers. Our high school renovation will increase school taxes on a \$200,000 home \$575 per year over the next 6 years per school board member Matt G. As Dr. Burkhart stated we renovate our schools in SWSD on an average every 25 years. So basically, SWSD school taxes will force me to move due to the cost of school taxes. We

are a one income home living in a \$375K home and our school taxes cost \$6300 per year. SWSD school board increases our school taxes as much as possible each year which averages \$200 per year. School taxes are a burden to every resident in Pennsylvania. Imagine the economic growth we could have with school tax elimination. I would also like to address Cyber Charter schools. I have a friend that has a child in cyber charter school. Why are my school taxes paying for their internet and their child's swim classes. Love seeing their post "when am I getting my check." I can't afford those activities for my child because we pay an outrageous amount of school taxes. It is your responsibility to get cyber charter schools funding under control and have oversight of the schools as well. Please one other notes... this is a serious matter and while I appreciate all the time you are spending on this matter. Please take the time to seriously consider the information that was sent to you addressing HB13. School Tax Elimination is the only option for us to remain in Pennsylvania.

Name: Kimberly M. **City:** Hanover, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 1, 2023 5:26 PM – 436

Subject: Full and equitable education funding

Message: Dear funding commission, The "hold-harmless" policy in Pennsylvania's current basic education funding perpetuates funding inequities between school districts because it locks in funding distributions from prior years, before the fair funding formula was implemented. As a result, Pennsylvania's current educational funding system is an example of institutional racism: More than 75% of Black and Hispanic students are in under-funded districts. Currently, only about 12% of funds go through the fair funding formula. Please phase out the hold harmless policy, boost the state's share of funding to lessen the dependence on property taxes and accelerate a fair and equitable funding solution.

Name: Chris S. **City:** Havertown, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 1, 2023 5:36 PM – 437

Subject: Fair Funding For All

Message: To Whom it May Concern, For many many years this problem has been going on. A equitable way of funding the schools is in the best interests of the schools and the taxpayers. I have heard many excuses but the biggest one is the taxation of retirement. Do you realize that many people pay their taxes with their Social Security and their retirement benefits anyway. I have seen myself and witnessed good people getting tossed from their homes because of the struggles paying for school taxes. They had children. Try explaining to a child they are losing their family home. Many younger generation people cannot afford a home because when they get that escrow total it puts it as unaffordable. I'm hoping that you consider a bill that both builds equity in the funding of schools and eliminates all the school debt and at the same time protects the family home. HB13 or whatever number it will take on is a very good way to start. Let's save our state and get rid of this ancient way of taxation and stand out above other states as the best state to live in. Thank you for your time.

Name: Barry M. **City:** Mountville, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 1, 2023 5:50 PM – 438

Subject: Fair Funding NOW

Message: "It would seem to be humiliating to be under the necessity, in the nineteenth century, of entering into a formal argument to prove the utility, and to free Governments, the absolute necessity of education." -Thaddeus Stevens, 1835 Read his full speech (https://collections.lancasterhistory.org/media/library/docs/famous_speech_of_Hon_Thaddeus_Stevens-1904_edition.pdf) because his nearly 200-year-old argument still rings true today. In order for all students to be best positioned to serve and enrich the Commonwealth in the future, free public education- of high quality- must be accessible to them. The current state of funding in PA does not allow for these conditions to be met, and a legal decision reinforced what district budgets make abjectly clear. When Thaddeus Stevens made his speech in the PARK House of Representatives, many of his fellow elected officials planned to vote against free public education, and his speech recalled them to their duty as leaders of ALL members of the Commonwealth. You have the chance to be strong leaders too, if you are courageous enough to do so. The fair funding formula should apply to all funds, not just a tiny percent. Do right by all students as if they were your own children. The future of our Commonwealth depends upon your ability to understand the humanity of all children and the fact that they deserve an equitable investment of PA's resources.

Name: Tara R. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 1, 2023 8:26 PM – 439

Subject: School funding

Message: Please increase school funding in a fair and equitable way.

Name: Patty B. **City:** Bala Cynwyd, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 1, 2023 8:43 PM – 440

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: Please support fair funding of our public schools in PA because all students should receive an equally funded education!

Name: Beth C. **City:** Ardmore, PA

Sent: Monday, October 2, 2023 7:46 PM – 441

Subject: Equitable funding for PA Public Education

Message: PA is 50th!!!! in educational disparities between white students and students of color leading to one of the nation's worst achievement gaps. <https://www.researchforaction.org/educational-opportunity-dashboard/> We need fair STATE funding that is equitably distributed throughout the state and is not dependent on the wealth of those surrounding the schools.

Name: Abby G. **City:** Havertown, PA

Sent: Monday, October 2, 2023 8:45 PM – 442

Subject: Property Taxes

Message: I am writing to see the status of property tax reform. When will Pennsylvania homeowners truly own our homes and this illegal tax be removed? Thank you for your response to this question.

Name: Kimberly L. **City:** Sinking Spring, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 12:58 PM – 443

Subject: high quality public education for every student

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC, I'm a parent, taxpayer, and school board member in Pottstown School District. Last week I shared some remarks a local event where members of the public shared about the importance of full and fair funding for all PA students. I spoke about how the recent increase in Level Up and other funding has made a material impact for our PSD students, and I wanted to share those remarks with you: I'm here tonight to share the Pottstown Story of how increased education funding has made a difference in the life of our students, their families, and our community. First, a bit of background on how Pottstown has been affected by Pennsylvania education funding decisions: Over the past 3 decades, Pottstown and other low wealth school districts have suffered from a remarkable level of disinvestment and underinvestment from Harrisburg. As has already been shared, this has resulted in huge funding disparities between school districts, and our students and community have been among those deeply harmed. This resulted in Pennsylvania having the widest funding gap in the nation when you compare per student spending between wealthy and poor districts. To say that another way, when you look at what PA spends on low income students and what it spends on high income students, the low income students get far, far less than their wealthier peers... a bigger spending gap than any other state. These funding gaps have also resulted in clear racial disparities in per student funding, with black and brown students consistently the most underfunded. The years of under-investment from Harrisburg resulted in a huge gap between what our students needed and what the school district could provide. Here in Pottstown, the school district did what it could to compensate for the lack of funding from Harrisburg by raising LOCAL property taxes until we had the 5th highest property tax burden in the state. The taxes were raised to try to help preserve as much educational opportunity as possible, but that wasn't enough to stop major cuts. The underfunding affected the whole district- for example, music and foreign language classes were removed from the middle school, there was chronic underinvestment in curriculum, school counselor positions were cut, over 30 non-professional staff positions were lost, And for many years we were unable to offer our teachers competitive salaries. On top of all that, we had to defer millions of dollars of maintenance on our facilities. I make a point of noting these particular examples because I think we sometimes get used to the way things are. When my now-8th-grader entered kindergarten in 2015, most of these cuts had already taken place. In essence, being under-resourced can begin to just feel normal... that is until we look at pretty much any one of our neighboring school districts and see the difference. And our students do see it- particularly when visiting these schools for athletics or other events. It is troubling when I hear them notice the disparity and ask why they deserve fewer opportunities than their wealthier peers. One additional bit of context- It's so important to note that study after study has shown that all students, including students in poverty, can learn when they are provided with the consistent educational resources and support they need. And when these students have high quality schooling, they are more likely to become adults who are successful in their careers and who are stable, healthy members of their communities. So that's a bit of background. And now I want to share where we are now. Over the past few years we in Pottstown have seen an increase in education funding that has helped us make real progress towards providing our students with the education they need and deserve. Part of that increase is from one-time pandemic relief funding. But The other part of that increase is a permanent boost in state support through basic education and Level-Up funding. Now, it's nowhere near where we need to be - we are STILL shortchanged about \$3,000 per student each

year, but it has been significant nonetheless. We have used these new resources to reinvest in four important areas- facilities, personnel, programming, and local tax relief. For facilities, we have been catching up on that deferred maintenance. This includes fixing roofing and plumbing, as well as asbestos remediation. We have made improvements to our special education spaces including rooms for our youngest autistic support students and our high school life skills students, who were learning in a space that hadn't been updated in decades. On the personnel side of things we have been able to increase teacher and staff pay, make it more equitable, and hire for new positions. We now have School Counselors and Instructional Coaches in every building as well as a Home-School Visitor and a Social Worker to help with student attendance and other needs our families have. In terms of programming, we have been able to invest in significantly more effective curriculum and accompanying resources and teacher training. We can now provide computer programs that can give our students targeted practice in the areas they need to work on. We have added co-curricular programs and educational trips; and we have strengthened a number of our existing programs including art, physical education, PreK, and Career and Technical Education. Finally, taxes. We have been able to hold taxes steady for the last 4 years and this year were able to begin the process of providing tax relief, with a \$89 tax credit on each property tax bill. There is much more investment to be made in each of those 4 areas, but progress is progress and it is bringing real RESULTS for our students and their families. I'm going wrap it up by sharing a few specific examples of those results At the elementary level we are seeing students make great progress in their reading. Last year we saw as many as 80% of them grow a grade level or MORE in their reading ability, ... and this is particularly important when so many students arrive at our doors already behind- the more we can do to help them become proficient in these skills when they are young, the more we set them up for future success. At the middle school - we were able to implement the house model, providing for greater academic and social-emotional support. This has resulted in improved school culture and a 30% reduction in physical altercations compared to the previous year. And at the high school, we have a predicted graduation rate of over 80% for this past school year. That will be our highest in 10 years. I've got to tell you- I am deeply encouraged by the progress we've been able to make. If we can do that with just a portion of the fair funding our students are due, imagine what we can do if we get full and fair funding each year. The message to me is clear- Our schools work and our children learn when they are provided with the resources and support they need. The school district will continue to do all we can with the funding we have... but we need the commonwealth to do it's court-ordered part- We need the Basic Education Funding Commission and the PA Legislature to close the funding gap. They must fulfill their moral and constitutional duty to fully and fairly fund our students and provide for the high quality education they deserve.

Name: Laura J. **City:** Pottstown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 2:18 PM – 444

Subject: Special/Funding

Message: Low funding for Special Education have detrimental effects on both students with special needs and the overall academic system. It often results in larger class sizes, reduced access to specialized support, outdated resources, and inadequate training for educators. This can hinder the progress and well-being of students with special needs and negatively impact academic outcomes, perpetuating educational inequalities. My child has regressed because of this issue.

Name: Ruby C. **City:** Allentown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 2:30 PM – 445

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: Greetings. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments about the Basic Ed Funding Commission. it is imperative that the Commission complete its work to provide all districts in the Commonwealth with their fair and equitable share of state funding. Wyoming Area is in desperate need of this new formula. While we have been able to maintain a sustainable fund balance and keep our budgets balanced, we have not been able to implement a successful systematic maintenance program to address the enviable high cost repairs for roofs, doors/windows, HVAC, athletic equipment, athletics fields, district owned vehicles, etc. With the updated formula and the addition \$6 million that would become available, we would be able to start a systematic program to address these needs. Our current process of holding out the last possible moment and borrowing money to complete these projects is not sustainable. In addition, we are constantly performing other finical transactions to refinance/consolidate our previous debts, which generates more administrative fees and interest that reduce the district's fiscal efficiency. With an equitable basic education funding stream, we can also provide the instructional resources and materials to more effectively instruct our students, especially those with language barriers and learning difficulties.

Name: Jon P. **City:** Exeter, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 3, 2023 6:45 PM – 446

Subject: Distribution, not Taxation

Message: As far as school taxes and funding for public schools, there seems to be a vocal few who demand that taxes paid in a school district only pay for schools in that district. That bodes well for wealthy school districts, but does nothing to help poor districts, such as Philadelphia. In poor districts, such as Philadelphia, there is little tax revenue, because relatively few people are gainfully employed and relatively few people own valuable property for property taxes. Thus, if schools there are funded only by taxes from there, those schools will never improve – they will be stuck in a forever cycle of poverty. (Education is the way out of poverty, but if they can never get out of poverty, they can never get educated – it is a “vicious circle”.) I am proposing that funding for public schools should be collected from school districts as it is now, but then be distributed differently- as needed. That means it may be collected from one district and distributed to a different district, where needed. There are enough funds across the state to fund all school districts. We don’t need to raise taxes. We certainly don’t want to cut taxes, such as property taxes. (I am a taxpayer.) In short, it is not a taxation problem, it is a distribution problem.

Name: Dean M. **City:** Collegeville, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 4, 2023 5:20 AM – 447

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: It's time to eliminate the school property tax. It is an unfair and out-of-date way to fund our schools. There is an undue burden on seniors, the disabled, and those who live on a fixed income. Throwing more money at the public school system is not going to fix the problems. HB13 provides a fairer way to fund the public school system by spreading the cost further. No tax should leave someone homeless. Eliminate the school property tax!!

Name: Elizabeth F. **City:** Schwenksville, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 4, 2023 12:03 PM – 448

Subject: Property taxes

Message: To whom it may concern: In another year I should be retiring but I won't. I can't afford the taxes on my little 952 sq foot house in Chester County at over \$4000 a year. In the last 10 years they went up \$1,000. My mortgage keeps going up. School taxes are unfair when placed on the homeowners. I stand behind the plan that was formally HB 13 where everyone pays their fair share. People shouldn't lose their houses because of an unfair tax.. Why does the school board feel this is ok? Please, work with the people, before we all leave the state.

Name: Mary B. **City:** Coatesville, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 4, 2023 12:09 PM – 449

Subject: Property Tax

Message: Hello, Please support the HB13 for fair school funding! We are a retired couple and our taxes are over 7k yearly! Inflation and these taxes are taking a big chunk of our funds. Our area has high school taxes and some districts use the high taxes to keep low income individuals from buying homes in the district! Should be no “country club” districts. There is too much dependence on property tax in their budgets. HB 13 addresses these issues. No student should be denied a great education based on their zip code! Funding must be inclusive of everyone not just property owners! Thank you! Cindy Coots Other states have seniors exempt from property tax over age 65.

Name: Cindy C. **City:** Elverson, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 4, 2023 12:25 PM – 450

Subject: Human right to be secure in our home

Message: Please save our home. This is not feudal Europe of the 1600's! Our founders did not intend for private homes, our GREATEST asset to be stolen for taxes. Save our homes! It's the American thing to do. Protect our Republic. Sincerely, a disabled cancer survivor and vet too.

Name: Daniel M. **City:** Carlisle, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 4, 2023 12:44 PM – 451

Subject: School property taxes

Message: Taxes need to be fair. Seniors should not lose their homes that are paid for because they cannot afford this. There are more fair ways to do this but Pennsylvania seems to be a tax me state to death. There are bills for consideration that politicians act like they are for but when elected, do nothing.

Name: Annette L. **City:** Spring Grove, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 4, 2023 1:34 PM – 452

Subject: its hurts everyone

Message: Most racist don't see that racism hurts them the most because for every racist practice within our system including unfair education funding you don't benefit because on the front end it looks like you benefit but on the back end you pay dearly because instead of everyone having a better quality of life and everyone's rising to their most best self in our American system one group rises faster but pays for the other group just due to the fact that they feel like they're more superior based off of the color of their skin but not realizing it if you paid attention to any other studies JP Morgan did a study about how racism affects our whole economy and then in this study it basically said that if we weren't racist we would be better off so people who practice economic racism as systematic racism you don't pay up front but you always pay in the back end so instead of having lower taxes now you have higher taxes now you have more problems and you don't live the way you want all because you don't want to educate to have fair education funding.

Name: Angela O. **City:** Chester, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 4, 2023 2:39 PM – 453

Subject: Property taxes

Message: The property tax needs to be replaced with a fairer tax. Increase the States sales tax. No tax should have the power to make a person homeless. You work all of your life and pay off the mortgage and you still have to pay property taxes! Plus when you have your home confiscated you lose all of your equity!

Name: David F. **City:** Camp Hill, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 4, 2023 4:26 PM – 454

Subject: measuring effect of school funding

Message: Hello As you consider a way to measure the benefit of equal school funding for all, please look at more than just test scores. Among other things, look at things like graduation rates, job training, ongoing education, development of creativity and interest in pursuing creation of their own business, understanding of business/money/how the world works. I am a parent and teacher. I know there is more to education than test scores.

Name: M. J. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 4, 2023 5:44 PM – 455

Subject: Equitable education for all

Message: I am a grandmother and member of Christ church and supporter/member of POWER interfaith. I urge the commission to: Listen to the public! Develop a system to fully and fairly fund all public schools Complete the work of the commission by December 2023. And constitutional, equitable and good school system by 2024. There never has been an equitable public school system in Philadelphia in the sixty years I have lived here. It is time to change!

Name: Lucille P. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 4, 2023 5:52 PM – 456

Subject: Funding for Special Education Materials

Message: Hello, I am a high school life skills teacher at Strawberry Mansion in the School District of Philadelphia. I am writing to advocate for a PA life skills curriculum with adequate materials, including workbooks and manipulatives. With wide ranging abilities in this type of classroom, the planning and creating is endless. Many of my students can only learn with visuals and manipulatives that I am forced to create or buy myself. I am also advocating for including a stipend for community based instruction, as I also dig into my own pockets for food and materials to cook and create DIY projects to create independence in future living. Of course this proposal takes money, which I know can be made available. However, since I know this will not be the case, I am proposing a bill that holds school districts accountable in how much they allocate to special education. Thank you for your time.

Name: Kaitlin M. **City:** Thorndale, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 4, 2023 7:46 PM – 457

Subject: Equitable Funding for PA Schools

Message: I am both a teacher and parent of a graduate with Philadelphia Public Schools. I love the school I work at, and my child received a solid, academic education at SDP schools. However, there are some alarming gaps and inequities: 1) Both my child and myself were exposed to asbestos while in SDP schools. This is unconscionable! A lack of funding is putting the health of PA citizens at risk. 2) My child had to take Spanish and Algebra as part of "enrichment" and "pullout" groups because there

was not adequate funding to pay a full-time, middle grade teacher. Some schools cannot even offer this; meaning, many kids are not getting the same level of basic education as kids in other schools and neighborhoods. 3) My child—and my students—had/have no access to libraries, comprehensive art and music education, adequate academic counseling, and so much more. These are just a few examples, but the list of inequities far, far longer. It is time for PA to do right by all of it's children, not just those in affluent neighborhoods. The lawsuit has proven the need for this, and PA parents and educators are demanding fair and equitable for the kids we care about. Please prove that you care about them too!!!

Name: Kathleen B. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 4, 2023 8:15 PM – 458

Subject: Urging a Plan that Addresses Underfunded Schools and Ensures Every Child a Chance

Message: I am a parent of a current second grader and an incoming kindergartener (2024-25) in our Pennsylvania public schools. I am writing today to urge you to produce a plan that will close the resource gap between high wealth and low wealth districts, whether they are urban or rural, and provide all students with a high quality public education. Every child deserves an opportunity to succeed in our nation. However, in our schools, we see the stark reality facing our students based on where they live, especially rural and urban students. We are next to the suburban school districts with multiple specials, AP classes, test prep, and after school activities while our schools can't afford to offer basic algebra or Spanish let alone AP classes. Our schools also face environmental hazards that are dangerous for our kids. We have a loving community that has organized around our kids, but our efforts can only go so far in the face of unfair funding. I urge you to develop a plan that will ensure every student gets a fair opportunity to succeed in their education.

Name: Alyssa S. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 5, 2023 10:55 AM – 459

Subject: Property tax

Message: This tax is an unfair tax and should be replaced with a fair tax.

Name: Elaine S. **City:** Robesonia, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 5, 2023 1:21 PM – 460

Subject: PA school funding / property tax opinion

Message: In a world that now cancels student debt - it's a no brainer to cancel school property taxes for seniors. After paying \$\$\$\$ in school property taxes over decades, such seniors should be exempt status. Every year over many years, the Methacton School District has raised taxes and plays shell games, sitting on millions \$\$\$ in surplus. All the while enrollment and school rankings have steadily declined. The current system is archaic, unfair, and now unconstitutional. The property tax rebate program is a token program that does not provide meaningful or much deserved relief to seniors who have contributed so much and no longer are consumers of the public education system.

Name: Andrea G. **City:** Audubon, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 5, 2023 2:59 PM – 461

Subject: Unfair resource gaps between districts needs to be addressed

Message: I am a CASA and in my experiences advocating for foster care students I have noted the differences between school districts. Some districts have academic and behavioral specialists, social workers, mental health resources and specialized programs available to assist foster care students who are in need of additional support and other districts are struggling to simply supply basic education to their students. I am calling for the commission to produce a plan that will close the resource gap between high wealth and low wealth districts and provide all students with a high quality public education. All students deserve a quality education regardless of their zip code.

Name: Alina K. **City:** Douglassville, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 5, 2023 4:20 PM – 462

Subject: Stay Focused On the Who

Message: I am writing to urge you to stay focused on our children, all children in PA, who deserve the same opportunities for success regardless of the home they happened to be born in. It is the right thing to do for them, our communities, our state and our country. If we truly value human dignity, we cannot sit by while populations of our children get stuck in generational poverty and lack of hope. Not just for them, but for our democracy. There is no way to keep a true democracy without an educated population, its time to ensure that our entire population gets this opportunity. How much stronger will our nation be when we lift up all people, giving all of the talents they bring a chance to thrive. If we truly believe in the value of people, we

must invest in their education, and if we truly value democracy, we must invest in their education. Fix the inequitable distribution of our education system and everyone benefits.

Name: Michael J. **City:** Pottstown, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 5, 2023 5:08 PM – 463

Subject: The Declaration of Independence

Message: People have been debating which rights are natural rights for hundreds of years. John Locke was an English philosopher who had a major influence on the thinking of the founding fathers of the United States, Thomas Jefferson and James Madison included. Life: everyone is entitled to live. Liberty: everyone is free to live their life as they see fit provided, they do not infringe on the rights of others. Estate or property: everyone is entitled to own all they create or gain through gift or trade, so long as they do not profit by infringing on the rights of others. We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. --That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their Safety and Happiness. - Excerpt from The Declaration of Independence

Name: Kim M. **City:** Hanover, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 5, 2023 8:16 PM – 464

Subject: Request to Testify

Message: Dear Chairpersons , I am a member of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group. We are passionate advocates for the School Property Tax Elimination Act. Our primary objective is to engage in a meaningful dialogue about a more equitable approach to funding education, one that removes dependence on local property taxes. We firmly believe that our proposed solution has the potential to effectively address numerous concerns highlighted by the recent Commonwealth Court Order and the ongoing discussions at the BEFC hearings. Moreover, we consider our proposal as a crucial step toward establishing a constitutionally sound education funding system. I am writing to formally request the opportunity for a panel of our distinguished members to provide testimony during an upcoming session of the Basic Education Funding Commission (BEFC) hearings.

Name: Ron S. **City:** Williamsport, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 5, 2023 10:47 PM – 465

Subject: Education Funding

Message: All students deserve a good education that is not dictated by where they happen to live. PA needs a more equitable system for funding education statewide.

Name: Rosalind B. **City:** Narberth, PA

Sent: Friday, October 6, 2023 10:56 AM – 466

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: As has been recognized, PA's education funding has been ruled unconstitutional because it shortchanges school districts that predominantly educate Black and Latinx students. It is essential that a more equitable funding system is created, one that provides GREATER funding for those districts that have been historically underfunded for decades and which suffer the systemic impacts of poverty, leaving these districts in need of a greater amount of funding beyond that of the other districts not facing ongoing systemic disadvantages (including a lack of neighborhood resources like safe spaces to walk/play, grocery stores to access healthy food, organizations to hire folks for decent jobs, etc.). This is why equitable (rather than 'equal') funding is necessary for those underfunded schools. Thank you!

Name: Krista M. **City:** Ardmore, PA

Sent: Friday, October 6, 2023 11:55 AM – 467

Subject: Fair and full funding

Message: Please do not become distracted by tactics that are being used to discredit and demoralize public education. These include attacks on books, literature, and the character and competency of public educators to make educated, age-appropriate decisions about material access for students. My sons have graduated from or attend Warwick schools. I asked my high school senior if he had heard of the books under public attack by certain lawmakers. He had not even heard of the books! The issue is

a red herring to distract the public from YOUR real public duty to enact full and fair funding for public schools. I want every school and every student to have access to a high quality pre-K thru 12 education that is not predicated on ones zip code, skin color, or economic status (as the present system does). Please complete your work by the end of this year and include a plan for legislation that can pass both chambers that will finally enact full and fair funding by the 2024-25 school year.

Name: Matthew L. **City:** Lititz, PA

Sent: Friday, October 6, 2023 1:35 PM – 468

Subject: Fair Funding for Pennsylvania Schools

Message: I am a concerned resident of Pennsylvania who has been involved with bringing the disparity in funding of Pennsylvania schools to light. In actively gathering information of how the pa educational budget is allocated, I was appalled at how some school districts offered free lunch while others didn't have enough desks! I hope this committee will make the necessary changes to ensure our students receive a comparable education. All Pennsylvania students deserve this from their state government.

Name: Inge H. **City:** Lafayette Hill, PA

Sent: Friday, October 6, 2023 2:50 PM – 469

Subject: Public School Funding

Message: Dear Distinguished members of the BEFC, By now you all may recognize my name as I've contacted you previously. Let me give you a little background about myself. I have been and will continue to be an advocate of School Property Tax Elimination. I have also been a School Board Director for the past 8 years. I am a director in a very rural area of Pennsylvania and I have seen, during that time, and in my lifetime the impact that School Property Taxes have had on property owners. In my district of Montoursville Area School District there is no big industry or huge shopping centers. We do have mom and pop stores and a few small manufacturing businesses but the majority of our local revenue comes from private property owners. Homes where the children that attend our schools live. Homes where our elderly on fixed incomes live. Homes where our young families that are trying to keep a foothold in our community live. The constant increasing of School Property taxes is making that more and more difficult every year. I am against constantly raising property taxes because I see the effect on people and I feel there is a better way to fund our public schools at the local level. I feel that way would be the School Property Tax Elimination Act. It would be a way that EVERYONE would be contributing to the education of our youth. It would also be a way that the overall majority of Pennsylvanians would benefit the first year and the few that don't would benefit the following years due to the ever increasing property taxes currently. The other benefits would be the local revenue would stay under local control and it would satisfy the decision brought down by the court saying that there is too much reliance on property taxes to fund our schools. Lastly I would like to say that I am hopeful that you approve my request to have members of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group testify before your commission so that you can get a better understanding of our plan. Thank you for this piece of your valuable time.

Name: Ron S. **City:** Williamsport, PA

Sent: Friday, October 6, 2023 6:19 PM – 470

Subject: School funding

Message: Every child deserves a quality education. It should not matter where you live. Depending on property taxes and school PTAs makes for an extraordinarily inequitable education system. I am a Physical Therapist in a preschool for the children with the greatest challenges in all areas of development and have kids from Philadelphia up through lower to mid Bucks County. It is so sad to see the difference in supports the children receive depending on which school district they go to after they leave our Easter seals.

Name: Melody K. **City:** Langhorne, PA

Sent: Saturday, October 7, 2023 11:12 AM – 471

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: Dear members of Basic Education Funding Commission. I am a citizen living in West Chester, PA. I belong to POWER Interfaith. I am writing to encourage equal allocation of dollars to PA school students. I encourage you develop a system for fully and fairly funding all PA public schools that will provide excellent education opportunities to ALL PA students regardless of zip code, color or family financial status. Also, do not let bureaucracy bog down the process--Complete the work of the commission by December 2023. Have a constitutional, equitable, adequate school funding system in place for the 2024 school year. Thank you for addressing this issue fairly & promptly.

Name: Gerard G. **City:** West Chester, PA

Sent: Saturday, October 7, 2023 3:47 PM – 472

Subject: Please pass a fair funding formula

Message: We all know that Commonwealth Court has declared our school funding system to be unconstitutional BECAUSE IT DISCRIMINATES AGAINST LOW-WEALTH DISTRICTS. But that decision will be meaningless unless the Legislature enacts a new funding formula that will allow more funding to go to those underfunded districts. Please pass a formula that provides adequate resources, distributes them equitably, and ensures a reasonable timeline. I want full and fair funding because I don't want Black and Brown students to graduate without a good education. I am a parent and I care about racial justice.

Name: Kay L. **City:** Pequea, PA

Sent: Saturday, October 7, 2023 5:08 PM

Subject: Property Tax Elimination – 473

Message: Home ownership is the domestic glue that keeps families goal oriented, motivates the bread winners of the household to strive for that accomplishment, that dream, that trophy at the end of their occupational careers. The toil and trouble of budget battles of 40 years gives life a little more meaning. Affords their children the leverage for a good education. HB 13 can be the foundation of that aspiration. The Taxpayers of the commonwealth need your support, now is the time to make a difference and be "OUR HEROS !" Support HB13.

Name: Byron S. **City:** Lehighton, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 8, 2023 8:49 AM – 474

Subject: How Basic Education in Allegheny County is impacted by Concentrated Poverty

Message: When we talk about underfunded school districts in Pennsylvania I am baffled as to why the subjects of concentrated poverty and or economic segregation are never a subject of meaningful discussion and debate. Specifically I refer to the fact the overwhelming population of poor and underprivileged children live in public housing that is concentrated in a dozen communities that face major societal problems on a daily basis. Yet no one proposes a solution to a problem that has existed in Allegheny County for over 50 years. The prosperous and affluent school districts and communities do not think that they should be a part of the discussion and solution. It is time for a frank and honest discussion about the concentrated poverty issues I have raised. I look forward to hearing from the basic education committee about their response to my testimony.

Name: Nick K. **City:** Cranberry Township, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 8, 2023 6:38 PM – 475

Subject: 10-5-23 meeting

Message: Addressing Mrs. Phillips-Hill comment to Mr. Kelly around 1:40 Mrs. Phillips-Hill commented to Mr. Kelly stating "last week this commission sat in a board room that was adequate, very basic, very minimal but in a district that was financially sound. This comment was referencing Southwestern School district meeting in Hanover, PA. PLEASE understand the taxpayers of Southwestern School district are spent. We are taxes to the maximum each year and homeowners are struggling and moving out of the district. Our schools are beautifully due to a board that hasn't cared about the expense that comes to the homeowners. School Tax Elimination No Level Up program

Name: Kim M. **City:** Hanover, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 8, 2023 8:00 PM – 476

Subject: School Taxes

Message: I know you know the hardship placed on homeowners by school taxes. The way you are funding schools is unfair and I'm glad a judge agrees and found that the way the state funds schools is unconstitutional. NO TAX should have the ability to make you homeless, yet this is what is happening to over 10,000 families a year. These are public schools so they should be funded 100% by the state, not homeowners. If you eliminate school taxes people will have more money to spend, which will have a positive impact on our economy and will create tax revenue. We will be able to make improvements to our homes, buy cars, food, etc. In turn it will make the state a better state to move to and our young families will also stay. This will create more jobs which will create a larger tax revenue. I read an article that a man purchased fifty-eight properties in Luzerne County from a tax auction, how is this even legal? Where else can you lose your home due to only the inability to afford these ever-rising school taxes, Pennsylvania, that's where! This is shameful, now is the time to correct this unconstitutional way you fund schools!

Name: Jennifer S. **City:** Mohnton, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 7:08 AM – 477

Subject: EQUAL EQUATIONS FOR EQUAL FUNDING

Message: Charter and Cyber Schools have different equations than true public schools. Public schools in PA have too many objectives and special interests they can use for their By adding other cost deductions not granted to true public schools, we will never be able to make the starting point fair across the state.

Name: Joanne B. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 10:17 AM – 478

Subject: Closing the adequacy gap in education

Message: Please work to determine the required amount of funding to close the adequacy gap, and then ensure it gets priority in the state budget. Philadelphia schools have been grossly underfunded for years; this furthers systemic racism, evident in the facility needs (from building safety to lack of playgrounds), lack of teachers of color to represent our students, the need for smaller classes for students who deserve more, and to eliminate the unfair practice of "leveling." I'm including a quote from Dr. Watlington's recent letter to address this unfair practice: "Unfortunately, the solution is not as easy as keeping the teacher at School A and hiring another for School B. The School District of Philadelphia, like other economically disadvantaged urban and rural districts across Pennsylvania, has been systematically underfunded for decades. Underfunding has significant consequences for our schools and students, particularly the ability to recruit, hire and onboard high quality teachers as quickly as we would like."

Name: Katie C. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 10:43 AM – 479

Subject: We Need Funding For Educator Diversity

Message: My story, I worked in a public school for over a decade that had a very high teacher turnover rate. The school had a 99% student-of-color rate to a 99% young White teaching staff rate. Therefore, families, students, and educators suffered because we lacked balance in the hiring process and teaching staffing due to inadequate salaries, and professional development funding. The ability to pay teachers salaries comparable to their work experience would allow the hiring of seasoned teachers of color more in line with the student body. Please feel free to reach out to me if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Name: Linda W. **City:** Sewickley, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 11:34 AM – 480

Subject: SCHOOL NURSE CONCERNED

Message: Certified School Nurses are concerned about our student's health and well-being. "You cannot educate a child who is not healthy, and you cannot keep a child healthy who is not educated." Jocelyn Elders The reimbursement rate for providing health services cannot possibly ensure that we can meet the demands of our student's needs. Please consider this when you are allocating funds ! Please see the rates of reimbursement below: The Pennsylvania Department of Health, through Appropriation 654, provides reimbursement for state mandated school health services, as specified by law.* MEDICAL SERVICES: \$1.60 x ADM (Average Daily Membership) or certified costs, whichever is less. Certified reimbursement costs include payment to school physicians, salaries of supplemental health staff, payment for specific examinations, and cost of medical supplies/equipment necessary to carry out the mandated medical services program. DENTAL SERVICES: (Mandated Dental Program or Dental Hygiene Program) Mandated Dental: \$.80 X ADM or certified costs, whichever is less. Certified reimbursement costs include payment to school dentists, salaries of dental assistants, payment for diagnostic, preventive and treatment services, cost of fluoride products, and costs for dental supplies/equipment necessary to carry out the mandated dental services program. OR Dental Hygiene: \$2.00 X number of children served, not to exceed ADM by grade level, or certified costs, whichever is less. Certified reimbursement costs include salaries of dental hygienists, payment for diagnostic, preventive and treatment services, cost of fluoride products, cost of dental health education materials, and cost of dental supplies/equipment necessary to carry out the dental hygiene services program. NURSING SERVICES \$7.00 X ADM or certified costs, whichever is less. Certified reimbursement costs include salaries of the certified school nurses who perform mandated school nursing services (services which include care for ill and injured students, referral and follow-up, mandated screenings, health counseling, maintenance of health records, coordination of the school health program, and health promotion and wellness). Certified costs also include travel mileage reimbursement for certified nurses to perform services. ACT 25 ALLOCATION Act 25 of 1991 provided for an increased allocation to schools through a non-categorical payment to help defer total program costs of the school health program. The Act provides for an additional \$9.70 X ADM to schools. For more information or additional questions, contact: Administrative Officer Division of School Health (717) 787-2390 *References:

Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949, Article XXV, §2505.1 (State Reimbursement for Health Services) Pennsylvania Public School Code of 1949, Article XIV (School Health Services) 28 Pennsylvania Code §§23.1 – 23.87 (Health Services)

Name: Wendy R. **City:** Beaver Falls, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 1:20 PM – 481

Subject: Please do right by our teachers and students

Message: Dear Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a parent of two students in the Lower Merion School District and have worked in nonprofits serving students in Philadelphia for the last seven years. Every day, contrasting the experiences of my own children with those that I serve in my professional capacity reveals the vast inequities across our region and state. One of many inequities I see is in regards to our teacher workforce, and we cannot address inequity in our education system without addressing inequity there. Students in district like Philadelphia do not have access to enough prepared and experienced educators. We also know that studies have shown that students have improved outcomes when they have the opportunity to learn from folks that look like them and have life experiences in common. It's also impactful on a number of measures for white students to have teachers of color. Please consider including specific and targeted investments in initiatives that we know work - like Grow Your Own programs, paid teacher apprenticeships, and strengthened partnerships with Pennsylvania's Historically Black Colleges & Universities - while you formulate recommendations to foster a more equitable educational system in the Commonwealth.

Name: Scott G. **City:** Narberth, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 3:40 PM – 482

Subject: Equitable Funding - Consideration for Public Charter School

Message: As a parent of two public charter school graduates, I urge Commission members to not exclude public charter schools from the fair funding conversations. Charter schools deserve the same funding as their traditional school counterparts. Both of my children were honor students in high school after graduating the public charter school in 8th grade, and both are now honor students in college. I credit the foundation they obtained at the charter school for a good part of their success. Public charter schools should also receive their funding directly from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, not local school districts. The current process makes absolutely no sense, since charter schools are treated like competitors, and often there is often animosity over money, when both entities should be working together in the best interests of students. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: Yolanda S. **City:** Bear Creek Township, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 4:28 PM – 483

Subject: Bear creek charter school

Message: To whom it may concern, My 2 children attend a public charter school. They are getting the education that a parent can ask for. I feel the public charter need to be considered when coming up with a new formula. The public schools are over crowded and at times miss out on music and art due to teachers being out. Our charter school makes sure our children get a well rounded education and I couldn't ask for a better school.

Name: Trisha T. **City:** Wilkes-Barre, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 4:33 PM – 484

Subject: Charter School Funding

Message: Please support charter schools being funded solely by the State so local districts no longer feel threatened by charter schools.

Name: Sarah K. **City:** Mountain Top, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 5:06 PM – 485

Subject: Fair funding in Pennsylvania

Message: I am a 17-year school board director from Brentwood Borough School District in the South Hills of Pittsburgh. I also serve as a director on the Allegheny Intermediate Unit board, and am currently President of Pennsylvania School Board Association. Our district has been underfunded by the state since I began my board service, which at several points has necessitated cuts to program offerings and furloughs of employees. A lot of our budget pressure has come from increased pension contributions, special education costs, and charter and cyber-charter tuition. There have been a number of years where our raising taxes to the index hasn't even covered the increased costs from just those three cost drivers. We were fortunate that we were getting increased funding each year by new monies being run through the BEF formula when that first

started, but it was clear that we would not be in an equitable point of funding for at least 20 years, a whole generation of our students being educated in a known underfunded school district. It is not fair to our students or to the residents of our community that have had to make up the difference through their property taxes. This past year our BEF increased by over 17% which has been very helpful. But that means we have not received those necessary funds in the past, which amounts to millions of dollars that have been made up by our taxing residents of Brentwood. Our district has two elementary buildings over a hundred years old. The cost of renovating both buildings is near the cost of constructing a single new elementary school, which is the course we chose, since 21st-century education is challenging to run effectively in early 20th-century buildings. Ventilation is inadequate in our older buildings, which is a challenge with airborne viruses. There is no PlanCon funding to help us make this major capital investment, so our residents are paying for this through the financing we are required to arrange. But even with the budget pressures we constantly experience, our teachers are doing an amazing job. Our ELA student numbers have increased, but the district has risen to that challenge. We have added a dozen AP classes to the high school curriculum, and have added counselors and improved security of our facilities. We just had a team of students travel to Singapore for the F1-in-schools competition, the only US team selected to attend. Almost 20% of our high school students attend Steel Center CTC, learning skills that could allow them to enter a profession right out of high school. All the issues we experience in Brentwood are also found across our county and across Pennsylvania. The mandated cost increases continue to create extraordinary pressure on our budgets; we are required to make capital improvements without PlanCon funding; districts continue to improve our mental health resources through staffing and programs and make improvements to the safety of their schools with insufficient support for the costs of these initiatives. We need to fully fund our schools to the level where all of Pennsylvania's students will succeed in their education, and not be hindered by the lack of resources in their schools. And we need to fully fund them as quickly as possible.

Name: David S. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 5:12 PM – 486

Subject: School funding legislature

Message: To whom it may concern, Let me begin by introducing myself. My name is Hollianne and I am a mother of a student currently enrolled at Bear Creek Community Charter School. My son is in 1st grade and we have had the most amazing experience within his short, yet ongoing school career. The charter school provides an environment that promotes learning and puts children's needs first. My son is thriving in this educational environment and I count my blessings daily knowing how lucky we are to have access to quality education for him. In addition to the school providing a great education for my son I also take part in the school process by volunteering multiple hours a week within his school. I am writing to emphasize that my child deserves the same funding as a student in a traditional public school. Currently, charter schools are operating with a fraction of the funding public schools receive and yet, in my opinion, are doing a better job educating our PA students. I also encourage you to remove the local school district from the funding process. Charter schools should be funded directly by the state. Please consider the above concerns when rewriting school funding legislation. Thank you, A concerned Charter school parent.

Name: Hollianne P. **City:** Hanover Township, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 5:21 PM – 487

Subject: Charter school funding

Message: My oldest child graduated from the Wilkes Barre area school district and was forced to go to class with cockroaches in a class that his teachers couldn't even remember he was in their class. His 2 younger sisters were lucky enough to get into Bear Creek community charter school. The difference was beyond belief. The whole staff knew them by name the curriculum is light years better than public schools and the school is clean and has everything kids need to learn in a positive environment. When my older daughter graduated from bccs she has been far ahead of the curriculum in the school she's in now, and that is a testament to how good the teachers are at BCCCS. This School and others like it need to be funded from the government that is what we pay taxes for.

Name: Patrick F. **City:** Wilkes-Barre, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 5:22 PM – 488

Subject: Charter school parent

Message: My nine year old daughter attends bears creek charter school, it is the best possible school she could be in other than a private school. She is excited to go to school everyday. The charter schools in Pennsylvania should receive the same funding as the state run schools.

Name: Justin P. **City:** Pittston, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 5:49 PM – 489

Subject: Charter schools

Message: Charter schools need to be included. My son has ADD, he started off in a public school and never should have passed second grade, they were supposed to test him and help him and they did nothing. I am so thankful he was accepted into bear creek community charter school. He is now a freshman in high school, he wouldn't be where he is today without that school. I also believe charter schools should be funded directly by the state instead of through the local school districts.

Name: Margaret M. **City:** Bear Creek Township, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 5:50 PM – 490

Subject: Charter schools should be funded directly by the state.

Message: Mathews (5th grader) My favorite thing about my school is that it's fun! 1- I like how my teachers are energetic and fun to be around. 2- I feel safe and happy there. 3- I like all the activities they have that everyone can participate. Alexander (1st grader) My favorite things about my school is that I get to play and run 1-I feel great when I'm in the school. 2-I like my teachers because they show us stuff that we don't know. 3- I love the food chef Jeff makes. I (mom) personally feel lucky to have my kiddos attend BCCCS. I know now days it's hard to find the village to help raise your children but I can say BCCCS have my back. I've seen other children from family and friends attend public school in Wilkes barre and the Wyoming valley west and their stories are so different from my own, contrary to my friend's 5th grader who doesn't want to go to school and is mostly "sick" my children cry if they can't go to school. As their mom it's the little details and seeing them learn things I was not given the chance (I grew up out of state). I believe my children deserve the same fundings as a student in a traditional public school. I also encourage you to consider removing the local school district from the funding process.

Name: Katherine A. **City:** Edwardsville, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 8:04 PM – 491

Subject: Charter school experience

Message: My son attended bear creek community charter for 9 yrs, 1 mile from our home. K thru 8th grade. He had a fantastic experience in a beautiful environment with exceptional teachers and support staff. With phenomenal facilities and broad exposure to multiple topics, people and places. He has already gone on to exceed in high school. Charter schools are essential, there is no possible way for area schools to accommodate more children or provide all the opportunities that my son was able to have. The fact that the charter school has no vacancies for student positions, and has such a waiting list speaks to the demand for this school. Charter schools have a place in PA, and must be valued accordingly by the state.

Name: Gary N. **City:** Bear Creek Village, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 10:02 PM – 492

Subject: Funding for Bear Creek Community Charter School

Message: Hello, My name is Sally. I am the mother of Gerald (5) and Michael (2). I'm writing to you today because I strongly believe that my sons' charter school should have the same rights to funding as a public school. As a pre-k teacher and assistant teacher at the Wolfpack Early Learning Academy(Wilkes-Barre Area school district) I know that funding for public schools is extremely important. However, I also know that without the funds to Bear Creek Community Charter school my son wouldn't stand a chance to get into the school as I know it would be a great financial burden for myself. My son being in a public pre-k and now in a charter school for kindergarten deserves the same funding as any public school. As a parent and a teacher, I want to make my voice heard and my concerns answered. I thank you for your time and attention on this matter.

Name: Sally S. **City:** Wilkes-Barre, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 10, 2023 10:07 PM – 493

Subject: ALL students deserve fair funding.

Message: I am a Pennsylvania taxpayer and I have extensively researched the need for equitable public school funding in this state. I have worked closely with groups of Pennsylvania educators and parents who have shared with me stories of the blatant inequalities in their school systems. This includes the lack of access to opportunity in underfunded schools compared to well-funded or over-funded schools. As someone who has built a career in data-driven research, I have personally conducted data analysis on this topic and have found that because of the lack of enforcement of the Fair Funding Formula that was created under Act 51 in 2014, school districts in lower-wealth areas with otherwise similar characteristics compared to higher-wealth areas (enrollment size, population, millage rates) are still receiving less money than they are entitled to due to "hold harmless" laws. Though the recent lawsuit rules PA's current funding system unconstitutional and called for reform, it is important to consider the circumstances which have led to the need for reform. All Pennsylvanian children should have the opportunity to

access a quality education, so that they can become engaged citizens and productive members of society who will eventually contribute to our state and country's economy. I am writing to ask the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to formulate a plan which will eliminate these inequities which are detrimental to the education and future of hundreds of thousands students. The plan should equitably allocate resources across school districts, regardless of whether they are low-wealth or high-wealth districts. The current resource gap must be closed in order to best serve our young people. This should always be our goal: to best serve all of Pennsylvania's residents, and it is especially important when it involves literally investing in our children's futures. Thank you for your time and for your commitment to furthering equitable education in Pennsylvania.

Name: Alex B. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2023 6:30 AM – 494

Subject: Funding public charter schools

Message: Our local Bear Creer Public Charter school is one of the best in the area and deserves all the help that any other school is entitled to. Our children are entitled to the same funding as a student in a traditional public school. Charter schools should be funded directly by the state.

Name: Hubert S. **City:** Wilkes-Barre, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2023 8:49 AM – 495

Subject: Charter Schools deserve direct funding

Message: My son currently attends a Public Charter School, Bear Creek Charter to be exact. This is the only school he knows, as he started in Kindergarten with this school and does not plan on leaving until he's moving to a further grade level. The charter school has had an amazing impact on my child, his education, and his personal development. Unlike most public schools, the charter school goes above and beyond for their students. They teach more than the traditional core classes which helps all of the students become well rounded members of society. They teach our students how to be productive and positive members of the community in a variety of ways. Our students deserve the same amount of funding as any other public school, if not, they deserve it more due to the amount of effort these teachers and school board members put forth for their students and faculty. This is not a tradition public school and that's what makes it so much better for students. Charter schools should be funded directly from the state, there should be no middle man or other schools that get the money first. We should have equal right to the funding available for our children and their education. Not only has this charter school influenced my child, they have a lot influenced us as parents. They are always doing things that actively involve the parents, they have programs and organizations that specifically promote parental involvement. I believe this charter school, and many others within the state of Pennsylvania, deserve the same support and funding as any other public school. At the end of the day, public schools (at least in my area) are very run down, not well kept, have very poor curriculums, and allow down right terrible behaviors from their students yet the charter school in my area, is the exact opposite. They are upholding the highest standards for not only the school but for every student enrolled. We need more charter schools, not less funding

Name: Victoria L. **City:** White Haven, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2023 9:32 AM – 496

Subject: School T ax

Message: It's time to change the source of funding for education to eliminate home owners forced to pay school tax which is unconstitutional. Sale and income tax that everybody shares is the only fair and sufficient way to fund schools. House Bill 13 does that and more.

Name: John L. **City:** Gibsonia, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2023 11:26 AM – 497

Subject: The Other Side of Dual Enrollment College Credits.

Message: Greetings, BEFC and All, I agree with the comments given on CTEs by Dr. Copeland's testimony. We need young people to enter the trades and professions whose members who have dwindled, and to help direct them to fields that are growing and in need of eligible employees. School Boards can take steps to allow CTE programs to flourish, while still ensuring students enrolled to obtain necessary basic education. However, it is to my belief NOT advisable to extend dual enrollment credits for these students, as like any students, they need other forms of education to make them well-rounded individuals- both for their own benefit, as well as society's benefit. There is a reason for primary education, to give us ALL the tools to succeed in life. Likewise, higher education is not only for career training. Any students, even those who test out of basic credits and are taking college credit in high school, need a holistic education, expanding their knowledge in the various forms of intellect. We should not supplant college education any more than we should supplant continuing trade or professional

instruction. The basis for higher education is a different level of learning, for those already working in a field, as well as those with no job experience. I realize everything costs money. If we devoted more of our state budgets to education, and gave more assistance based on need, costs of college don't have to be as costly.

Name: Melanie P. **City:** Oakmont, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2023 4:28 PM – 498

Subject: Fair Funding for Pennsylvania public schools.

Message: I am retired Philadelphia district school teacher and school librarian. When I became a school librarian in 1988, I was one of 176 certified school librarians in the district. Now there is 1 full-time equivalent school librarian in the district. When my position as a librarian cut was cut, I had to take a position as a literacy coach at Germantown High School as a literacy coach. While there, I accompanied a group of Philadelphia Germantown High School students on a tour of the Springfield High School library in Montgomery County. The Alumni Association of Germantown had begun a fundraising campaign to restore the library, and they wanted student input. The president of the Alumni Association arranged the tour because she wanted our students to first visit a 21st Century school library program to see what was possible. At the time Germantown had a school library, but the print collection was outdated, the periodical collection was non-existent, the card catalog was ancient (still a cabinet with drawers), and the computers were hand-me-downs of varying vintage. Dr. Joyce Valencia, the librarian at Springfield welcomed our group and gave them a thorough tour of the library program and all of its resources: an extensive print collection, audiobooks, individual and small group computer stations, an in-library computer lab big enough to accommodate an entire class, a recreational reading area, a class presentation area equipped with an interactive white-board for student and teacher presentations, a website allowing students to access a myriad of high-quality licensed databases--all maintained by a certified librarian and several assistants. As Dr. Valencia finished her tour and description of the program, one of our students turned around and said to me, "I will never be able to compete with these students when I go to college." Of course he was right; at Germantown he had no access to the extensive resources that the students of Springfield High School had. He had never read any of the countless studies that link the existence of quality school library programs to student achievement, but in one short afternoon, this student was able to recognize the value of a quality school library program. Philadelphia schools are not alone in their lack of resources. Many districts in Pennsylvania not only don't have librarians, but lack much of the staffing and resources they need to ensure that their students get the education they need to not only compete with those from wealthier districts, but to become productive members of their communities and this state. It is an issue of equal access to educational resources. As you contemplate recommendations for the allotment of this year's state educational funds, remember you owe all Pennsylvania students the same "adequate" education required by the state constitution.

Name: Deborah G. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2023 4:43 PM – 499

Subject: How I'd love to see funding be used in our schools.

Message: As a teacher in SDOL, I would love if all schools had a Reading Specialist position. Fair and adequate funding could aid in this goal. That role could help many students in their reading growth and development.

Name: Audra B. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 11, 2023 6:24 PM – 500

Subject: School property tax

Message: It so necessary to eliminate the school property tax or a tax shift. I know two people that can not pay the tax and will lose their home. One has put their home up for sale but it's in poor condition. They want to live the rest of their life but can't make the payment

Name: Calvin M. **City:** Dunlevy, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2023 8:07 AM – 501

Subject: Barely able to buy groceries

Message: Financially, I was doing okay a couple years ago. Since 2020, inflation has really hurt me and my family. I have to pay over \$3600 per year in school taxes. It really hurt before but now it completely wipes out my income. If I don't or can't pay it, they'll take my house! How is this fair in any way? All our kids are grown and no longer in public schools. The school tax is driving people into poverty. It's sickening. Please help get rid of this unfair tax system. Thank you for listening.

Name: Mitchell S. **City:** Monroeton, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2023 11:57 AM – 502

Subject: Stop school taxing homes

Message: Holly T. posted today "Got a letter from my Rep. Maloney and he says the general assembly and our leaders along with the Governor showing zero interest in eliminating school tax in homes or putting this on the ballot 😞". How can it be that PA leaders do not care about what Taxpayers and Constituents want and need? Tax on homes is cruel and unusual punishment, taxing away the rights of Pennsylvanians to own homes. Please end taxing homes. Our communities and many businesses will bloom. Let the Property Elimination Tax working group testify.

Name: Julia B. **City:** Collegeville, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2023 3:13 PM – 503

Subject: Individual School Districts

Message: I know this is about my 30th comment... and I hope some of them are being read and passed along... I plead and hope the committee is looking at all 500 school districts and getting input from all 500. The speakers while amazing, have budgets that make my mouth water as a long time school director in the Old Forge School District. You have schools pleading poverty and inadequacy while having double the budgets of some schools in the state while servicing the same amount of students. Please Please Please give someone in the Old Forge School district a call and interview them for this committee and its findings for the record.

Name: Robert N. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 12, 2023 3:18 PM – 504

Subject: Fair funding for all Pennsylvania schools.

Message: Testimony for Basic Education Funding Commission Lisa B., Teacher at Forest Area School District West Forest Secondary School (Tionesta, PA) September 28, 2023 Hello. My name is Lisa B. and I am beginning my 18th year as a teacher at West Forest Secondary School in Forest Area School District. I have spent 19 years working in education with all but one being at Forest Area. I teach or have taught mathematics, business, computer science, and chemistry courses. Additionally, I write grants for the district, am the advisor to several student clubs, and organize and develop curriculum for supplemental student programming. I have also worked as a part-time adjunct instructor for the Northern Pennsylvania Regional College. This year on February 7, 2023, Judge Renée Cohn Jubelirer signed an order declaring that Pennsylvania's school funding system is unconstitutional and must be reformed. The state has an obligation to provide a system of public education that does not discriminate against students based on the level of income and value of taxable property in their school districts. The Education Law Center's legal director Maura McInerney commented that "hundreds of thousands of children in public schools in lower-wealth communities across Pennsylvania are being denied the basic resources needed for a quality education because the state is not adequately or equitably funding our schools." (The Public Interest Law Center, 2023) The Forest Area School District is one of those districts falling in a lower-wealth community that has deficient funding. Forest Area School District includes all of Forest County and small portions of Venango and Elk Counties. The district is just over 500 square miles with an enrollment of just under 400 students. Forest County has around 6,600 residents with about 2,000 of those being inmates of the state prison located in Marienville (Department of Corrections, 2023), this is 30% of our population. In the past several years, we have had a population decrease of 5%, while realizing an increase of those living in poverty and senior citizens who are on a fixed income. We educate students in two Pre-K through grade 12 school buildings located almost 30 miles apart. Our student demographics reflect 22% special education, 11% homeless, 64% economically disadvantaged, and 19.6 % persons in poverty with 31.4% of children aged 18 years and under living under the poverty level, which is almost double the state of Pennsylvania (16.4%). The median income of our families is \$43,958 per year as compared to a state average of \$67,587 per year. The Forest County per capita income is \$20,696, which is the third lowest in the state. We are an impoverished community operating two school buildings. (US Census Bureau, 2022) The costs associated with the operation of two functional school buildings are considerable. Utilities and building maintenance are the typical fixed costs; however, with very small schools, one could argue that the teachers, administration, and staff could also be considered fixed costs. Regardless of class size, each primary grade level needs a teacher. The secondary schools still need a minimum of one teacher for each of the state-mandated courses for graduation, along with teachers to teach the other major disciplines. The schools each still need a secretary, principal, guidance counselor, school nurse, cafeteria staff, and custodial staff. When you have less than 400 students in a district, across two schools, on paper the Forest Area School District is reported at a \$0 adequacy shortfall per student (Education Law Center-PA and the Public Interest Law Center, 2023). This could not be any further from reality. The district has already worked to minimize the cost associated with teacher employees. Our teachers teach six and seven different classes over the course of a day, some of which are teaching subjects they are not certified to teach. A couple of elementary teachers are teaching more than one grade level simultaneously. We have very few electives to offer students, with some

students taking essentially the same elective courses multiple times throughout the day. Studies show larger schools with an increased number of students benefit from substantial economies of scale in staff costs. (Witte & Schiltz, 2017) Further research by James Hayes supports the economies of scale benefits to public education noting that “increasing district enrollment lowers cost per pupil expense, freeing up funds that could be used to improve the quality of education as well as save taxpayer money.” (Hayes III, 2018) Small, rural, low-wealth school districts in Pennsylvania such as the Forest Area School District cannot tax their way to sufficient funding. Ultimately, this is the state’s responsibility. The argument might be made to consolidate the two Forest Area Schools into one building, which sounds like the perfect solution. As mentioned earlier, the district is just over 500 square miles. The Allegheny National Forest, which occupies 50% of our district’s area, divides our attendance area right down the center and creates significant transportation issues. It is a goal of the district to keep every child’s transportation time to and from school to one hour or less. Williamena Kwapo makes mention in an Education Week publication of research conducted by researchers at Temple University and Syracuse University regarding commute time and absenteeism of students. It was found that exceptionally long rides, those longer than one hour, were linked to an absenteeism rate of 12 %, which is considered chronic absenteeism. (Kwapo, 2022) Students who attend school regularly have been shown to achieve at higher levels than students who do not have regular attendance. Keeping the best interest of the students as our number one priority, the Forest Area School District's geographic size and logistics lead to expensive transportation and the need for two school buildings. Transportation reimbursements are one category that is based on market value. Each day, our buses and vans travel 2,500 miles to transport students to and from school. We cannot afford to lose transportation reimbursements, so they must be considered in the funding process. Referencing the House Appropriations Committee report, PA’s Fair Funding Formula for Basic Education Explained, 147 of the 500 (29%) Pennsylvania school districts, who educate approximately 55 percent of Pennsylvania’s students, receive less than their fair share. (Brandon, 2020) The reliability of funding is also questioned in the report, and it highlights Forest Area School District as one of the state districts in which funding is impacted by the concentrated poverty factor, falling on either side of the poverty cliff depending on the year. It is difficult for districts, like Forest Area, to plan and budget with the variability in funding. This phenomenon can also occur with the sparsity size adjustment factor for many districts. The Basic Education Funding is Pennsylvania’s largest subsidy to school districts. Having to come up with a one-size-fits-all funding formula for 500 districts that have different characteristics is a daunting task, and is it possible to have a formula that fairly distributes the money to these districts? Moreover, Pennsylvania districts heavily rely on local taxes, and not all communities have the same ability to pay for education no matter how high they raise their taxes. In addition to an updated formula, it would behoove the state to offer a means for school districts to appeal the granted funding amount if they can demonstrate that the state determined funding is not adequate or equitable. The Pennsylvania Constitution requires adequate funding for all aspects of public education. All children deserve a comprehensive, high-quality education no matter their needs and no matter where they live, in order for students to succeed in life and be productive citizens. The Forest Area School District is a very unique school district with respect to its geographic size and small, impoverished population. Regardless of the school population, both buildings still have a minimum number of employees and cost to remain functional and offer the students an education equivalent to that of a larger, fiscally thriving district. It is the fiduciary reasonability of the state of Pennsylvania, per the Pennsylvania Constitution, to find a funding solution to meet the needs of this very unique district. The Forest Area School District needs reliable, adequate, equitable funding to support early childhood education, charter school reimbursements, special education funding, transportation cost reimbursements, the hiring of additional teachers and staff while working to maintain lower taxes for a blend of retired and economically disadvantaged community members, and the opportunity for districts to appeal the determined funding is imperative. Thank you for considering my testimony. Sincerely, Lisa B.

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Name: Lisa B. **City:** Pleasantville, PA

Sent: Friday, October 13, 2023 9:03 AM – 505

Subject: Meetings

Message: Good day. It is my understanding that meetings are being held to discuss new funding options for public schools on the heels of the court's decision that the previous method of district funding is illegal. Are there public meetings in the Philadelphia area to discuss this? I wish to attend and be part of that discussion. Please contact me with dates and times. Email is best. Thank you.

Name: Darlene A. **City:** Marcus Hook, PA

Sent: Friday, October 13, 2023 3:16 PM – 506

Subject: Tax refunds for homeschool families, eliminate property tax

Message: The public school system has become a system of Marxist indoctrination instead of education, and private schools are too expensive to be seen as a realistic option. Many families are deciding to homeschool, but this is very costly to them. They should get the tax dollars back so they can purchase computer equipment, curriculum, books, and other educational materials. People pay extremely high tax rates to live in a "good school district" (aka low crime area), and now they can't even use the schools because they don't respect our values. Property taxes are not Constitutional and should not be used to fund a bloated, ineffectual school system. Scale back the unnecessary renovations and sports programs, get back to basic education principles, stop the pensions.

Name: Lisa I. **City:** Dallastown, PA

Sent: Friday, October 13, 2023 4:18 PM – 507

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: I am 63 years old and live in the home I grew up in. Every summer, I receive the bill for the Public School Tax. As I approach retirement age, I will probably have to keep on working just to pay this bill. Many people, including seniors, might be losing their home because of not being able to pay this tax. Anything that can be done to help with this problem is appreciated.

Name: Anita R. **City:** New Freedom, PA

Sent: Friday, October 13, 2023 7:19 PM – 508

Subject: School funding for public schools

Message: Hi, I am a parent of 2 school-aged children, as well as a homeowner/taxpayer. All children, regardless of race, class, school locale, etc. deserve a high quality public education. Sadly this has not been the case. The inequities are egregious and the resource gap between high wealth and low wealth districts must be drastically reduced. Thank you for serving on the commission and being diligent in following the court order and fighting for equality across districts. These changes are long overdue and will greatly benefit the whole Commonwealth.

Name: Mira K. **City:** Ambler, PA

Sent: Friday, October 13, 2023 9:12 PM – 509

Subject: School Tax

Message: Good day; I moved here from Maryland thinking I was making a move that would improve my ability to live out my years in retirement with a bit of financial certainty. I only have Social Security and a very small 132.00 pension from my "union" job as a crane operator in a steel plant. I quickly found that my home was levied with a 7,000+ school tax on top of the reasonable local property tax. I have never had and never will have a child in the education system. I am 75 years old. Isn't there a way is give seniors over a certain age, say 70 a waiver for the school tax. We have spent our entire lives paying our way and making the world better for everyone else, so a small break would be well deserved. No senior should be left homeless and have to sell their home to pay for school taxes.

Name: Robert A. **City:** Delta, PA

Sent: Saturday, October 14, 2023 6:26 AM – 510

Subject: PA School Funding

Message: No funding should be given to schools who teach CRT or any form of it. Nor should any funding be given to schools who place pornographic and other inappropriate books such as "Gender Queer" in their libraries or put them on their reading lists. Also, schools should not hide things from parents such as children who are trying to change their name or gender. They should not affirm or go along with these delusions and they should never help these children try to "transition" in any way. Including those secret "translation closets" where kids can change their clothes at school and pretend to be a different gender during the school day all without parental knowledge. I know of several people who have had these things happen to their children. It is wrong. One spoke up at a school board meeting, merely telling what had happened to her daughter, and was threatened with a lawsuit. No names were even mentioned. No school should receive any funding for participating in these activities. Children belong to their parents. Not the government. And not the schools.

Name: Amy R. **City:** Sellersville, PA

Sent: Saturday, October 14, 2023 7:36 AM – 511

Subject: School Funding

Message: Change the current tax method to sales tax.

Name: William E. **City:** York, PA

Sent: Saturday, October 14, 2023 9:40 AM – 512

Subject: Education funding

Message: Since the job of education and educators is to teach our children; then the money should be based on the child and not the wealth or poverty of an area of our state, and certainly not on the money needed to fund poorly negotiated contracts and pensions. All education funds, therefore, should be based on a "per student" basis. The money follows the child, and not the district or area of the state. Since we are in a "right to choose" social pattern, then parents, the first educators of their children, should have the right to choose where their child goes and thus where the money goes. Good schools, like the cream, will rise to the top.

Name: John G. **City:** Breezewood, PA

Sent: Saturday, October 14, 2023 10:35 AM – 513

Subject: Public Education Funding

Message: HB 27 proposes a whopping \$120 million (35%) increase in funding that would increase the total funding for school vouchers in Pennsylvania to \$460 million PER YEAR. There should be no additional funding for private and religious school vouchers before public schools are fully and constitutionally funded. In addition, I believe that before new funding is put into any voucher program, the legislature must be able to demonstrate, based on data, that the current \$340 million/year expenditure by the EITC and OSTC programs is producing positive educational outcomes for students.

Name: Jean F. **City:** York, PA

Sent: Saturday, October 14, 2023 2:29 PM – 514

Subject: For the betterment of all

Message: Dear Commission Members, I am a parent of two children at Westbrook Park Elementary School in Upper Darby School District, a District School Board Director, and a taxpayer. I urge you to fund ALL of our schools fairly and completely. In recent years, as a district we've had to decide between necessary building upgrades and hiring sufficient faculty. We've had to close school due to excessive heat since most of our buildings are not air conditioned. Our students attend classes in trailers that were purchased used over 20 years ago and are now more than a decade past their intended lifespan. None of this is acceptable. I frequently hear people bemoan the state of today's youth and connect it to rising crime rates. If we want our society as a whole to be safe, secure, and happy, we must take care of and educate all of our children so that they can be engaged and productive members of society.

Name: Meredith H. **City:** Clifton Heights, PA

Sent: Saturday, October 14, 2023 5:12 PM – 515

Subject: Fair Funding for our public schools

Message: As a taxpayer in an underfunded school district, I am very concerned about strain on our teachers to provide the educational resources our students need to survive academically, much less thrive. It is the law now that the gap in funding must be rectified, and the commission must do their job, and as soon as possible - our teachers and students are suffering.

Name: Janice H. **City:** Drexel Hill, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 15, 2023 11:24 AM – 516

Subject: Full Fair Funding for All - Now!

Message: I attend Akron Mennonite Church, which supports POWER Interfaith's efforts to realize full and fair funding for all PA students. I am deeply saddened by how underfunded the poorest and minority communities are in PA school system. Please expand the fair funding formula, which has bipartisan support, to all money used to fund education. All students deserve equitable education, and vouchers will only make funding disparities worse.

Name: Justin G. **City:** Denver, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 15, 2023 12:57 PM – 517

Subject: Property taxes

Message: Eliminate property taxes and convert to the system South Carolina utilizes. Also, increasing property taxes on home improvement DOES NOT stimulate the economy. Most ridiculous system ever.

Name: Larry K. **City:** Palmerton, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 15, 2023 1:08 PM – 518

Subject: Property Tax

Message: As a retiree on fixed income, I can't afford \$4,000 in school tax. I must borrow the money every year, then spend the whole next year paying it off. I only paid \$40,000 for my home 43 years ago. I've since paid 3 times that amount in school tax. Please consider HB 13, sales an income tax so all Pennsylvanians can share the funding.

Name: John L. **City:** Gibsonia, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 15, 2023 1:34 PM – 519

Subject: Fair funding for all schools

Message: I am writing in favor of fair funding for all public schools in Pennsylvania. Now that the courts have decided what has long been obvious, that in Pennsylvania rich schools get more and poor schools get less, it's time to correct this indefensible practice. Funding must be based on need, not on wealth. Redistribute funds from districts that get more than their fair share to districts that get less. From a parent of two children in public school.

Name: Kyra R. **City:** Drexel Hill, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 15, 2023 1:43 PM – 520

Subject: Eliminate school tax

Message: 70 yr old senior citizen here, retired, never had children. Can't take much more!!

Name: Robin M. **City:** Drexel Hill, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 15, 2023 2:31 PM – 521

Subject: Property tax

Message: Eliminate it!!!

Name: Michael H. **City:** Williamsport, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 15, 2023 3:31 PM – 522

Subject: Property taxes

Message: Why as a property owner am I " forced " to educate other people's children? That's between the parents and the educators. I had one child, he's 28 years old and beyond this process.

Name: Glen M. **City:** Kutztown, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 15, 2023 3:37 PM – 523

Subject: Property tax elimination or tax shift

Message: Would you please consider the elimination of the school property tax. There should never be a tax that can take my home from me. With all the problems we are having with inflation, gas prices, higher insurance premiums we can't afford this tax anymore. I went thru all my savings. This ever increasing tax is unaffordable now. Please have all Pennsylvanians pay this tax. Homeowners should not have to take the brunt of educating our youth. Thank you.

Name: Sara E. **City:** Dunlevy, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 15, 2023 3:45 PM – 524

Subject: Funding Education r/t Property Taxes especially r/t Seniors

Message: I am writing to express my concern over Seniors being put out of their homes d/t the rising cost of property taxes. Basic education needs to be looked at carefully and another way found to fund it AND we also need to find a way to STOP property taxes on seniors! We did not make a lot of money to start with and our incomes are meager compared to today's incomes. I was an RN who worked for \$13/hour back in the day and I had to go out on Disability. My husband retired on \$16/hour after a lifetime of working. We have thrift store shopped since 1980 and use coupons. We do not have a cell phone. We bought our home in 1988 and the taxes and everything keep spiraling upwards but our income is not! PLEASE LISTEN AND HELP US!!! Thank God for the local food pantry and the produce vouchers from the state in the summer. If one of us dies I do not know what the other is going to do. There are no reasonable places for seniors to live in eastern Pa. Anything that is available for seniors locally has a 2 year wait, at least.

Name: Peg H. **City:** Bristol, PA

Sent: Monday, October 16, 2023 9:45 AM – 525

Subject: School Property Tax

Message: The financially irresponsible Parenting and the laws that allow those actions must end. Is the present k-12 School System part of a pyramid scheme and causing financially irresponsible Parenting? Laws must require people to be self-sustaining productive members of society, financially responsible for their actions and not financial burdens to others. The extremely unfair School Property Tax must end Now! A person's home should have nothing to do with funding the k-12 School System.

Name: Stephen M. **City:** Pottsville, PA

Sent: Monday, October 16, 2023 11:44 AM – 526

Subject: Fair funding for public education

Message: I am a parent and grandparent whose children have been and are in public schools. State funding for public education has discriminated against children in districts where the majority of students are of color or below state average in funding. The old system has been ruled unconstitutional for that reason. Therefore I urge the legislature to implement a fair funding formula that includes all state education funding, in a timely manner, before the 24/25 school year. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: John S. **City:** Akron, PA

Sent: Monday, October 16, 2023 1:45 PM – 527

Subject: Property tax elimination

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I have been following the efforts to eliminate the school property tax in Pennsylvania for many years. I am writing to express my concern on the issue of funding education in Pennsylvania. Please enter this into the official record. The Commonwealth Court decision finding of February 7, 2023 has recognized the inequitable way the schools in our state are funded. Our legislature has been tasked with implementing a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education". I support the School Property Tax Elimination Act proposed by former Representative Frank Ryan. The particulars of this proposal have been given in previous articles and letters so I ask you to please refer to the proposed legislation by former Representative Ryan. Please stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. Please work with your fellow legislators to find a solution for elimination. Our education system cannot continue to place the burden on homeowners. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Name: Kay B. **City:** Lehighton, PA

Sent: Monday, October 16, 2023 6:30 PM – 528

Subject: School property tax unfair

Message: I'm paying too much school taxes for never have used the school system!!!

Name: Jennifer S. **City:** Fleetwood, PA

Sent: Monday, October 16, 2023 8:07 PM – 529

Subject: School Property Taxes

Message: These taxes were originally set by wealthy property owners. This is no longer the case and now it is a hardship for people owning property to pay these year after year. There is no reason why hb13 cannot be implemented.

Name: Karen W. **City:** Montoursville, PA

Sent: Monday, October 16, 2023 8:16 PM – 530

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: Hello, I attended the hearing in Lancaster as a member of Power Interfaith and heard the expert testimony. As a mom of 3 adopted children, one with special needs, I know firsthand the greater time and resources that vulnerable children require. We've felt this impact as a family but school districts with large numbers of children who are non-English speakers, coming from impoverished circumstances or have need of special education are feeling this impact multiplied by thousands. They need our support to help these kids. We are lucky as a family that we could access many resources to help our son but not all families can. They rely on schools. Our investment in these children means the difference between healthy productive citizens as opposed to adults with the possibility of serious mental health disorders and antisocial behavior. Every child is precious and deserves the very best educational experience that Pennsylvania has to offer!

Name: Kimberly H. **City:** Lititz, PA

Sent: Monday, October 16, 2023 8:45 PM – 531

Subject: School Taxes

Message: I have one week to get the money together to pay my school taxes. I have had to sell personal items to try and get the money. I have had to sell things that have been in my family for over 100 years and its tearing me apart. When I get my SS Disability check this week the whole thing will have to go towards these school taxes. I will not be able to go to the grocery store this month. I will be at the mercy of my kind neighbors for food. This also means I can't pay other bills either like electric, insurance, or get my medicine. I have no other means of income. I am a 65 year old disabled widow who worked her whole life to pay off my home and now look what is happening to me because of the way we fund schools, you use my home to make me fund public schools my home is held in Ransome by the public school pay this tax or lose your home I'm glad this has been found unconstitutional by the court. Public schools should be funded by the public not property owners. No tax should have the ability to make you homeless but that is exactly what you have allowed to happen. I've been watching the meetings and everyone asking questions makes a lot of money asking people on a panel who also make a lot of money how we should fund schools which all of you can afford. You have no idea what this tax is doing to families. You wonder why people are leaving this state, doesn't take a brain surgeon to understand school taxes make it too expensive for a young family to own a home sometimes your school taxes are more than a mortgage. You can create all the jobs you want but people will commute from another state where they can afford a home. Why do I get threatened to have my home stolen when there are families with a lot of kids who pay nothing? That's certainly not fair and equitable. Please this is your chance to make this right and it needs done now not 10 years from now find a way to fund schools without using people's homes. Thank you.

Name: Dawn N. **City:** Honey Brook, PA

Sent: Monday, October 16, 2023 8:59 PM – 532

Subject: Alternative property Tax funding

Message: Request for appointment for November or December meeting

Name: Ed W. **City:** Linesville, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 12:03 AM – 533

Subject: The school tax

Message: In 1980, my mom was 65. My dad passed away and Mom only had his railroad pension which was very little. Our house we grew up in was paid for. Mom couldn't afford the taxes especially school. Mom had to sell the home we all grew up in. This has been playing over an over for years. It never gets any press. Everybody figures that's part of life. The BEFC can have a major impact on many people's lives. Change the method of providing funding. The fair way where everyone has to share in

funding. Sales and Income tax. And there's no need to tax pensions, there's more than enough with sales and Income tax!

Name: John L. **City:** Gibsonia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 2:05 AM – 534

Subject: School taxes on homeowners, seniors, elimination

Message: This tax is TOTALLY UNFAIR on senior tax payers. Pennsylvania needs to make this school tax eliminated for seniors. Raise the sales tax or tax clothing.

Name: Yvonne O. **City:** Hanover, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 5:26 AM – 535

Subject: School taxes

Message: It is about time something is done about the school taxes, if all the senators and congressmen cared enough, something would be done. It is time to stop putting seniors out of their homes or that they have to leave the state because they can no longer afford the school taxes. Everybody runs on ending school property taxes, but nobody ever follow through with it. It's time to get something done once and for all!!!! Other states do it so I'm sure there's a way we could two in Pennsylvania!!!

Name: Christiba H. **City:** Palmerton, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 5:27 AM – 536

Subject: Property tax elimination!!

Message: Owning property does not mean I am wealthy, only that I worked my whole lifetime so I could own my own home, never dreaming that the tax would have become such a burden in my so called retirement, I worked since I graduated from High school when I was 17 to 70, my home is my big investment. There were no real vacations or new cars etc., just countless hours of overtime and working on weekends and sometime working 2 jobs!! My husband also worked his whole life and things weren't too bad when there were two incomes, when he died It is all on my shoulders but I will NOT give my house willingly!!! Being here in my own place was what I worked for all these years!!! I can not believe the confiscating someone's home can be legal in America!!! I do believe in contributing to education for our children but it should be the responsibility of everyone, not just a few, I know that can't be Constitutional!!!! Property tax is just another word for extortion to my way of thinking and it needs to be eliminated!!

Name: Carol Y. **City:** Quakertown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 5:37 AM – 537

Subject: School taxes

Message: The time to end property taxes is now!!!! This is ridiculous that this has been an issue over 20 years and nothing ever gets done!! All the senators run on eliminating property taxes, but nobody ever follows through and does anything!!!! The time is now, other states have eliminated property taxes, so why can't Pennsylvania and stop putting people out of their homes!!! Most people would not mind paying 1,000-1,500 dollars, but paying in the range of 5,000-up to15,000 is absolutely ridiculous!!!! Save Pa. end school taxes once and for all!!!

Name: Christiba H. **City:** Palmerton, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 7:16 AM – 538

Subject: Pa. Property School Taxes

Message: It's a disgrace that senior citizens have to pay Pa. School Taxes. We have paid our dues through the years. It time to eliminate these taxes from senior citizens. Our school taxes are out of control. Even though you worked all your life and paid your home off, you can lose it because of these unjust taxes! Congress needs to address this issue if they have any conscience at all!!!

Name: Antoinette S. **City:** Scranton, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 8:26 AM – 539

Subject: School funding commission

Message: Please consult with Joel S. of York Suburban school board. He has done a lot of research on this issue. Please lessen or remove the burden on property owners, many of whom have no children in school. Thank you.

Name: Sharon S. **City:** Brogue, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 8:27 AM – 540

Subject: School Funding Through Property Taxes

Message: The taxation policies in Pennsylvania are driving people away. Several of my 30-something friends are moving to Florida, Tennessee, or other states that don't fund their education systems in such an inequitable and unfair manner. Every year my mortgage payment grows because the local school district raises taxes. At a certain point, I will likely be forced to leave Pennsylvania because I won't be able to afford the local taxes. Politicians in this state often lament the "brain drain" that occurs, but do nothing to make this state a better place to live. I've watched my nieces struggle in an underfunded school district while my daughter thrives in a well-funded one (Both districts are within Berks county). The inequity that the school funding system reinforces is the reason people want to leave this state. It is reprehensible that it took a PA state supreme court decision to force politicians to fix this problem...and they're still dragging their feet. I have little hope that politicians in this state will resolve the problem. Most elected officials are only interested in serving themselves, not the needs of their communities. HB13 (which would have eliminated the school property tax) languished in committee for months and was never considered. The PA state reps and senators should be ashamed of themselves; they collect 6-figure salaries for part-time work and have made little to no effort to help PA homeowners with this incredible burden. Cut legislator's salaries and re-allocate those funds to education!

Name: Frank F. **City:** Reading, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 8:42 AM – 541

Subject: school property taxes

Message: I am 65 years old and my husband is 77 years old. We built the home that we live in in 1995. We will never be able to retire and pay the outrageous school/property taxes totaling over \$20,000.00 per year. In the end we will be forced to sell this home. Why am I being forced to pay for fancy football fields, computers for every kid, busing for kids from outside the school district, multiple Principals in every school in this district, ect. ect. ect? There is so much waste in spending because they have a blank check signed by the tax payers. You need to put the burden on everyone, not just the Homeowner. Make these school districts accountable for their spending. Let's get back to the roots of educating - it worked for my generation it can work for this generation.

Name: Brenda G. **City:** Reinholds, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 8:56 AM – 542

Subject: Elimination of Property Taxes

Message: You have heard it all. Elimination is simply the right thing to do. The future of our kids and our state depends on what you do or don't do

Name: Eugene H. **City:** Matamoras, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 10:30 AM – 543

Subject: Gifted Funding

Message: My child has an IQ of 154. He is as different from his gifted peers as his gifted peers are from their general education peers. The only option we have right now is a grade level acceleration but this does not give him access to content that challenges and engages him but it does take him away from his same-aged peers. We have many gifted students in PA and they should be able to access appropriate curriculum in the same way as their peers who require educational support because they are struggling with the grade-level curriculum. All students deserve a challenging and engaging curriculum. Funding these programs could lead to finding answers to some of the world's greatest problems.

Name: Kelly S. **City:** Nazareth, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 10:32 AM – 544

Subject: Basic Education Funding Commission

Message: Good morning. I am a school administrator who supervises gifted programming in my district K-12 and also a member of PAGE. As both an administrator and parent, I believe that Chapter 16--a mandated set of regulations--should be further funded. There is a need for local and state level administrative oversight, along with a need for further PD (to help to foster enrichment/acceleration, defensible goals/GIEPs and identification of gifted learners) and to help to open more possibilities to recruit and hire gifted support teachers. I look forward to hearing more about the possibilities of further supporting our state-level gifted programs and initiatives.

Name: Matthew L. **City:** Jamison, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 10:39 AM – 545

Subject: Equity for Gifted Students

Message: Hello. I am a gifted support teacher in the Upper Darby School District in Delaware County PA. It is one of the largest districts in PA. There are over 12,000 students in this district. There are 9 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, and one high school. Our district has 5 gifted support teachers. Only 2 cover the 9 elementary schools, and one of those teachers (me) also covers another middle school. We have no funding for our department. We work tirelessly to meet the needs of our gifted learners and it feels like we can barely scratch the surface. This is not equitable for our higher learners. We need funding so we can appropriately and equitably meet and identify our gifted learners.

Name: Danielle D. **City:** Springfield, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 10:43 AM – 546

Subject: Funding for gifted education

Message: To whom it may concern, I am supporting the push to fund gifted education in PA. We have a daughter who graduated in 2020. She was identified in 3rd grade. As she entered the program, we noticed that minimal opportunities and enrichment were offered. We were told that it was because there is no budget from the state for gifted education support. Please consider budgeting for future gifted education support services. Thank you kindly.

Name: James P. **City:** Murrysville, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 10:44 AM – 547

Subject: Gifted Education and the BEFC

Message: Gifted Education should obviously be funded. The idea that you would not invest money in the generation that is most likely to cure cancer or find solutions for global warming is short-sighted to be generous. Funds for Gifted Education allow otherwise impoverished schools to provide enrichment for students (not just gifted students by the way). Schools create programs and enrichment experiences and need the money to support this. Gifted students have IEPs that need to be met and they have a right to have a funded education.

Name: Samuel M. **City:** Georgetown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 10:45 AM – 548

Subject: Needs of Gifted Learners

Message: Gifted children & young adults are misunderstood and underserved in our public schools. Most of our brightest students are not being challenged in their classes. Gifted children need gifted services and programming because in most cases, the general education program is not ready to meet the needs of gifted students. This is because most educators lack training in gifted education. Teacher certification requirements need to include training on giftedness and how to educationally serve gifted students. In addition, gifted programs have a positive effect on students' post-secondary plans, according to several longitudinal studies. Gifted individuals make up about 7% of our population. However, many gifted children are not identified - often due to a lack of educational funding for the gifted population. Gifted students are a population of nearly 60,000 in Pennsylvania (not counting the thousands not yet identified) and yet this group of students with unique needs and challenges has \$0 in funding. Gifted education needs to be made a priority, for the good of gifted students and for the good of our society as a whole. A gifted education budget will increase staff at the state level as well as at individual districts and buildings. It will increase training and resources for teachers who serve gifted students in their general education classes, and it will provide training for district administrators as well. Funding gifted education will also increase equity for under-represented populations and improve the identification of gifted learners. Gifted education should be part of the education fund in Pennsylvania.

Name: Kallie R. **City:** Blandon, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 10:48 AM – 549

Subject: Gifted Education

Message: Gifted education should be a part of the educational fund. I have two children who are twice exceptional, which is common for gifted children. They have needs for enrichment that would be unavailable to them without funding. If it were not for gifted programming, children like mine would fall through the cracks as all gifted programming would be flooded with high achievers, who can have very different needs. Please support programs for gifted children.

Name: Kathleen B. **City:** McMurray, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 10:52 AM – 550

Subject: Gifted Education

Message: Please fund gifted education as it is a required program and part of student's IEP's but is currently unfunded.

Name: Micah R. **City:** Warren Center, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 10:53 AM – 551

Subject: Gifted Education Funding

Message: As a parent of a gifted child, and as an educator in at a public institution, I highly encourage the state to start funding for our gifted education programming. So much goes into accelerating our students' learning and so little is provided to schools to promote this to the degree necessary for our smallest population. In order to promote future leaders, especially in impoverished communities, it is our obligation to compensate our districts appropriately in order to continue to provide (or initially provide) services necessary.

Name: Ariana R. **City:** Little Meadows, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 10:57 AM – 552

Subject: Gifted Education Funding

Message: Hello! I am a Life Skills teacher and advocate for minds of all kinds. I believe gifted students deserve the funding that special education is given. Gifted education is mandated, but unlike special education, it is not funded. This needs to change!

Name: MaKaylah L. **City:** Ulster, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 10:59 AM – 553

Subject: Fund Gifted Education

Message: Just like special education is funded, so should gifted education. If you are mandating it, you should be funding it.

Name: Erin E. **City:** New Albany, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 11:00 AM – 554

Subject: Gifted Education Program Feedback

Message: Dear Sirs, over the past 12 years I had two children in PA Gifted Education program through our local school. Both children benefited greatly from these extra sessions, building on their identified areas of strength and developing them under the guidance of the Gifted Program teachers. This greatly expanded their horizons and opened a range of opportunities that we would not have been aware of. They had great experiences participating in events organized through the program. They also were able to make further advances in several subjects other than their identified "gifted" areas due to skills developed in the program - analytical and critical thinking, working with peers in a group, presentation skills, understanding connections between different disciplines, etc. Please continue funding this great program and investing in our children - our resource for the future. Thank you for your consideration of my feedback.

Name: Valeria M. **City:** Bethlehem, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 11:14 AM – 555

Subject: Gifted Education SHOULD BE FUNDED

Message: How are ZERO tax dollars going to gifted education? This population is misunderstood and in dire need of highly qualified teachers and educational programming.

Name: Chris S. **City:** Canonsburg, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 11:17 AM – 556

Subject: Gifted Education Funding

Message: Since gifted education is a mandate in PA, it should absolutely be funded by PA.

Name: Melissa T. **City:** Rome, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 12:05 PM – 557

Subject: Gifted education funding

Message: I am a parent of a 12th grade student with a GIEP. My daughter was tested in 2nd grade. At that time, I had no idea what the Academically Talented Program at our school would do for her. She suffered from nightmares and anxiety, she didn't process emotional situations like most children. She had high anxiety because she is a perfectionist. I was initially concerned that adding difficulty to her education program would make things worse. In fact, dealing with these feelings, like

perfectionism, is a characteristic of these students. The ATP advisor spent time working with her to learn to work with these feelings. To have them become strengths, not crippling weaknesses. As she got into higher grades, they enriched her education with more difficulty, not an increased work load. Higher reading levels with more difficulty for English and higher level math assignments. Each of her teachers was involved with her annual GIEP meeting and we decided as a group how best to challenge her as well as enrich her emotional growth. In high school, they worked every day on post-secondary education, standardized testing, career paths, school choices based on majors of interest, and more emotional guidance. She is currently 2nd in her class, tested in the top 5% for her SAT score on her first try and excels at sports, she has a boyfriend and a job. She has grown into a very well rounded student and most importantly, a good person. I absolutely share the credit for all of this with her ATP advisors and our school district. She has a very gifted mind, but without the enriched program, I would never been qualified to help her grow in every way possible. As a parent, it is so important to have every tool to grow a great person! If she was not challenged academically, that part of her could have been left unchecked, undeveloped. Who knows how that would have affected her emotionally and socially. Each child is more than just an IQ score, but without a teacher or an advisor to guide and challenge them, to advocate for their best education, they are at a distinct disadvantage. It is our responsibility to give a gifted student equal resources to maximize their education. Their need for independent guidance for their ability, is no less than a student with a disability. This will require funding from the commission be allocated to GIEP programs in every district!

Name: Rebecca F. **City:** Oxford, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 12:10 PM – 558

Subject: Gifted education

Message: Please make GIFTED Education part of the education plan/funding. More than 7 out of 10 teachers have indicated that their brightest students are not challenged enough in the regular classroom. The Gifted education programs are a place for these students to be challenged and work on reaching their full potential. It should be a part of the regular education plan/funding as with any other educational program that is included so that we can best meet the learning needs of all students! Please consider this as the learning potential of each child at every level is so important and should always be considered and attended to as part of their public school education. As a parent of a gifted child, I realize this and appreciate everything that our school's gifted program is able to do to continue to challenge my child and help him to find what he is best at and most interested and to continue to learn and grow to his full potential.

Name: Natalia L. **City:** Canonsburg, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 12:18 PM – 559

Subject: Gifted Education Funding

Message: Please appropriate funding for Gifted Education students in public education just as we appropriate funds for Special Education Students. Students in rural and impoverished school districts have less access to gifted educational opportunities without funding from federal government. Please do your part and making funding available for not only special education student but the Gifted Education students that qualify under special education guidelines to receive Gifted services in school districts yet no funds are appropriated to their programs through the federal and state level or local district levels.

Name: Barbara S. **City:** Rome, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 12:25 PM – 560

Subject: Gifted Funding

Message: As a parent of a dually identified emotional support & gifted support child, I can tell you firsthand that funding for gifted students IS ESSENTIAL funding for my son's wellbeing. Please be generous with gifted funding in your budget planning.

Name: Karen H. **City:** Huntingdon Valley, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 12:28 PM – 561

Subject: Gifted education Funding

Message: I am the mother of two "gifted" students in the northeast Bradford school district and a sister to a Special Education teacher in the same district. Although both are mandated by state law, only one of them receives any funding for help and improvements. Our gifted students are in just as much need as our special education students for improvements to their programs, additional training and increased staffing in their teachers. We owe it to them to do more than check the box to say these programs are available. We need to fund them appropriately so they add value, meaning, and purpose to the additional responsibilities we place upon the students and teachers.

Name: Savannah G. **City:** Ulster, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 12:31 PM – 562

Subject: Gifted education

Message: Comparison with world's premier economies proves how far behind United States has gone for STEM education. I have lived in other countries and gifted students are treated at a premier level, whereas we talk about cutting down funding for STEM activities. It is very well known that gifted students go for STEM education and that's what creates engineers, scientists and doctors amongst other professionals, not to forget teachers. There is no question why gifted shouldn't be priority. Gifted kids need to be given every possible resource to excel because they bring back benefits to whole society.

Name: Parag B. **City:** Irwin, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 12:33 PM – 563

Subject: Gifted Education Funding

Message: Gifted education requires funding in order to meet the exceptional needs of our gifted learners. These children are our future innovators, entrepreneurs, scientists finding cures for cancer, etc. Their unique abilities should be valued and supported through educational funding our schools so desperately need.

Name: Abby A. **City:** Conestoga, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 12:42 PM – 564

Subject: Act 1 index and the extended act 1 index.

Message: Hello, I am the Assistant Superintendent for Bristol Township School District. I'm also conducting research on perspectives of legislators on the Act 1 index. I'm conducting my research now. I'm concerned because I'm not finding many people that actually understand the Act 1 index. It's fascinating that roughly 40 districts out of 500 qualify for the act 1 index. The majority of districts qualify for the extended act 1 index. If you'll have me, I would like to testify on equality and equity in the Act 1 index.

Name: Chris P. **City:** Chadds Ford, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 12:51 PM – 565

Subject: School taxes for funding

Message: I'm concerned that the commission is not addressing the unsustainable process of using school taxes for funding public schools. There is a solution and it's called HB 13. If not addressed, no one will be able to afford to own a home in PA. Already younger adults struggle to be able to afford a home. Please give consideration of the shift in funding during your decision process. Thank you.

Name: Karen F. **City:** Newmanstown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 12:53 PM – 566

Subject: Unfair Property Tax

Message: I've recently retired and now on a fixed income. I am happy to be retired but I am increasingly stressed on how we can afford to stay in our home. Our property taxes are over 10k annually and increasing \$300-400 every year. We've lived in our home over 20 years, maintained it, improved it and now facing serious questions as to whether we will be able to live here the rest of our lives, which is what we want. School funding needs to be changed. It is unfair, immoral and down right wrong!

Name: Mike D. **City:** Boyertown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 1:06 PM – 567

Subject: School tax reform for Seniors:

Message: The Government needs to abolish School Taxes for Senior Citizens, We have paid school tax for many years while we were raising our children & putting them through school & now we are all on fixed income & struggling to make ends meet. Our time has passed & it's time for the younger generation to assume the responsibility!!

Name: James G. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 1:25 PM – 568

Subject: Gifted education funding

Message: All kids should have the right to be educated to their own abilities. Some kids need extra beyond the scope of the classroom and gifted support is one of those ways. Without funding, these kids are not getting the extra help they deserve from the state since many districts don't have the ability to support this service on its own. Help us be able to better our kids

outside of their regular curriculum to challenge them and develop their minds at an early age.

Name: Julie S. **City:** Canonsburg, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 1:31 PM – 569

Subject: Gifted Education in the Budget

Message: Clearly we need a comprehensive education budget for all students, and I believe that over the past approximately 30 years, we have learned why it is essential to have funding for special education. One group that has been largely left-behind in that same time period is our gifted population. A fallacy that many believe is that students who are gifted will be fine no matter what because they are so smart. Nothing could be further from the truth. All children must learn that work and creative thinking are required to succeed; when our gifted students are not challenged and spend more time teaching other kids than expanding their own minds, they never learn to work hard because everything required of them comes too easily. Throwing more easy work at them or having them do "math games" on their tablets doesn't help the situation either. High-school gifted students often end up dropping out because they are not learning anything new; then we've lost our greatest potential. Therefore, funding for gifted education is essential in the Basic Education Funding plan so that ALL children are challenged and can make yearly progress beyond where they start.

Name: Janet H. **City:** Williamsport, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 2:13 PM – 570

Subject: Please continue to support Gifted instruction

Message: Gifted instruction is a key piece of my son's public education. Without gifted support, he would have no opportunities to be challenged within the general curriculum. Continuing to support these gifted learners so that they remain invested and challenged in the public school environment serves our communities and overall population.

Name: Janice G. **City:** Perkasio, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 2:22 PM – 571

Subject: Gifted Funding

Message: To whom it may concern, Please fund gifted education. My daughter has a gifted IEP, and the program has done wonders for her. Instead of being bored in her classroom because she has mastered most of the concepts already, she is challenged on a higher level and is able to pursue and research topics that interest her. As a child who scores close to perfect on the PSSA each year, she is the type of kid who will grow up to be a high achieving adult as well. Please don't take her education away!

Name: Shaylee S. **City:** Le Raysville, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 2:30 PM – 572

Subject: Gifted Education Funding

Message: Gifted education should receive funding. Our gifted students have IEPs that must be followed by the school districts. However, many schools and teachers do not have the funding to properly carry out the GIEPs. These students crave knowledge and enrichment opportunities. If school districts are given funding to support that, it can help lessen the drop out rate of gifted students.

Name: Hillary H. **City:** Catasauqua, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 2:36 PM – 573

Subject: School taxes

Message: Hello, it's way past time for the elimination of school property taxes. We need this to be done and now! Courts have ruled these as unconstitutional. Yet we continue to collect them. Why? You people were elected to do what's right for the people. Everyone in the state should contribute to the funding of the schools. Not just property owners. You are not just hurting the homeowners you are also hurting the kids. Please will everyone including our governor put on their big people pants and get this done. Thanks for listening.

Name: Donald H. **City:** Barto, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 2:37 PM – 574

Subject: Elimination of school property taxes

Message: Please consider an alternative approach to raising funds through the elimination of school property taxes and replacing revenue by the HB 13.

Name: Barb B. **City:** Lebanon, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 3:17 PM – 575

Subject: Gifted

Message: Please put gifted as part of educational funding. Those students have needs that deserve to be met just like IEP students. Please help our high IQ students be successful and meet their potential so they can mentor and help all the students in the classroom.

Name: Stacey F. **City:** Kintnersville, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 3:27 PM – 576

Subject: Allocation of Funds for Gifted Education

Message: Please consider South Williamsport Area School District for the allocation of funds for gifted education. My granddaughter, a 2nd grade student at Central Elementary, along with many other children in the district, would benefit greatly from this! I understand, there is an extreme shortage of funds for South Williamsport for this program. Last year, Central Elementary was only able to spend \$330 on their program. The whole community cares about our kids and want them to have the best education possible!

Name: LaDonna C. **City:** South Williamsport, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 3:34 PM – 577

Subject: Gifted education funding

Message: Funding gifted education is essential to developing intellectual capital in our society. Innovation across all fields - medicine, technology, finance, military, education, and more depends upon supporting the cognitive capacity of each citizen to their full potential. Gifted education took prominence during the "space race" and should not be forgotten with competing priorities. As a former student, parent to former students, and gifted support teacher, I see the difference this education makes. Please fund gifted education to our schools.

Name: Jill V. **City:** Harleysville, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 4:48 PM – 578

Subject: Eliminate or drastically cut School Property Taxes.

Message: Property taxes in Pennsylvania are illegal and need to be eliminated. Property owners should not be forced to fund a failing public education system with no accountability for graduating students who are illiterate. Funding the public school system should not be tied to my personal residence. Property owners are never truly owners of their property. Our government needs to listen to the people. Put that on the ballot again and see what happens. Let the people decide this once again. No tax should have the power to leave anyone homeless.

Name: Andrew M. **City:** Hanover, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 4:54 PM – 579

Subject: Unconstitutional Pa. Property Tax

Message: I was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania and proud to be one of its citizens. It saddens me that some Pennsylvania citizens have paid property taxes on their homes for many, many years now! They can no longer afford these taxes as they continue going up every year. Our seniors' and others salaries are not being raised enough every year so their income can no longer afford to live in their own homes, and necessities like utilities, food and these unfair property taxes. As a result homeowners are losing their homes due to these property taxes and becoming homeless! Please consider this as you go forward and Eliminate Pennsylvania Property Taxes! Thank you for your consideration! No one should become homeless because of these unconstitutional property taxes. Thank you!

Name: Karen M. **City:** Honey Brook, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 4:58 PM – 580

Subject: FAPE?

Message: Burkheimer is unconstitutional! Not only will they tax you right out of your home, they also hit your paycheck twice...Once a pay for PIT and again for LST. Enough!!! What a racket!

Name: Jeanne M. **City:** Lake Harmony, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 5:27 PM – 581

Subject: Fund gifted ed!

Message: Gifted education allows my child to have such a variety of classroom experiences! He would be so bored without having this extra curriculum.

Name: Amanda S. **City:** Canonsburg, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 6:41 PM – 582

Subject: Fund Gifted Education

Message: Please fund gifted education. We need to be financially supporting the top of students the same as special education.

Name: Brian P. **City:** Rome, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 8:34 PM – 583

Subject: Fund Gifted programs

Message: My children are benefiting greatly from their gifted programming and we would love to have it funded! Thank you!

Name: Katherine R. **City:** Canonsburg, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 9:29 PM – 584

Subject: Gifted education

Message: I am a mom of an 8 year old boy who is gifted. He skipped 2 grades and is currently in 5th grade as an 8 year old. After 2 grade skips he is still the top of his class and not challenged. Our small school district does not have the resources needed in order to provide him what he needs. Our PSSA scores as a district are in the red. As a teacher in this district I know our teachers are told their main goal is to raise those scores. The teachers are focusing on the students who are struggling. They are not able to challenge the students who already know the material. We have 1 gifted teacher for our entire district. My son is pulled for gifted services for 30 minutes a week. Please help fund gifted services so our gifted students are able to get the education they deserve.

Name: Rebekah C. **City:** Schuylkill Haven, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 17, 2023 9:38 PM – 585

Subject: Fund Gifted Programs!

Message: I am writing in support to fund the states gifted program! My child has engaged in so many enrichment and fulfilling activities that he would otherwise not have access to. Not only is he thriving with the educational setting but the gifted program has opened up so many interests for him to pursue in his future endeavors. Please consider these programs as essential to those kids that excel in subject matters at school. Sincerely, a caring mother of 3 bright and wonderful children!

Name: Halle B. **City:** Canonsburg, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 5:21 AM – 586

Subject: Request for gifted funding

Message: My daughter is a gifted student in fifth grade at North Strabane Intermediate School. She has been in gifted for three years now and has been benefited tremendously from the different activities, and I am writing to request that these activities and supplies receive funding to support greater opportunity and engagement that will compound over time. My daughter and her peers are our future leaders and need to be invested in.

Name: Erin S. **City:** Canonsburg, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 6:53 AM – 587

Subject: Gifted education funding

Message: I am writing to express my strong support for including gifted education in the educational fund. As a parent of a 10-year-old son who has a gifted individual identification plan (GIEP) in the Fox Chapel Area School District, I've witnessed firsthand the immense potential and unique needs of gifted students. Gifted education is essential not just for my son, but for thousands of students across Pennsylvania who thrive when given the appropriate challenges and resources. Statistics highlight the discrepancies in funding and the undeniable need for gifted programs. Investing in gifted education is investing in our state's future innovators, leaders, and changemakers. I urge the Commission to prioritize and allocate the necessary funds to support gifted education.

Name: Brian B. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 7:53 AM – 588

Subject: Gifted funding

Message: Hello! Gifted education should be part of the education fund!

Name: Shannon M. **City:** Rome, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 8:48 AM – 589

Subject: Gifted Funding for Pennsylvania School Districts

Message: Good morning. My name is Jestine. I am the Teacher of the Gifted K-12 for the Millville Area School District. In addition, I am a parent of gifted students. In my 11 years with working with gifted students and my 20 years of parenting gifted children, I have seen firsthand the needs that come as part of the Gifted "package." My students and my own children have proven time and again that they need specially designed instruction in order to have their educational needs fully met. These instructional components take the form of acceleration services (that often include some form of transportation when crossing district buildings), educational competitions to be truly challenged by educational peers, submitting writing examples for potential publication, and industry or college field trips to look into particular niche careers they are considering. All of these activities take funding in order for them to happen. The State of Pennsylvania mandates gifted education be available for all qualified students, but there is no state funding set aside to support this mandate. This means that our best and brightest, who sometimes suffer from extreme need for social and emotional supports, do not have the funding made available to their programs to fully support their educational and social needs. We gifted teachers have been able to do so much with so little financial support. Imagine what we could help our students accomplish with dedicated funding from the state. Please fund gifted programming in our Pennsylvania public schools.

Name: Jestine M. **City:** Danville, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 10:38 AM – 590

Subject: Funding for Gifted in PA

Message: Ch 16 MANDATES 1 gifted teacher per 65 gifted students. Current data shows there is a need for 1000 teachers! With the average teachers salary being \$73,000 we want a line item in the state budget of \$73,000,000. All districts must have gifted services which includes enrichment opportunities as well as acceleration within the classes. This could lead to college academies and dual enrollment programs. With no state funding many children cannot take advantage of some of the acceleration because there is no transportation offered by the districts. Students can not go on field trips and have the enrichment due to admission and or transportation fees. If there was a state budget for gifted part of those funds could open this possibility up for others. I have been a gifted coordinator since 2012. My own son twice exceptional. Please consider funding the gifted students and staff within this state. Many teachers do not truly understand the twice exceptional population of gifted students. Many parents may not know how to advocate effectively or even what to advocate for. I am very fortunate that I am on both sides of the gifted world, educator and mother. My son's district do all that they can but they could do SO much more if they had funding.

Name: Bronwyn K. **City:** Georgetown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 11:10 AM – 591

Subject: Funding for gifted education

Message: Hello - I'm writing to request that gifted education be part of the education plan/funding in Pennsylvania. Both of my children have been fortunate enough to benefit from the gifted education program in the Canon McMillan School District. They have had the opportunity to participate in enrichment that they wouldn't normally have had the chance to receive. Without funding, this may not be available to other children in the future. Please fund gifted education to allow children the chance to learn and grow. Thanks!

Name: Jamie C. **City:** Canonsburg, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 11:41 AM – 592

Subject: Property Tax Elimination

Message: Dear Basic Education Funding Commission, I am writing to address a deeply concerning issue that affects the education system in Pennsylvania. Our commonwealth currently ranks among the worst in providing adequate support for education. This problem has been perpetuated by the General Assembly's reliance on insufficient measures, such as the "Hold Harmless" and "Level Up" initiatives, which have failed to address the underlying problems. The consequence of the funding shortfalls and inequities is a vast disparity in education quality across the state's school districts. This is simply unacceptable. The Commonwealth Court has mandated an end to 2 of these inequalities, attributing them to an excessive reliance on school property taxes that has been exacerbated by legislative band-aid attempts to rectify the situation. As a member of the General

Assembly, you hold a fundamental responsibility to the children of Pennsylvania, as outlined in the state's constitution and explicitly stated in the Commonwealth Court Order. This duty must not be taken lightly or ignored. There is no way to equitably redistribute school property tax revenue across the state's 500 school districts; the tax itself MUST be eliminated. There are other compelling reasons to discontinue the use of property taxes for education funding: • They are an archaic and regressive form of taxation that has no place in a modern economy • They disproportionately penalize the most vulnerable homeowners, particularly retirees with fixed incomes, especially those relying solely on Social Security, who constitute a large portion of the state's retirees • Reliance on property taxes for education financing is an anomaly among developed nations • It is the most detested tax in Pennsylvania. The General Assembly has allowed this education funding tragedy to persist for far too long. However, you will soon have an opportunity to fix it. A new bill, the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," is set to be introduced in the Senate this session. This proposal offers an excellent solution to our education funding challenges and will answer the Commonwealth Court Order. The "School Property Tax Elimination Act" provides for the replacement of all school property tax revenue with a combination of modestly increased sales and income tax rates, a less regressive taxation method where everyone contributes to education funding according to their ability to pay. Notably, these replacement taxes will be distributed locally, preserving local control. It introduces a small, 2% tax on food and clothing except items included in WIC/SNAP programs, with no expansion of the rest of the tax base. It broadens the income tax to encompass select categories of retirement income, but excludes Social Security income and retirement income equivalent to Social Security, such as those earned by law enforcement, military and railroad workers. Contributions to qualified retirement plans will remain untaxed when filing state returns. While critics may raise concerns about taxing retirement income, it is undeniable that the school property tax is already a severe tax on retirement income, and is particularly hurtful for those living solely on Social Security. This plan includes the elimination of all school districts' debt. It also provides an initial \$12B cash infusion to schools (per the Independent Fiscal Office) to help them through the transition period and soften the impending loss of ESSR funding. It also includes training for school district financial officers to help manage this infusion during the transition period. This bill will present a pivotal moment for you to show leadership in addressing the deeply flawed education funding structure in our state. The Commonwealth Court has charged you with this responsibility; it is time to modernize education funding by fully eliminating the school property tax in Pennsylvania. We implore you to acquaint yourself with the details of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" when it is introduced this fall. We encourage you to join your fellow legislators in remedying the longstanding chaos in our state's education funding.

Name: Barry R. **City:** Lititz, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 12:00 PM – 593

Subject: Gifted Education

Message: Gifted education is education and as such should be part of the educational fund. Gifted education is just as important as special education services and should be funded similarly.

Name: Stacey R. **City:** Rome, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 2:06 PM – 594

Subject: Funding for Gifted and Advanced Learners

Message: Pennsylvania is one of several states that mandates gifted education for qualified students, but does not provide any additional funding for doing so. For many schools, this can be a disincentive to qualify students for gifted education and can lead to limited offerings for acceleration and enrichment for advanced learners. Also, the current Chapter 16 guidelines are focused on reading and math only. Please consider adding a broader definition of gifted that includes students in the 95th percentile and above in at least one major area, and funding for acceleration and or enrichment across at least all four core disciplines: math, science, social studies, and English. For an excellent model, check out the PA Leadership Charter School's University Scholars Program: <https://www.palcs.org/usp/>. Yes, I am the principal of this program. For research on the benefits of acceleration for advanced learners, a great place to start is: A Nation Empowered, Volume II. Chapter 2 has a terrific meta analysis that shares the research supported benefits of acceleration:

https://files.nwesi.org/website/Teaching_Learning/HiCap/2015-16%20meetings/NationEmpowered%20Vol2.pdf Also, we are a cyber school, but we deliver some supplemental services, such as education for gifted and advanced learners, in person a 2-3 days per week. We continue to meet the definition of a cyber school as a school that "uses technology in order to provide a significant portion of its curriculum and to deliver a significant portion of instruction to its students through the Internet or other electronic means." The nearby school districts refuse to transport students, even those that live within a 10 mile radius. As a charter school, we contend that they should transport students as the law requires them to. According to the Pupil Transportation School Code, school districts are responsible for transportation of students to charter schools when "students who attend a charter school located in their school district of residence or a charter school located outside district boundaries

at a distance not exceeding ten (10) miles by the nearest public highway.” (24 PS 17-1726-A) Thank you very much for your consideration of these two measures.

Name: Christopher S. **City:** Malvern, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 5:40 PM – 595

Subject: Gifted Education

Message: Gifted Education has long been underserved. These students have the potential to accomplish great change but there is little emphasis but on funding in which more students would be able to gain access to critical thinking tools, programs, and competitions.

Name: Andrea M. **City:** Chambersburg, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 6:24 PM – 596

Subject: Funding for Building Conditions

Message: School buildings need to be renovated and re built to 21st century standards. Our heating and cooling does not work properly. Our plumbing is constantly having major leaks through ceilings. My colleague was dumped on by a broken pipe while using the bathroom during the school day. My students use bathrooms that are constantly covered in water. We need funding for these basic needs of functional 21st century standard buildings. This will show the students, especially most at-risk, that they are valued and deserving of new facilities. This will build staff morale, to have a comfortable bathroom without leaking pipes, lead-paint walls, mouse poop lined corners. Please include building renovations and new construction in the fair funding formula. Thank you.

Name: Kaitlin M. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 9:03 PM – 597

Subject: Property Taxation

Message: It is time to stop penalizing homeowners. Schools continue to increase the cost we have to pay. In 1990's, I paid \$500.00 for all my taxes- a fair amount and I paid my share. Now, I pay over \$3200.00 every year and there is no end in sight. It is like I will be renting my home forever, since, even after the loan is finally paid off, I will be billed for school taxes forever until I die or can no longer afford this unfair taxation and my home is taken away from me. Since it has happened to many of our elderly in our area. Everyone should be paying their fair share toward school expenses, not just the homeowner. We need reform. Pennsylvania collects inheritance taxes, death taxes, sales taxes, \$20.00 for each death certificate, and money from gambling proceeds. You tax our interest and dividends and even our Social Security money along with IRA and Pension money. Please reform School Taxes and make it right. Thank you.

Name: Susan S. **City:** Lehighton, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 11:03 PM – 598

Subject: School Taxes

Message: Finally, the way the public schools are funded was found unconstitutional; I've been waiting for this for years! The legislature has ignored the hardship school taxes have been on homeowners. It's time to put an end to the over 10,000 families that are made homeless each year only due to the inability to afford these ever-rising school taxes. It's time to end the inequitable way the state funds public schools. It has been unfair to the children, but it has also been unfair to the homeowners. It's time the state steps in and fund public schools with public money. Every student regardless of zip code deserves to have the same amount spent on them each year. There is no reason it costs different amounts for different zip codes and that is the reason there will never be an equitable way to fund schools if property taxes are used to fund schools. There are thousands of children that attend public schools whose parents don't pay a dime towards their education; I would suspect over 50% don't pay a dime. How do you even think it is fair for homeowners to have their homes they worked for held in ransom by a school district with the sky's the limit with spending? Many homeowners haven't had school aged children in the public school system in over 20 years! Some families have never had any children in the public school system yet are being forced to fund public schools or we will take your home! How does that even make sense? Of course, you won't answer those questions because you don't have an answer that makes any sense, I'm sure. I truly hope the judge does not let you put another band aid on the situation with level up or hard harmless because that doesn't work and isn't equitable for all involved. Unfortunately, taxes will have to be raised to fund public schools, which is the way it should be. Everyone needs to pay, not just homeowners. A tax should be on your income, not on your property. My property doesn't make me an income, in fact, it costs me money for upkeep. NO TAX SHOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE YOU HOMELESS YET THAT IS WHAT IS HAPPENING WITH THE WAY YOU FUND SCHOOLS, YOU DO REALIZE THAT OVER 10,000 FAMILIES ARE MADE HOMELESS EACH YEAR BECAUSE OF THIS

SCHOOL TAX AND YET YOU DO NOTHING ABOUT IT, WHY IS THAT? WOULD LOVE THAT ANSWER. I HOPE YOU DO YOUR JOB AND MAKE THIS FAIR FOR EVERYONE THERE IS NO REASON FOR YOU TO ALLOW SO MANY FAMILIES TO LOSE THEIR HOMES EACH YEAR.

Name: Robert P. **City:** Mohnton, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 18, 2023 11:27 PM – 599

Subject: School Taxes

Message: I have been watching your meetings online and so far, I see no concern whatsoever for the homeowners who are forced to pay for public schools. Thousands of families are made homeless each year because they can't afford the ever-rising school taxes. Children also live in those homes that are stolen by the school districts or their grandparents. Don't you think that has a negative effect on those children you all say you care about? Yet all I hear is a panel that makes big money and can afford school taxes asking questions of another panel of people that make big money and can also afford school taxes how much more money do you want and need with not a word on where you plan to get the money. It shows that you people don't have a clue about the hardship you have burdened homeowners with. Your lack of concern is sickening! I agree the education system is a mess, but it is a mess because it has been ignored by the legislature for over 20 years and now you have been forced by the court to fix the mess you have created by kicking the can down the road every year on school funding. You have put more of a burden on the homeowner to fund schools and the state has paid less and less each year. I'm glad the judge has finally found the way we fund our schools unconstitutional, something thousands of us have known for years. No tax should have the power to make you homeless and the way you fund schools has that power and it must be taken away. Public schools should be funded by the public not homeowners. Every child deserves the same education as the next no matter what the zip code. It should take the same amount to educate regardless of zip code with children with special needs getting more. Teachers should be on equal pay scales so all schools will have the opportunity to have good teachers. I'm sure school districts and teachers will not like all this but it's the way it should be. If people who live in high class districts want to donate more to have the state-of-the-art athletic fields let them, don't expect the rest of us to pay. Taxes should be based on income, that way they are affordable. Hopefully, this judge will force you to do your job and not kick the can down the road with a lot of talk and nothing done. Students and homeowners need action now! Thank you!

Name: Jerry M. **City:** Narvon, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2023 4:07 AM – 600

Subject: Property/School Tax Reform

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a member of the Property Tax Elimination in Pa. Facebook group and I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record. The February 7, 2023 Commonwealth Court findings with regard to the inequitable school funding lawsuit have highlighted a significant issue affecting education in Pennsylvania. The Court has recognized the urgency of this matter and emphasized the need for a thorough review of education funding and the implementation of a system that ensures "all students have access to a comprehensive, effective, and contemporary system of public education." The court attributes the vast disparities in education funding and opportunity to an excessive reliance on property taxes to fund schools. Ironically "Hold Harmless" policy is a prime driver of the vast funding disparities and now perpetuates them. Pennsylvania's state-level education funding ranks among the lowest nationwide with much of the support directed to schools that receive significant funds through "Hold Harmless" policy. As legislators, you hold a crucial responsibility to enhance our education system for every student in Pennsylvania. There simply is no way to fix current funding models. Over the years, the General Assembly has grappled with finding effective solutions, such as the aforementioned "Hold Harmless" rule and the currently debated "Level Up" measures. Despite these efforts, the quality of education across the state remains decidedly unequal due to extreme funding disparities among school districts. It's important to acknowledge that addressing the significant differences between school districts is a complex task. Consequently, a viable solution emerges: the elimination of school property taxes. This approach answers many of the concerns raised by the Commonwealth Court while benefiting many in our state, especially retirees relying solely on Social Security, who constitute about 40% of seniors, a growing cohort. With limited savings, those approaching retirement often struggle to meet their financial needs. A particularly notable proposal is the "School Property Tax Elimination Act," introduced by former Representative Frank Ryan in 2019. This proposal merits consideration due to its potential to address the concerns highlighted by the Commonwealth Court. The act advocates for replacing revenue from property taxes with proceeds from increased sales and personal income taxes while maintaining local control. An additional 1.85% personal income tax

would be added at the school district level, and a 2% sales tax at county level would be used for funding schools in that county. This 2% portion of the sales tax would also apply to clothing and food, excluding essential items like WIC/SNAP. The act expands income taxes to encompass some retirement income, excluding Social Security and equivalents (e.g., police, military retirement) to allow the sales tax base to remain largely unchanged. Importantly, this legislation also eliminates existing school districts' debt. The idea of extending the state income tax to cover certain retirement income initially was not received well but careful financial and demographic analysis showed that it was preferable to expanding the goods and services subject to sales tax, which had been a sticking point in previous property tax elimination legislation. Most who initially rejected a retirement tax now realize they would see a tax reduction and are supportive of the measure. It is worth noting that Pennsylvania's retirees, a growing population, use their retirement income to pay property taxes. Many (about 40%) rely solely on Social Security income. Additionally, many individuals on the cusp of retirement are living paycheck to paycheck, and will struggle to make ends meet due to minimal savings. In this perspective, the property tax is effectively an unregulated tax on social security and retirement income. Since property tax does not take into account a person's ability to pay, we currently have a situation where low income families and those living on Social Security are in effect subsidizing those who benefit from comparatively lucrative un-taxed pensions and distributions. The School Property Tax Elimination Act taxes income whether you are retired or employed but does it in an equitable way. It saves people money now or in the future. Retired seniors would pay roughly \$1.9B in a retirement tax but would see about \$3.5B in property taxes eliminated. That is roughly a \$1.6B financial windfall for this demographic!! Education funding advocates emphasize the need for a significant funding increase, potentially in the billions, in addition to the \$7.9 billion currently allocated for basic education at the state level. Implementing the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" would facilitate real-time collection and distribution of funds, providing an additional immediate one-time \$12 billion cash infusion to schools, along with training for school district financial officers, to navigate the transition period. The cash infusion would also help with the transition away from ESSR funding. This presents a moment for leadership and progress in our education system. The Commonwealth Court places trust in you to address this critical issue, emphasizing the necessity of modernizing education funding and supporting a solution that completely eliminates the school property tax in Pennsylvania. I urge you to stay informed about the upcoming introduction of the "School Property Tax Elimination Act" this fall. By familiarizing yourselves with its intricacies, you can actively contribute to resolving the ongoing challenges in Pennsylvania's school funding and collaborate with fellow legislators to create a better future for our schools. Thank you for your attentive consideration and unwavering dedication to the advancement of education in our state.

Name: Alvin W. **City:** Tamiment, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2023 4:07 AM – 601

Subject: Property Tax

Message: I'm a single retired woman that owns my own home. I make Less hen \$1,000.00 a month from S.S. It's all I can do to pay my bills. I can't afford to put a badly needed roof on my house or new Windows. I could get a loan for that but how do I pay it back? I put a new propane boiler system in a few years back, but with the price of propane now, I've had to go back to using a small wood stove to heat my home. I can't afford to pay for life insurance, home insurance, or health insurance so I have none. God forbid if something should happen and they take my home that I have worked so hard for all my life. I can't understand why school taxes are so high in this area when we have less and less children in our schools. Thank you.

Name: Norton L. **City:** Shunk, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2023 9:43 AM – 602

Subject: Gifted Education

Message: Much like Special Needs students needing support programs to meet their abilities, Gifted students also need educational programs to meet their special needs as well. When gifted students make continuous progress in school, they will be able to maximize their full potential. All students deserve the tools to meet their maximum potential. When we educate our children to become the best that they can possibly be, it will secure their future as potential leaders.

Name: Twyla W. **City:** Rome, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2023 1:04 PM – 603

Subject: School Funding/Property Tax

Message: As the Court has ruled the current funding structure must be overhauled and a committee is traveling the state to hear comments, I respectfully ask that you hear from actual stakeholders-taxpayers and those who support HB13 to eliminate Property Tax as school funding. As we know, throwing more money does nothing to improve the quality of education however it does harm taxpayers. Senior citizens are often forced out of their home over high taxes and that's wrong. Parents who choose to sacrifice & pay tuition at private/other schools still pay the same property tax as those with kids in public school,

businesses may be exempt from this tax. Overall it's a very poor way to fund education & detrimental to the residents of this state. Now is the opportunity to make real, noticeable change & eliminate Property tax per HB13. Please don't squander such an opportunity. Yes, schools need to be funded but perhaps better oversight into where they spend their funding & how bloated their administration might be is a better starting point to improve our students education. The dollars schools do receive should primarily be used to educate students in the core subjects and not setting schools up as social justice or medical centers. Please carefully complete this process so that the taxpayers see relief and students see better outcomes. These are not mutually exclusive targets. Hear out and listen to the property tax elimination group's proposals. There is no better time than now. Thank you.

Name: Michele B. **City:** Lehighton, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2023 1:09 PM – 604

Subject: Fair Funding Suggestion

Message: Funding should be used to hire positions such as reading specialists and math interventionists.

Name: April A. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2023 3:58 PM – 605

Subject: Gifted education

Message: Gifted education is severely underserved. These kids learn differently, just as kids who need adjustments based on slower learning. Advanced learners are forgotten. This leads to boredom, quitting, and not reaching full potential. These are the brightest minds! Our future! They need the engagement and extra curriculum to keep them learning, engaged, and eager.

Name: Summer S. **City:** Wrightsville, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 19, 2023 7:45 PM – 606

Subject: Gifted education Funding

Message: I am the mother of two "gifted" students in the northeast Bradford school district and a sister to a Special Education teacher in the same district. Although both are mandated by state law, only one of them receives any funding for help and improvements. Our gifted students are in just as much need as our special education students for improvements to their programs, additional training and increased staffing in their teachers. We owe it to them to do more than check the box to say these programs are available. We need to fund them appropriately so they add value, meaning, and purpose to the additional responsibilities we place upon the students and teachers.

Name: Savannah G. **City:** Ulster, PA

Sent: Friday, October 20, 2023 8:47 AM – 607

Subject: Wiped out again

Message: I have to pay my 3rd installment of my \$3600 school tax bill by the end of this month. So I'll be wiped out again and struggling to pay for groceries. This is ridiculous and needs to stop NOW!

Name: Mitchell S. **City:** Monroeton, PA

Sent: Friday, October 20, 2023 9:30 AM – 608

Subject: Mandates aren't enough

Message: Hello, My name is Sarah. I work as a gifted educator in the State College Area School District and hold a gifted education endorsement in the state of PA. I am also the parent of a gifted student who has now graduated from our high school. I see first hand the impact of our state's attempts to ensure that gifted students' needs are met in our schools, and in both my own school and in talking with other educators from around the state I have seen how those attempts fall short. The PA Department of Education has issued a slew of mandates about gifted education that try to ensure that schools search for, identify and serve students who show giftedness in Math and Language Arts. But, those mandates are completely unfunded. I work in a well-resourced district that has a historic dedication to meeting the needs of all of our learners, but even in our district it is difficult to find the resources to meet the mandates of the DoE. In connecting with other colleagues from around the state and talking about the gifted services programs in their districts, it is obvious that these mandates cannot be carried out in many places without appropriate accompanying funding. Gifted education is important. Our gifted learners' needs are no less significant or important than our deficient learners' needs. Investments in gifted education come back to our country in the increased earning potential and innovation that our students are capable of when their specific educational needs are met and their gifts are nurtured and allowed to grow. They have enormous potential to impact our society in a positive way, but unfortunately many of our gifted students fail to realize that potential in schools that stifle, fail to support or bore them. The

notion that "smart kids" should be able to help themselves and don't need special programs is misguided and flies in the face of decades of educational and psychological research that proves otherwise. Gifted learners have unique needs and face unique challenges in our educational systems, and we should support them in just as many ways as we support other learners. That support can only come with adequate and appropriate funding. Pennsylvania legislators need to fund the mandates that they have imposed on Pennsylvania schools and work to meet the needs of our gifted learners and help them to thrive.

Name: Sarah R. **City:** State College, PA

Sent: Friday, October 20, 2023 9:33 AM – 609

Subject: Stop taxing our homes to fund education

Message: to Whom it May Concern: It is well past the point of abolishing school taxes on homes. Make the change to 8 or even 10% sales tax in which even non PA residents pay and adjust the PIT accordingly. I'm a disabled widow on a very fixed income without a car the runs. I recently had to take out a loan on my life insurance policy in order to buy materials for a new roof or I'll have no homeowners insurance. That's only the tip of the iceberg.

Name: Suzanne M. **City:** Lehighton, PA

Sent: Friday, October 20, 2023 10:32 AM – 610

Subject: Gifted Ed Funding

Message: I believe gifted education should be funded just like other programs in the school. This funding would be vital in providing resources, materials, educational trips, and educational opportunities (students and staff included). A school is to meet the needs of ALL students, so why is gifted not included in the funding?

Name: Lydia W. **City:** Rome, PA

Sent: Friday, October 20, 2023 12:31 PM – 611

Subject: Gifted Education Funding

Message: There is a requirement to identify gifted students under chapter 16 but no attached funding to offer programming.

Name: Abena O. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Friday, October 20, 2023 6:32 PM – 612

Subject: School Tax

Message: My school tax is due. The cost of everything is up. I'm on fixed income. I can't afford to borrow to pay it anymore. Somebody please help. This tax has hurt my family for years and caused my mother to sell her home of 50 years.

Name: John L. **City:** Gibsonia, PA

Sent: Friday, October 20, 2023 8:59 PM – 613

Subject: School Property Tax Elimination.

Message: School Property taxes are wrong. It penalizes those who own property while non owners are not held accountable to the schools. These taxes drive people and seniors from the state. It is wrong to take a person's house they worked their whole life for because schools keep raising taxes on the municipalities. There is a more fair system to fund the schools so everyone pays. Take this burden off the back of the homeowners. I am 53 and a widow. I have no children and will have no children yet I am on the hook to these schools because I own a home. While people with children in the schools that don't own a home don't pay those taxes. It is discriminatory and unfair.

Name: Robyn S. **City:** Tobyhanna, PA

Sent: Saturday, October 21, 2023 6:36 AM – 614

Message: Please lower our taxes...so many are struggling to keep their homes

Name: Kim S. **City:** Jim Thorpe, PA

Sent: Saturday, October 21, 2023 9:47 AM – 615

Subject: School Property Taxes

Message: Please consider HB 13 which would eliminate the school property tax so no one would lose their home over a tax. As a new widow, this tax concerns me regarding my future ability to pay since my income will be greatly reduced.

Name: Catherine B. **City:** Trappe, PA

Sent: Saturday, October 21, 2023 10:02 AM – 616

Subject: School tax

Message: There are so many elderly people that can't afford the school tax. They paid when their children were in school but this is a burden on them now. There should be another way that this could be paid for.

Name: Pauline D. **City:** Conshohocken, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 22, 2023 3:01 PM – 617

Subject: Property Tax Elimination!

Message: Our state has put too many people and families out of their homes for not being able to pay what should be paid for equally and in another manner. Schools have a lot of money and unfortunately the higher ups is where the majority of the money lands. The money isn't used to supply a real education or food for our kids. It's being used to line the pockets of the rule makers and increasing the sports programs fields. If our education system was run correctly and fairly there would be no one on the street and we would have exceptional. There are other ways to fund our schools. And you as our leaders need to listen and look into ways to do so. People are struggling every day to survive and I myself being disabled along my husband also, we struggle daily to keep a roof over our heads and we also are parents of a teenager who needs clothes, food, and is learning to drive. So the extra costs are sucking up what little money is left in this economy. Did I know both my husband and I wouldn't be able to work when our child was a teenager NO, and we worry daily about being able to keep a roof over all our heads. This is just one family story and ours isn't the worst. But you all go ahead and live off of our money and make sure YOU CAN SURVIVE THE NEXT ELECTION ROUND !! We are done living off Pennie's while after taxes you all have a windfall to fall back on.

Name: Karen C. **City:** Shade Gap, PA

Sent: Monday, October 23, 2023 8:44 AM – 618

Subject: BEFC RESULTS

Message: I was a school board president when this commission began in 2015. After 8 years of holding meetings, I'd be very interested in learning the results of all those meetings and what improvements for the taxpaying public have actually been enacted. Thank you!

Name: Richard M. **City:** Douglassville, PA

Sent: Monday, October 23, 2023 9:06 AM – 619

Subject: School Property Tax

Message: Please eliminate the school property tax that places hardships on homeowners. Seniors cannot keep up with these ever increasing taxes and risk losing their homes. I do not understand why a certain group of people, the property owners, are the ones responsible to pay for our schools. Everyone should pay this tax. Why do we find it acceptable to take away a home someone has worked all their life for because they cannot afford this ever increasing tax? Please find another means that is fair to fund the schools! Thank you.

Name: Laurie S. **City:** Phoenixville, PA

Sent: Monday, October 23, 2023 10:54 AM – 620

Subject: Formula for school funding

Message: As you deliberate about school funding please please be sure the formula provides full and fair funding for black and brown students. I am a taxpayer and want to learn that the new formula provides adequate resources, equitably distributed and in a reasonable timeline. Thank you.

Name: Erma W. **City:** Lancaster PA

Sent: Monday, October 23, 2023 11:25 AM – 621

Subject: GIFTED deserve funding too!!!

Message: Hi. Our gifted programs deserve to be funded just as much as any other programs in the school systems. These children learn at a higher level and need the appropriate education and tools to succeed. They need funding because the schools cannot provide adequate programs without funding. These children are the ones that will be running our country and communities in the future. They are also our future doctors, lawyers, teachers, and business owners to name a few. The funding that they receive will only make the future a better place. Please do not let our system fail our kids. Thank you for your time.

Name: Rebecca S. **City:** Bangor, PA

Sent: Monday, October 23, 2023 4:47 PM – 622

Subject: Funding with Property Taxes in PA

Message: Thank you for addressing the funding issues for education in PA! You have a hard job to do. I am IN FAVOR of REPLACING all school PROPERTY TAXES with a SALES/INCOME tax. The current funding mechanism (through property taxes) is broken. The SALES/INCOME TAX should be used as replacement revenue because they FULLY FUND schools, and KEEP THEM FUNDED because these sources of revenue grow with the economy. Several bills have been proposed (including former Rep Frank Ryan) which would solve TODAY'S funding issues, and can accommodate TOMORROW'S funding needs. The wide disparity in funding lies squarely on property owners today. A band-aid is not enough. A complete switch to Sales/Income tax is required, and the elimination of dependency on school property taxes would help tremendously. Thanks for all you're doing!

Name: Ryan P. **City:** Middletown, PA

Sent: Monday, October 23, 2023 9:54 PM – 623

Subject: Lack of focus on some schools

Message: The Lancaster education "discussion" always focuses on Lancaster City schools...mainly. What about the outlying area schools. I have NEVER read or heard of any focus/conversation on Conestoga Valley High School.....never 😞 ! Why??????

Name: Bonnie D. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 9:48 AM – 624

Subject: Attendance for the 21th century

Message: We live in an uncertain world. Since Covid we must be aware that it is still here. The children in school needs the 10 days with excesses to be reevaluated. The times has change we live in a two-parent household sometimes even the child of age need to work and must help the family. The children who are doing everything in society right with their families should have an opportunity to look at this attendance program with a need fresh perspectives because times has obviously change. This is our future let really make a change not just repeat our past history.

Name: Stephanie S. **City:** East Petersburg, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 1:46 PM – 625

Subject: Please keep pornography away from minors

Message: Also keep the racial bias out of the curriculum.

Name: Paul B. **City:** Lititz, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 2:19 PM – 626

Subject: Community member comment

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a new tomorrow and your time to act is now

Name: Marlene A. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 2:25 PM – 627

Subject: Funding for Public Education

Message: Funding for public education is broken and our courts have acknowledged that in finding that the current system is unconstitutional. Understand that simply increasing state funding for the government run public schools will not solve the problem. It may even increase some of the problems if they feel insulated from having to perform. Increasing parental choices is a better system. Parents are in the best position to find the best educational opportunities for their children. The more that the state money follows the children the more equitable the education will be for all. Public education and public schools are not synonymous terms. The state constitution uses the term "public education" not "public schools." The Commonwealth Court opinion does not say that the solution is to increase public school funding and that would not automatically meet the constitutional mandate if they continue the pattern of underperformance. In West Philadelphia our children have very high needs that are unlikely to ever be met under the current public school system.

Name: Matthew W. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 2:28 PM – 628

Subject: School funding

Message: Please do your job in earnest and come up with fair calculations that provide for the correction of the underfunding that has gone on for too many years. Thank you.

Name: Richard T. **City:** Holtwood, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 2:38 PM – 629

Subject: PA must boost state funding for public education ASAP!

Message: As a parent of a Philadelphia public school student (and a recent graduate in his first year at Penn State), I know too well the impact of inadequate education funding on students, teachers and families. The lack of public education support in our state hurts every district, but has outsized impact on communities with a high percentage of low income families - primarily urban and rural areas. By not investing in the education of our children, we are driving up other costs as we deprive them of the foundation to thrive. The best way to combat poverty and crime is by spending more to rebuild our schools and give teachers and school staff members the tools they need to nurture and educate the adults of tomorrow. Please stop being short-sighted - invest in Pennsylvania's future.

Name: Lauren W. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 2:39 PM – 630

Subject: Educational Funding

Message: My name is Candi and I am an alumna, an employee, a previous parent, taxpayer and firm supporter of the Pottstown School District. I have watched my district as it has gradually declined as our tax base shifted and the state has failed to step forward with plan that will provide every single child in the state an equitable education. I can look across the river and see the difference a plan that truly supports our underfunded district would make. I was already disappointed by your very narrow scope for hearings and am outraged that, rather than establishing fair funding, there is a deep-seated effort to divert even more funding to charter schools. The ONLY failure in this state is not inherent in the administration, teachers and students in underperforming districts; it is inherent in the politicians who refuse to treasure all of the states children and continue to squander their talents and skills. Change this now.

Name: Candi S. **City:** Pottstown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 2:45 PM – 631

Subject: Every student deserves to be adequately funded.

Message: Hello! The message from the Commonwealth Court case is clear: the state has been underfunding education for years and it has disproportionately harmed communities and students of color. Many schools around the state are in crisis-- they need resources to meet the many needs of students coming into public education right now. Investing in our public system is the only way forward that provides an equitable solution. Make sure every school district is adequately funded in 2024, and use some of the money we have in our reserves to remediate the damage that has been done to those schools that have been chronically underfunded!

Name: Jacquelyn H. **City:** State College, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 2:47 PM – 632

Subject: Two crucial steps

Message: Thank you for tackling PA's inadequate school funding system, the results of which are painfully apparent in my neighborhood in Philadelphia. In my view, step one of any fix must be to calculate the actual cost of providing adequate programs. From what I can see, that's not really so hard; in fact, the more successful school districts have already done it. Second step, and a bigger challenge: figure out how to phase in enough state money to enable all districts to reach that number. I'm counting on BEFC to recommend both. Let's move PA forward!

Name: Len R. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 2:51 PM – 633

Subject: Basic Education Funding Equity

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools

with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a new tomorrow and your time to act is now

Name: Todd S. **City:** Lykens, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 2:58 PM – 634

Subject: Funding the Erie and municipality school system

Message: As a senior citizen, I have but one very large and long-standing complaint. I have been following this forum for years and admire the hard work they are doing and to no avail. I am getting ready to mail a check for over \$2000.00 to the Fairview Township Tax Collector. It averages out to \$250.00 monthly. I am 77 years old and have one income - Social Security. "There gotta be a better way". Friends of mine who rent don't have that problem. I'm 77 years old and have been paying this tax myself for 53 years and I don't use the school system. Please consider this when you are discussing changes that would help the school systems in Erie and the surrounding area. One person in, say, Harborcreek township might pay \$2000.00/year and another person in say, Union City will pay half that amount. Also, the students get varying amounts of help depending upon their school district. Could you please consider at least a cut off at age 65 when people begin to leave the work force? Glad to have a forum here to voice an opinion - it's a great start. Thank you for the consideration.

Name: Mary L. **City:** Fairview, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 3:16 PM – 635

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. As part of the historic decision rendered in the Fair Funding lawsuit case declaring the Pennsylvania school funding system unconstitutional, an expert analysis has indicated the Shenandoah Valley School District is underfunded by over \$10,000 per student for an adequacy shortfall of over \$12 million per year. The per student shortfall ranks 11th in the state for most underfunded districts with approximately 80% of all schools underfunded. Furthermore, district enrollment has increased by 25% since 2015-16 with the ELL population more than doubled. It is time for legislative leaders to work on a funding solution without horse swapping, bartering, bundling or combining it with any individual political agenda to provide a thorough and efficient funding system for public education. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a new tomorrow and your time to act is now.

Name: Brian W. **City:** Shenandoah, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 3:30 PM – 636

Subject: Eagerly awaiting BEFC outcomes

Message: First of all, thank you very much for taking the time to listen to parents, students, educators & taxpayers. It is a shame that the push for appropriate state funding to our public schools had to come down to a lawsuit, but nonetheless, here we are and it's important to work together so our students across the Commonwealth start getting the support they need as soon as possible. Divisive politics aside, we ask that you keep your focus on the task at hand and consider only what will benefit Pennsylvanians. Our public school systems and their funding are vital to ensure our state embraces the power of knowledge to change lives. Thank you again for your efforts to accomplish this!

Name: Lisa R. **City:** Allentown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 3:48 PM – 637

Subject: Save public education

Message: The Basic Education Funding Commission's plan must include adequacy targets for each school district and lay out a reasonable timeline for the state to fully fund a constitutionally compliant school funding system.

Name: Tsee L. **City:** Brooklyn, NY

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 3:50 PM – 638

Subject: Reasonable timeline for the state to fully fund a constitutionally compliant school funding system.

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a new tomorrow and your time to act is now.

Name: Yolanda B. **City:** Indiana, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 3:54 PM – 639

Subject: Eliminate property taxes

Message: Property taxes are out control too high for people to afford there are other ways of collecting taxes

Name: Francis M. **City:** Upper Darby, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 4:29 PM – 640

Subject: Justice-focused funding

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: I come to you as a community advocate. I will keep it simple. If our children our the future, why are we creating such a bleak one for them? Why are the school buildings they spend the majority of their formative hours in freezing, full of mold and asbestos, hyper-policed, and under resourced? We must bring back counselors, libraries and librarians, art and music teachers, and school nurses. Most importantly, each school needs to be staffed with at least one of the aforementioned individual staff member, instead of them being spread across schools. This is unfair to the students and the staff. We must and can do better. We must fight for justice and use our funds to do so.

Name: Nicole W. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 4:32 PM – 641

Subject: Property taxes

Message: I am in favor of eliminating the property tax and I support finding a fairer way of funding the way we pay for the education of the children. No tax should have the power to make someone homeless.

Name: David F. **City:** Camp Hill, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 4:42 PM – 642

Subject: Equity for schools funding

Message: I worked as a public school educator in rural PA for over 20 years. Pennsylvanians should now be able to expect your report to inform budget proposals in the very next school year. It is embarrassing that Pennsylvania cannot back up state mandates with equitable funding, yet the legislature continues to "debate" the value of school vouchers. That proposal would only compound the discrepancies in funding between public school districts. Children in my community and state-wide need fair and adequate funding, without the competition from alternative education options that do not have the same mandates to meet, and without the burden of relying on property taxes in poorer districts. Please issue a report that is an up-to-date and accurate calculation of how much money each school district needs. We need to meet this constitutional obligation to our students, and the state needs to meet its share of funding within a reasonable (next year!) timeline.

Name: Eileen D. **City:** Bellefonte, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 5:03 PM – 643

Subject: Eliminate Property Tax

Message: Property Tax Is Slavery. It is a Mafia Style Protection Racket (Pay me what ever I want, or I'll take your house, weather you made any money, or not.) It's rife with abuse. It's ruining PA. It Negates our Right To Own Property.

Name: Brian Z. **City:** Lower Burrell, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 5:07 PM – 644

Subject: School funding/ property tax

Message: Pennsylvania has an opportunity to eliminate school property tax. Homeowners shouldn't have to worry about losing their homes to fund education. Please listen to the working group for property tax elimination. Seniors and the disabled lose their homes in tax auctions and that isn't right. Thank you.

Name: Gordon Groff **City:** Bristol, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 5:20 PM – 645

Subject: Educational Funding

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: Each of you has been tasked with the distinguished mission of improving thousands of young lives in the upcoming years, by assuring that the budgets of each of Pennsylvania's 500 school districts are fairly and adequately funded. Last February, Commonwealth Court Judge Jubelirer underscored the gravity of your task by ruling that the system of funding public education by the state is unconstitutional. I am therefore requesting that as public servants and as decent individuals, that you expedite your mission in a manner that satisfies the state constitution and the educational needs of all the commonwealth's current and future students. Thank you.

Name: Coleman P. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 5:26 PM – 646

Subject: We need fair education funding!

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: My name is Sandy and I am a parent in the Coatesville Area School District. We have a truly wonderful and diverse community, but our schools, students, and teachers are really struggling. Our school district is severely underfunded, in part due to the inequities of the charter school funding formula. There is a large charter school nearby where many parents have been sending their kids, draining funds from our public school system. It's a viscous cycle because the lack of funding creates more and more problems, in turn causing more people to choose charter. We have numerous school buildings in desperate need of repair or replacement. Several schools with no AC, teachers can't get the supplies they need, and our classrooms are overcrowded, among many other issues. Our students are not receiving the attention they need. My children deserve the same opportunities as our neighboring districts' children and we are tired of waiting and hoping. Please ensure that your final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. Please also include a fair charter school funding formula that takes into account the funds that the charter school actually needs. We are counting on the Commission to complete its important work. Now is the time to act. My children can't wait any longer. Thank you.

Name: Sandy K. **City:** Coatesville, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 6:28 PM – 647

Subject: Pennsylvania's school funding system

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: As a community member, retired educator, and parent, I was grateful that my children were privileged to attend great public schools and receive a wonderful education that prepared them well for advanced education and their eventual careers. "Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a new tomorrow and your time to act is now." Thank you.

Name: John W. **City:** Sellersville, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 6:45 PM – 648

Subject: Equity

Message: I never could have imagined that a mere zip code could mean the difference in educational opportunities and fairness for children. Pennsylvania is among the worst states with this problem. It's time our politicians start looking at it through the EYES OF A CHILD. Would you honestly want this for the proper development of our future generation?

Name: Ann B. **City:** York, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 6:52 PM – 649

Subject: School Taxes

Message: Everyone should pay through increase sales and PIT! No one should lose their home to fund someone's pension.

Name: Mike M. **City:** Forty Fort, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 7:36 PM – 650

Subject: Property taxes

Message: I feel it would be fair to all if they increase the sales tax on everything that way all pay their fair share. I'm tired of paying 3600 in fall taxes for a 2200 square foot home built in 2004. When I know pet who have a older farm house barb and 36 acres and pay 900 in fall taxes. Where is fairness in this?

Name: Michelle N. **City:** Clearfield, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 7:42 PM – 651

Subject: No more property tax

Message: Do away with this tax and replace with sales tax and maybe personal property.

Name: Teresa W. **City:** Greensburg, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 8:21 PM – 652

Subject: EDUCATION FUNDING!!

Message: Our young people are starving. They are dealing with so much right now. At least give them a properly funded education! I demand that we come up with a well-presented plan to help our children! They deserve so much better than months and months of dilly dallying. We cannot expect to have a productive society when we have an uneducated workforce as a result of the state. Get it done! Thank you.

Name: Daphne D. **City:** Hopeland, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 8:56 PM – 653

Subject: Property taxes

Message: Please consider eliminating the school tax and replacing it with a sales tax increase and income tax. By doing this, people wouldn't be afraid to remodel their houses and lumber stores and home improvement stores would get more business and the economy would prosper

Name: Jeff F. **City:** Wellsboro, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 9:18 PM – 654

Subject: School and property tax

Message: Eliminate school and property tax at least for people over 65.

Name: Chuck S. **City:** Latrobe, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 24, 2023 10:25 PM – 655

Subject: Adequate funding for PA students

Message: PA students in every district need adequate funding. It is a state responsibility to provide disadvantaged students who do not happen to live in wealthy districts that can raise adequate funding by raising taxes more state funding. It is the state responsibility to "provide adequate and efficient" education funding. We can't allow unconstitutional funding to continue.

Name: Mary M. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 3:41 AM – 656

Subject: School District funding

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to equitably fund our schools. Thank you for your cooperation and consideration.

Name: Adam L. **City:** Lake Ariel, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 5:02 AM – 657

Subject: Elimination of property tax

Message: Educating our children is everyone's responsibility not just homeowners it is unconscionable that we are constantly at risk of being put out on the street and losing the home they spent a lifetime paying for, when they loose a job, or become ill and can't work or when a spouse dies, or they were unfortunate enough to grow old!!! Property owner ship is one of the principle reasons this country was founded in the first place and now property tax is so high it is almost impossible for working people to keep up with, it must be eliminated now!!!

Name: Carol Y. **City:** Quakertown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 5:48 AM – 658

Subject: Equity

Message: I never could have imagined that a mere zip code could mean the difference in educational opportunities and fairness for children. Pennsylvania is among the worst states with this problem. It's time our politicians start looking at it through the EYES OF A CHILD. Would you honestly want this for the proper development of our future generation?

Name: Ann B. **City:** York, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 6:20 AM – 659

Subject: Fair funding

Message: Our schools and children need fair funding so they can have update books and supplies to equip them for their future.

Name: Regina A. **City:** Pottstown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 7:04 AM – 660

Subject: Education Funding

Message: Many people feel that public schools are "failing". There are a myriad of reasons why, inequitable funding is one reason. Where I live should not impact how well my child's school is funded.

Name: Karen C. **City:** Boyertown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 7:12 AM – 661

Subject: Pottsgrove School District

Message: Hello - I resent the fact that Pottsgrove School District purchases MAC computers for their students when Chromebooks are just as well. I am 67 years old and would like to retire. When I do, I will live on a fixed income and my largest expense will be my school taxes. I most likely will have to sell my home because it will only be my income. When schools think of taxes, they don't think of the taxpayer who can not afford the taxes. I have lived in my home 30 years, the taxes were not bad when I moved in but they build an enormous school and my taxes went up \$900 in one year. So when they finally have it paid, do they lower our taxes, no - they buy MAC computers!!!

Name: Carol B. **City:** Pottstown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 7:44 AM – 662

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: As we continue our mission to provide quality education for all, we want to express our deep appreciation. Equitably funding our schools has had a profoundly positive impact on our students and the community. As a result of we've been able to enhance educational resources, improve infrastructure, and invest in the professional development of our educators. In turn, our students are achieving higher academic success, our schools are becoming safer and more welcoming environments, and the community is experiencing the long-term benefits of a well-funded education system.

Name: Hector W. **City:** Pottstown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 7:52 AM – 663

Subject: Education Funding

Message: Education is one of the most important things we do as a community. Our children need the best possible education in order to compete in the world economy. This should NOT be determined by zip code! Every child deserves the best education. An equal education. Please fund our schools so that education is equal for everyone. Give ALL our children the same opportunities. The investment now can change the future! The children of our state need you to fund their schools fairly.

Name: Matthew M. **City:** Barto, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 7:52 AM – 664

Subject: Education Funding

Message: I am writing with a concern about education funding. Please increase your funding to ensure every student receives a fair and equal education.

Name: Kelly L. **City:** Mertztown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 8:04 AM – 665

Subject: Gifted resources

Message: To whom it may concern It has come to my attention that there are no funding money for the gifted program at my sons high school which is a mandated program so it appears to me that this a very problematic contradiction. How can we be providing a mandated program when there is no money for it this issue needs to be fixed immediately.

Name: Vanessa V. **City:** Bangor, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 8:26 AM – 666

Subject: Property tax

Message: Eliminate it!!!!

Name: Hales M. **City:** Williamsport, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 8:30 AM – 667

Subject: Basic Funding For Education

Message: Fund each student in Pennsylvania at the same level. There should not be any inequality to learning!

Name: T. Brown **City:** Pottstown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 8:33 AM – 668

Subject: Fair Funding in Pa Schools

Message: I am concerned about the disparity in funds available to public schools in Pennsylvania. As a mother and educator, I am determined to help public schools to remain strong, but something needs to change! Please follow a funding formula that is equitable, adequate, and delivered in a timely manner so our students can be successful.

Name: Danielle D. **City:** Bechtelsville, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 8:52 AM – 669

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: I am a school principal and wanted to share an example of how fair funding matters directly in the classroom and with students. I used to be a principal in the West Shore School District. In the West Shore School District there were small funding concerns but generally speaking, we got whatever tools we wanted and whatever programs were good for students. There was never a question of getting the best for students. One of the more expensive programs we had was a product called Exact Path from Edmentum. This is a program that assesses students skill levels across PA standards and then provides them with an individualized and tailored Learning Path that they work through for 40 minutes per week. If they complete 40 minutes per week, they should master a skill every 2 weeks and fill their learning gaps with at least 1 year's worth of growth in addition to their classroom instruction. It's phenomenal! What was sad was that my students in the West Shore School District whined and complained about it every single week. They didn't value or appreciate the program. They oftentimes refused to do the work and would blow it off regularly. We would have to pump extra money into big rewards like field trips to the movie theater to entice students to try on this program. Of course, in the West Shore School District, pumping extra money into those rewards wasn't a concern. I was a teacher for 6 years and a principal for 6 years all in Central PA where there are rarely funding concerns. In all 12 of those years, I ran into students who complained about the expensive programs the districts purchased them and did not value what they were given. Last year, due to family health concerns, my wife and I decided to move to Pottstown to live near her parents and family. I was fortunate enough to become the principal of Pottstown High School in October 2022. Our achievement scores are horrible but our growth scores are tremendous and it has been that way forever. Our PVAAS growth score means that our teachers are growing their students by a year each year. This is what good teaching looks like. However, our low achievement scores mean that our students are coming to us too low for one year of growth to be enough. When we were placed on A-TSI to improve achievement I explained to our team that our school was currently doing it's job of growing kids 1 year but that what our kids need is to grow MORE than 1 year, in 1 year of time. Sounds impossible right? I brought up Exact Path from Edmentum and my experience in my last district with the program. I explained how giving kids an individualized learning path with this program would be a great way to grow kids more than 1 year, given 1 year of

time. The district looked at the price tag and it was a SHOCK to say the least. Pottstown has not spent that much money on an educational program because they've had to live like the poor kid of districts for decades. I convinced our school board to move forward with the program, even given the big price tag. Remember, the price tag wasn't even a consideration for West Shore School District. It was an automatic for them and their students have benefitted from the program for years! Pottstown students have not had the money to purchase a program like this. Fast forward to Fall of 2023 and we have Exact Path. As the principal I went to every classroom to explain what the program does and how it will help students. In my 12 years of education I have never, ever had students thank me for getting them an educational program where they had to do work. Our Pottstown students THANKED ME for going to bat for them and getting them what they deserve. Since we've started, our Pottstown students are almost doubling the amount of skills mastered compared to what Edmentum suggests should be happening. Our students WANT the program. They CRAVE good programs. They VALUE their education. My old students at well-funded West Shore complained about this same program that my Pottstown students are thanking me for. The simple reality is that districts like Pottstown have been so underfunded for so many years that the students here have fallen behind on achievement through no fault of their own, through no fault of their teachers, through no fault of their parents. The fault is placed with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Now, I'm not saying that we should take money away from a district like West Shore. I'm just saying that we should raise Pottstown up to the same level. Equity is not about bringing others down. It's about lifting everybody up to a level that is fair. My students in Pottstown (my own children attend Pottstown schools too) deserve every penny that other kids get in other schools. The current state formula says that my children and my students are worth less than students who live elsewhere. That's absurd and it needs to be fixed. My children and my students are worth it.

Name: Christian D. **City:** Pottstown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 9:06 AM – 670

Subject: Public transportation/bus/bikes/ paid pta for parents/ crosswalks signs

Message: Rrta could set aside 2-3 am/pm buses to the JP McCaskey and or help with fares towards electric bikes, for children not quite 2 full miles away from school.... Pay parents to be more involved in schools... those that get access to classrooms should have background checks, could pay them monthly, every 3months or at the end of the school year one lump sum... One dear crossing guard is leaving the queen street corner to Carter and McRae due to lack of help, not enough enforcement on speeding cars, or more awareness on slowing down in school zones ,harassed and even threatened for doing her job, by people. we could even help fund parents to help participate in outside school monitoring at crosswalks etc.. have parents holidays gatherings during school hours to get parents to know each other and work together.

Name: Naila P. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 9:22 AM – 671

Subject: Public Education Funding

Message: It is important for our students, staff and tax payers to take care of the deficit to the public schools. Teachers should not have to buy their own supplies. We need to be able to provide extra tools and help students with learning disabilities, homeless students etc. We need to provide extra learning tools for the students that are excelling and college bound. Seniors should not have to sell their homes due to increasing tax bills. Please do the right thing and provide the funding needed.

Name: Susan D. **City:** Pottstown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 9:24 AM – 672

Subject: Gifted Funding

Message: I am a gifted educator for Southern Columbia Area School District, and I would like to have more funding made available to our district for the purpose of screening and evaluation for our program. I would like to see the screening and identification process become more representative of our population.

Name: Andrea G. **City:** Bloomsburg, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 9:25 AM – 673

Subject: screening for gifted programs

Message: Items that are mandated by state law should be funded by the state, including school gifted programs.

Name: Jessica A. **City:** Lewisburg, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 9:27 AM – 674

Subject: K-8 Gifted Teacher

Message: This is my first year as K-8 Gifted Teacher in my district. We do not have universal screening, but I believe we need it. Many students are passed over because they do not fit the "mold" of what prior identified Gifted Students look like. In addition, the process my district uses to identify Gifted Students relies heavily on PSSA, MAP, and In-Sight testing -- data tools that are not specifically designed to detect Giftedness. I am at the Central Susquehanna Intermediate Unit today for Gifted Network training, and I was directed me to this site.

Name: Melissa B. **City:** Middleburg, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 9:57 AM – 675

Subject: Funding for Public Schools

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: I am a parent in South Western School District in York County. Each year, my family starts the year hoping for the best year yet, but then we often face the reality that comes with attending an underfunded school. There are no textbooks, there are too many students in our classrooms, and my child does not receive the attention he needs. My children deserve the same opportunities as our neighboring districts' children and we are tired of waiting and hoping. Please ensure that your final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. We are counting on the Commission to complete its important work. Now is the time to act. My children can't wait any longer. Thank you.

Name: Lacey A. **City:** Hanover, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 10:04 AM – 676

Subject: Fair funding

Message: I am an educator working in the Pottstown School District. I have been a Special Education administrator for the last 18 years, and I have worked in the following districts: Unionville-Chadsford, Owen J. Roberts, Wyomissing Area School District, and Pennsbury. I have been fortunate to have worked in very high-performing districts that have had the luxury of sound funding that has allowed those districts and their students to flourish. I have also worked in economically disadvantaged districts, and the funding for these schools correlates to the lack of success for students and the district. I can honestly state, based on my years in the school system, that having appropriate funding lends to student success. Give every child in the state the same opportunity for success based on the same funding for all.

Name: Cheryl M. **City:** Pottstown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 10:07 AM – 677

Subject: Equitable School Funding

Message: I am a teacher at Pottstown High School. I have had the unique opportunity to work at other school districts that include Upper Darby, Upper Merion, North Penn, and PA Virtual Charter School. School funding has been a hot topic lately in the media and in politics, especially with Charter Schools taking more resources away from public schools. Because I have had experience at what are considered some of the top schools in the state, as well as some of the most challenging schools in the state, I am often asked, "what is the biggest difference, and why are some public schools failing?" The easy answer and low hanging fruit is to always blame the teachers and/or administrators. In my experience, the best teachers and hardest working teachers and administrators who care about making a difference in kids' lives and go the extra mile for their students are the teachers and administrators at the "more challenging schools." There is a reason why many of the teachers at these higher achieving schools get their start at places like Upper Darby, Reading, Pottstown, and the Philadelphia School District. Higher achieving schools know how valuable these teachers and administrators are and try to poach them away by offering higher salaries, better benefits, and full credit for years worked on the pay scale. So from my experience that argument doesn't hold water. The single most important factor to success at a school district comes down to one main thing, resources. When a school like North Penn for instance has enough Special Education teachers to have an average caseload of 10 students, that makes a huge difference and a big impact. When a school has the resources to have enough teachers to have co-taught regular education and special education classes for all levels except Honors and AP classes, that makes a huge difference and a big impact. When a school has the resources to have an average class size of 15, that makes a huge difference and a big impact. When a school has the resources to ensure a safe learning environment where students don't walk to school in fear of being assaulted, robbed, or shot, and has the resources to have intervention officers in every hallway so kids can get from class to class without fear of being harassed or beat up, that makes a huge difference and a big impact. Learning also starts at home, and when a large percentage of students in the district are impacted by poverty and trauma, that has a huge impact on the

success of a school. Schools in high poverty areas need the resources necessary to confront these unique challenges head on. Taking resources away from these districts or starting them out with less resources than higher achieving districts, when they are already facing bigger challenges than higher achieving districts makes no sense at all and is far from equitable. It only serves to further the endless cycle of poverty and trauma experienced by the population served in these lower achieving districts. The true key to success is smaller schools, smaller teacher to student ratios, smaller class sizes, smaller IEP caseloads for Special Education teachers, and the additional resources necessary to take on the challenges unique to impoverished districts. Thank you for allowing us to have the opportunity to provide input on this vitally important issue.

Name: Chris E. **City:** Bechtelsville, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 10:11 AM – 678

Subject: Fair funding for PA school districts

Message: Hello board members! I am a family physician serving many parents in the Columbia and School District of Lancaster school districts. I am also the parent of two SD of Lancaster students. I implore you to follow PA law by awarding fair funding to PA districts as outlined by the fair funding formula. As a physician and parent of students in underfunded districts it is clear to me what a significant impact adequate funding has on the health, economic, and educational outcomes for students. I get the opportunity to also care for patients in better funded districts in our community, and the improved outcomes regarding health and education are clear to me when I compare them to other students in similar circumstances. Your work toward improved education for all is appreciated. Please take action to help our state and our students. I am happy to be contacted for further conversations if needed.

Name: Benjamin S. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 10:52 AM – 679

Subject: Fair Funding in Central Pennsylvania

Message: I am very glad to see that Pennsylvania government is working to address the inequities in funding of our public schools. I live in an affluent community in Centre County though I have had relationships with residents and educators in less affluent communities in our county as well as other counties in the region. I believe that, among the solutions for this problem, we will need to see an increase in PA Commonwealth income taxes to close this gap in funding between school districts. Among the unmet needs are the ever worsening condition of our school buildings that were constructed fifty or more years ago. That is just one example of the many unmet needs for which government must provide leadership to resolve. Thank you for listening.

Name: Dan D. **City:** State College, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 11:04 AM – 680

Subject: Constitutional Obligations for School Funding

Message: I am a community member of the PennWood School District. Each year, I volunteer to help with science education in the school district and get to see first-hand the reality that teachers and students face when working in an underfunded school. There are NO materials for teaching science and science classrooms lack up to date textbooks. There is no AC in building that are now 75-100 years old. There are too many students in our classrooms and the HS in Lansdowne is infested with rats and mice. Our students in Lansdowne and Yeadon deserve the same opportunities as our neighboring districts' children who have makerspaces, laboratories, and opportunities for engineering and STEM learning. These are bright students who deserve better. Please ensure that your final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. We are counting on the Commission to complete its important work. Now is the time to act. Student in our community can't wait any longer. Thank you.

Name: Carol B. **City:** Lansdowne, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 11:18 AM – 681

Subject: Inequities in school tax system.

Message: I've been a property owner in the Greater Latrobe area for 34 years. For all 34 years, I've paid property taxes. For 34 years I've paid school taxes. I have no children. None. There's a family of five children nearby that rents. No taxes. Why is it only homeowners are expected to maintain everything through taxation? I am 73 years old. I'm slightly above poverty level which means I'm not able to get any kind of help even though I'm in financial distress. As a senior citizen that's helped carry the load, I want a break. I'm tired. Enough unfair taxation.

Name: Reta W. **City:** Latrobe, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 12:05 PM – 682

Subject: Fair Funding for all Public School Districts

Message: As a resident of the Downingtown Area School District, I am fortunate to live in a location with wonderful, adequately funded schools. All children in all school districts throughout the state should also have properly funded schools. I ask you to please determine the amount of funding each district needs to provide a fair, constitutionally-guaranteed education for its students. Please request lawmakers to include these amounts in the state budget in a timely manner.

Name: Amy A. **City:** Downingtown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 1:12 PM – 683

Subject: Director of Career & Technical Education

Message: Pottstown High School is a comprehensive high school of approximately 950 students. The school houses ten Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs including; Automotive Technology, Construction Trades, Entrepreneurship, Healthcare Technology, Management Information Systems, Early Childhood Education, Engineering, Marketing, Culinary, and Cosmetology. Our CTE programs are the most expensive to operate as the equipment needed to prepare students to industry standards is far above and beyond the cost of the supplies of an academic classroom. Because it takes all of our resources to keep the academic portion of the building operational, our CTE programs run on grant funding. This means we often do without resources that students in our neighboring Career and Technical Education centers take for granted. We ask that you take into consideration the demographics and economical status of our district and provide the funding needed so our students can take advantage of the same resources available to their peers in other districts. Our students deserve it. Thanks!

Name: Teri B. **City:** Pottstown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 2:13 PM – 684

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: I have worked at Pottstown School District and Pottsgrove School District for 28 total years (teacher, MS Principal and currently the HR director at Pottstown SD) My kids go to Pottstown and I see the inequities in funding from all my observation in other school districtsthe curriculum, the facilities and the day to day needs. It is a shame that we can not come up with fair funding that is equal for all. We are hurting 1000's of kids each year with the delay in this process.

Name: Matt B. **City:** Royersford, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 2:41 PM – 685

Subject: property tax

Message: Paid enough

Name: Barbara B. **City:** East Earl, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 2:50 PM – 686

Subject: Support for Fair & Equitable Funding

Message: As a life long educator in the Philadelphia region and member of our state teacher education association, I encourage the commission to work toward systemic change. The fact that a child born in one part of Delaware County may have a drastically different school experience based on another area in the same county. This is true for much of the Commonwealth. Every citizen of Pennsylvania deserves a great education, because they are our future teachers, doctors, lawyers, nurses, members of our trades unions, etc. The fact that our funding formulas still allocates money based on 1992 numbers is inherently wrong. Having equitable funding would also impact the current teacher shortage. Districts/schools will then be able to recruit teachers and pay a living wage. With less funding, the class size increases and the connection and impact on learning outcomes are seen. I would love an opportunity to share more about how this could dramatically improve our Commonwealth.

Name: Thomas C. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 3:01 PM – 687

Subject: Funding in Pottstown School District

Message: Pottstown needs funding for resources to better support our students and help close their learning gaps. What we have had so far helps, but we need continued and more support as more students coming up have needs.

Name: Rachel S. **City:** Pottstown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 6:15 PM – 688

Subject: School Funding Equity

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. We strongly believe that children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. All children deserve the right to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is imperative that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. We believe it is critical that you make it your highest priority to ensure that each child has access to the resources necessary to ensure a quality education that prepares them for a productive future. Thank you.

Name: Scott and Cynthia B. **City:** Biglerville, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 6:37 PM – 689

Subject: Public Schools and Democracy

Message: Our public schools have been the backbone of the American middle class and critical to maintaining our democracy. They need to be well funded so ALL our kids are well educated.

Name: Nick S. **City:** Fort Loudon, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 9:14 PM – 690

Subject: BEFC RESPONSIBILITY

Message: As a advocate working for a nonprofit organization, a Fellow and a school Board Director and last but not least a mother and grandmother, I come to demanding you the members of the BEFC to do what is right...distribute the public school funding our children deserve! It is unfair that it's up to people who have lost sight of the need for all children to have access to what is constitutionally what they deserve! Our children need a space to grow to feel safe to enter into a place where they are surrounded with quality equipment books and teachers! These all lead to being prepared for secondary education thus becoming adults ready for job opportunities build better communities be successful! The time is now!

Name: Karen L. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Wednesday, October 25, 2023 9:42 PM – 691

Subject: PA (school) property tax

Message: I've been a huge supporter of SB76, which wants to change property taxation to a fairer method. The courts have determined the current taxation is unconstitutional! I feel like I am only a short time away from being taxed out of the home that I built! Harrisburg needs to get out of the PSEA & other PACs pockets and uphold the constitution they swore to protect!

Name: Robert M. **City:** Lebanon, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2023 8:02 AM – 692

Subject: Fair funding for all schools in PA

Message: I urge the commission to create an adequate, equitable, and racially just funding system in Pennsylvania. In particular, it is crucial to establish a fair and equitable "state share" for funding so that school districts can reach adequate funding with a reasonable local tax effort.

Name: Ruth C. **City:** Wallingford, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2023 8:03 AM – 693

Subject: School property tax.

Message: What a sham, you're robbing Peter to pay Paul. How dare the system feel like they have a right to continually dip into a private persons possessions and take whatever they want to Fatten their lively-hood. Why are we responsible for putting others children in a #private school? You want them there, that should be out of their Pocket. Charter Schools should not be our #responsibility. You want a fat retirement, get a second job instead of destroying my life in order to suffice your lifestyle. Thank you and do the right thing.

Name: Debra S. **City:** Williamsport, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2023 8:07 AM – 694

Subject: Fully Fund all public schools

Message: As the court ruled, it is time to correct the way education is funded in the commonwealth of PA. ALL districts need to be fully funded, regardless of zip code, race or economic status. Please complete this work by December 2023 and have a plan in place for the school year beginning in 2024. It is time to remove the "hold harmless" clause that allows schools in shrinking districts to continue to receive funding year after year for students that no longer attend. Meanwhile poor districts like Pottstown and Norristown suffer from the lack of funding. Pottstown School District has some of the highest tax rates in the state. This inequality adversely affects the homeowners, particularly the elderly who face losing their homes because they are being taxed over their meager fixed incomes. Our children are our future and they deserve better. I don't have all the answers, I just know real people need to have real discussions and solutions to this very real problem. Oh, and stop funding charter schools without requiring the same accountability as public schools. Public comments from citizens, students, taxpayers, etc. should be available at all of your meetings. It is after all about our children.

Name: Sally F. **City:** Pottstown, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2023 9:50 AM – 695

Subject: Middle School

Message: The reason I left a 6-figure career in the medical field, to make less than half of what I was used to making, was to fulfill my childhood question. My question being, "Why do my friends across town not have the same textbooks, sports uniforms, go on the same field trips, etc. as I do?" Getting a second Master's in Education, quickly answered my question, FUNDING! The schools that need the MOST funding, get the LEAST amount of funding!

Name: Ashlee R. **City:** Kutztown, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2023 3:51 PM – 696

Subject: Community member comment

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. How can tomorrow's citizens fulfill their civic obligations, or get the kind of well-paying jobs that they hope for, if they are not educated? We need to fully fund PUBLIC SCHOOLS and give ALL children access to a decent grounding in Math, Science AND the Arts if they are to be well-educated Americans. Critical thinking, not just fact regurgitation, MUST be taught in EVERY school! I was taught in the 50's and 60's and I'm horrified at what kids today haven't learned in Grades 1-12. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a new tomorrow and your time to act is now.

Name: Juliet W. **City:** Hershey, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2023 4:32 PM – 697

Subject: Comment for the Basic Education Funding Commission

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. I watched as my children attended school in a district without the resources it needed to give all children the chance to reach their full potential and excite them to lifelong learning. First, they lacked access to computers. Then teachers didn't stay long because they could get better jobs elsewhere. Substitute teachers couldn't be found because we couldn't pay them as much as in other districts. Programs were getting cut or reduced, and more fees were being instituted to pay for athletics. Children whose parents couldn't afford the fees but wanted to take part in the activity or sport were in a bind. All children in the Commonwealth of PA are entitled to receive the excellent educational opportunities. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. Our children are our future, and shortchanging them shortchanges everyone and the future of our state, our country, and our world. We need our children well prepared for what they will experience and be ready to solve the problems we maybe can't even imagine yet. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. Please ensure a bright future for all Pennsylvania children by acting now to provide the timeline and amounts to be awarded. Thank you.

Name: Deborah R. **City:** Huntingdon, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2023 6:53 PM – 698

Subject: Funding Formula

Message: I am a school administrator at Muhlenberg School District, a former administrator at Daniel Boone Area School District, and a former teacher and basketball coach at the Reading School District. I am also a current doctoral student researching policy alternatives to the PA school funding model. One item continues to resonate with my doctoral research, and that is the fact that all states have a constitutional cornerstone: the right to a thorough and efficient education. With our Commonwealth Court ruling the current model "unconstitutional", it provides Pennsylvania a once in a generation chance to get it right, similar in that sense to several other states when their courts made this ruling. Due to a hold harmless policy which hurts growing districts, only a small percentage of "new" money has been flowing through the Fair Funding Formula. This circumstance hurts most school districts in Berks County, and hundreds of school districts across the Commonwealth. I believe 100% of the basic education budget should funnel through the FFF, or an equitable alternative formula, to appropriately provide state funds to growing public school districts. Public education is the right of all, not the privilege for a few, and I will continue to advocate for our children and their education in my current role as a building administrator and doctoral student.

Name: Joseph S. **City:** West Reading, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2023 7:32 PM – 699

Subject: Fund Philadelphia Public Schools!

Message: As a veteran teacher in the School District of Philadelphia, I am asking that the District be adequately funded so that our scholars can compete with their peers from high wealth districts. Our future and the economic development of our state is dependent upon it. Thank you.

Name: Catherine N. **City:** Upper Darby, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2023 7:36 PM – 700

Subject: Evaluation

Message: This may feel like I am looking far into the future, however, given that the state of New Jersey is or will be discontinuing Abbott reforms and understanding that the NJ DOE never implemented a systemic evaluation of the impact of programs funded by Abbott funds, I hope that you will ensure that rigorous evaluation is included in the requirements of PA's increased school funding law, so that PA will be able to both document how the increased funding created impact and defend it in the future if needed and also to understand what funded supports work and what funded supports do not work in efforts to increase equity and excellence for all PA students, especially those who have been historically left behind. Thank you.

Name: Caitlin W. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Thursday, October 26, 2023 11:40 PM – 701

Subject: Fund

Message: Government fund for the gifted program please

Name: Shaoyun S. **City:** Canonsburg, PA

Sent: Friday, October 27, 2023 10:25 AM – 702

Subject: Keep Gifted Education a Priority

Message: I was enrolled in GATE classes when I was 6 (I'm now 53) and both the education I received and the teacher I had back then made a lasting positive impression on me via my career path, life choices and respect for education in general. I strongly support Gifted and Talented Education and its ability to allow people to become the best versions of themselves.

Name: Michael D. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Friday, October 27, 2023 10:49 AM – 703

Subject: funding public education

Message: As I am sure you realize, public education in Pennsylvania requires a lot more funding. In order to obtain for funding the legislature will have to approve expanded or create new sources of revenue - cutting existing funding for other program simply will not work. I hope that your commission will recommend sources for new funding for public education - if the legislature is forced to find the new funds your whole process will be bogged down for years and you will have accomplish nothing. Give the legislature STRONG recommendations for sources. A recommendation: the legislature is more likely to approve the expansion of a current source of revenue than crating a new source of revenue. A second recommendation: the expanded source of revenue should not put an undue burden on those who can least afford it. Those who have the resources

should contribute more than those who don't. A third recommendation: an increase in the state's personal and business income taxes come the closest to achieving the above recommendations. However the state's flat rate for income taxes still seems a little unfair, so you might recommend that the state use a progressive rate similar to the federal government. This will probably require an amendment to the state's constitution and take several years, but will be worth the effort in the long run. Maybe start with an increase in the flat rate, then change to a variable rate in three years. Thanks for your consideration of these recommendations.

Name: Robert K. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Friday, October 27, 2023 11:06 AM – 704

Subject: BEFC Testimony on the Lack of School Libraries and Librarians

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: We represent a grassroots volunteer group of over 800 concerned citizens called the Philadelphia Alliance to Restore School Librarians (PARSL). Our mission is to ensure that all students in the School District of Philadelphia (SDP) have equal opportunities to learn through well-stocked school libraries with the reading guidance and information instruction provided by certified school librarians. Our detailed mission and vision can be found at our website <https://www.restorephillylibrarians.org/>. Our FaceBook page is at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/librarians4phillyschools/> SDP is the largest district in Pennsylvania with 217 district-operated schools and over 113,000 students who are mostly economically disadvantaged and predominantly students of color. Yet few SDP schools have a functioning library with a trained school librarian. There is the equivalent of only one school librarian for the entire district. As referenced in our recent white paper, Ensuring Equity and Access to School Librarians and School Library Services in the School District of Philadelphia, multiple research studies have found that school librarians and libraries increase literacy, student achievement, graduation rates, and college and career readiness by teaching research skills and digital citizenship skills. Without books to read and a school librarian to guide and motivate them, it is no wonder that two out of three children in Philadelphia cannot read on grade level by 4th grade. A school librarian teaches critical literacy and information skills to every child in a school building throughout their time in that building, nurturing their academic and personal growth. It is a fiscally sound policy to invest in librarians who maintain a centralized collection of shareable library resources that meet specific student needs, offer diverse perspectives, and serve a wide range of reading and interest levels. But Philadelphia is not alone in this lack of library programs. According to federal NCES data, Pennsylvania has 54 school districts that have not a single school librarian and most likely no school library of quality. This lack of school library services is evident today in 23 of the 29 Intermediate Units—a statewide disservice to our K-12 students. It impacts students in small rural and large urban districts alike. School libraries with certified school librarians, once considered an essential component of a child's education, are becoming a privilege for only the wealthy schools, dependent on zip code. Today, Pennsylvania has the opportunity to right this wrong--this social and educational inequity. Please increase school funding directed to school library services and certified staff that will benefit ALL students and schools, particularly among our most impoverished districts. Every child deserves to learn in a school library, not just the privileged. PARSL Core Committee: Jenny L., PARSL Coordinator, Assistant Director of Institutional Support, Eastern University Corinne B., Program Coordinator, Library Volunteers, John B. Kelly School, SDP Deb G., Retired School Librarian, SDP; Alliance for Philadelphia Public Schools (APPS), Library Advocacy Deb K., Retired School Librarian, Online Professor, Antioch University Seattle, Pennsylvania School Librarians Association, Advocacy Committee Dr. Barb S., Retired School Librarian, Administrator, Educator, Professor Emerita, Syracuse University 2013-2014, President, American Library Association.

Name: Debra K. **City:** North Wales, PA

Sent: Friday, October 27, 2023 11:46 AM – 705

Subject: Try something other than more money

Message: Anything career politician Mike Sturla says should be taken with a grain of salt. The guy who has enriched himself off the taxpayers backs for 30+ years thinks even more money will fix schools in poorly managed municipalities. Forced consolidation and reduction of administrative bloat is the way you equalize school districts. There does not need to be 15+ kingdoms in each county, each with hundreds of thousands in annual salary and benefits. More money is the stupid person's way of solving an issue without actually doing any work. And it's real easy to do with other peoples' money, which is why Mike Sturla is leading this smooth brained operation.

Name: Josh R. **City:** East Petersburg, PA

Sent: Friday, October 27, 2023 2:43 PM – 706

Subject: Every PA child deserves a fairly funded school

Message: Dear Basic Education Funding Commission: I see many fellow Pennsylvanians want to stop paying property tax, but weren't you educated (here in PA)? As families fracture, social problems and violent crime increase. Research shows the

lifelong difference a caring individual, often a teacher, can make in the life of a child who has experienced trauma, often through neglect or abuse. A nationwide study finds PA's disparity in funding between wealthy and low-income school districts devastatingly large, one of the very worst. Should we argue "excuse me from my part" or should we stand up for all the kids in battered neighborhoods who deserve just as much of a chance to learn and become contributing citizens as our own kids? As a placement coordinator in a teacher preparation program, I'm in touch with teachers and principals from all types of schools in the Harrisburg/Mechanicsburg area. Schools are not all the same. Vouchers will just keep siphoning more students away from the joint experience that can stretch each of us and make our communities stronger rather than more divided. Our kids went to public school, and all of our grandkids probably will too. I call on all passionate, involved parents to join us, making good schools better for everyone. When the kids whose parents have resources go to the same schools as the ones who don't, it's better for everyone.

Name: Amanda S. **City:** Mechanicsburg, PA

Sent: Friday, October 27, 2023 5:05 PM – 707

Subject: School funding

Message: The way Pa funds public schools is unconstitutional and the only way to make this fair and equitable to all involved is to eliminate the school property tax. You discriminate against property owners when you require us to fund schools. I don't want to hear wealthier districts can afford it because over 10,000 families a year are made homeless due to only the inability to afford school taxes yet thousands of families don't have to contribute anything there's nothing fair and equitable about that. News flash your gonna have to raise sales and other taxes in order to fund these public schools. Public schools hence public money. They are not called homeowners schools. None of your meetings have shown any concern for homeowners, well with the high salaries of the people on the panel and the ones you are asking what more do you need you all can afford school taxes. Not one of you are going to be made homeless, or go without food, heat, electric, medicine, etc to try and keep your home you worked for from being stolen by a school district. Its for the kids they say, well guess what, kids live in those homes or their grandparents do and that is traumatic for a child to watch. Don't claim you care about children when you sit and watch their families being destroyed by a school district. Its time for hard decisions about how to raise public money cause you have kicked the can down the road for years now you have a bigger problem than if you would have handled this years ago. I think I remember a few years ago something was put on the ballot for the people to decide and I seem to remember over 80% of the state voted to eliminate school taxes which I guess you ignored because nothing has been done. Hopefully this court decision will put some fire under you to get this done

Name: Lenny S. **City:** Mohnton, PA

Sent: Friday, October 27, 2023 8:49 PM – 708

Subject: SCHOOL TAX

Message: I can't make the payments anymore. I'm on fixed retirement income an no way can I pay the \$4,000 school tax. Please help homeowners so we don't lose our homes.

Name: John L. **City:** Gibsonia, PA

Sent: Saturday, October 28, 2023 8:43 AM – 709

Subject: Property Tax

Message: Eliminate the property tax and the ability of school boards to levy any tax. There has been a viable alternative presented years ago, SB/HB 76 that was vetted and found acceptable. 70% of residents in our school district do not have kids in schools but are bearing the burden.

Name: John B. **City:** Media, PA

Sent: Saturday, October 28, 2023 3:03 PM – 710

Subject: BEFC comments

Message: After retiring from Elizabethtown College's Education and Social Work Departments, I signed up to substitute teach at Harrisburg High School. I was dismayed by the out-of-date textbooks, the closed library, the ill-equipped science labs, and other evidence of the lack of money to provide young adults in our Capital city of Harrisburg with an adequate and equitable education. Just as discouraging was the near total segregation of the city high school, once richly diverse both racially and economically. The research in education and social science is clear about the negative effects of segregation, and it is equally clear about the devastating effects of underfunded public schools. As a nation we recognized this when we declared segregation unconstitutional, and as a state we constitutionally guaranteed equal, adequate, equitable education for all of our children and youth. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court has ruled that the school funding in the state is constitutionally

inequitable, and required that this unjust situation be remedied. Some remedies are obvious, such as returning the state share of taxes to the 50% level of other states, and using fully the bipartisan fair funding formula established in 2015. Other remedies require honest disclosure of the money leached from our public schools through inequitable and unaccountable privatization schemes, many of which go to already privileged students, while growing numbers of Pennsylvania's children live in poverty. Since PA legislators created EITC and OSCT vouchers in 2001, state legislators have funneled \$2 billion to EITC/OSTC vouchers for private and parochial schools—money that should have gone to our public schools, rather than to students already enrolled in private and religious schools. Eliminating this voucher program (costing \$340 million in 2022-2023) would not harm private schools, since most parents are already paying the tuition for the school they chose. But these vouchers/scholarships drain more support from public schools, and serve to further segregate our public schools, both racially and economically. They are not ear marked for students in poverty, going often to students already enrolled in private schools. When legislators say we do not have the money to fully fund our public schools, they are saying they do not want to lose the support of their wealthy donors who favor privatization. The enormous amount of money funneled to unaccountable cyber/charter schools is another legislative policy that has cut deeply into the budgets of our public schools and yielded more social and racial inequality. The research is clear on this, and the policy decisions are to blame. Before 2010 the funds for cyber/charter schools came from the state budget. But legislators rescinded and forced public schools to fund cyber/charter schools out of their own budgets, further starving public schools. Legislators created this inequality, division and starvation of our public schools, particularly in poor communities, already plagued with the enormous challenges of poverty. And legislators are responsible for cleaning up the mess they created. It is vital that the BEFC issue a report with adequacy targets for each school district that will bring the state into constitutional compliance, and lay out a clear timeline for the implementation of filling the adequacy gaps. Why should we fully fund our high poverty schools? Matt Desmond, in *Poverty, By America*, reminds us that poverty shrinks your mental energy and prevents you from realizing your full potential: "Being poor reduces a person's cognitive capacity more than going a full night without sleep." Legislators can't keep doing this to our Pennsylvania students in poverty. It is blatant child abuse. The majority of our PA citizens—your constituents—care deeply about growing economic and racial inequality, growing homelessness, and the growing depression and hopelessness of our students.

<https://news.gallup.com/poll/182987/americans-continue-say-wealth-distribution-unfair.aspx> We need our legislators to do their job and work diligently for equity, fairness and full funding of our public schools. New Jersey gives us some good examples of how to legislate for equity. There is much more to be done to fully correct the inequities of the past, but that is why we the people vote for legislators with a vision for democratic public schools that serve all of our children.

Name: Jill B. **City:** Carlisle, PA

Sent: Saturday, October 28, 2023 4:11 PM – 711

Subject: School funding

Message: All schools need to be funded equally. Children in underfunded schools are not receiving their fair education. They need more teachers and excellent resources to surmount their difficulties. Please apportion funds appropriately.

Name: Charlene R. **City:** Linfield, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 7:30 AM – 712

Subject: Equitable Funding for Pennsylvania's Students

Message: Equitable funding was never an issue until middle and high income families began seeing it impact upon their children and their schools. Low-income students and their families have been without school libraries, school librarians, music and arts classes for decades without anyone filing a lawsuit or showing interest. Around 2010, when Philadelphia's superintendent held focus groups and worked to implement "weighted-student formulas" to ensure that ALL students were provided with equitable funding, those with children in Philadelphia's magnet and higher performing schools criticized the effort. Low-income students and their families have continued to be underserved by an education system that has failed them for generations. To be fair, let's put the educational funding where we know it is needed...in communities with high crime rates. Education is liberation, we need to ensure that low-income students finally, get theirs.

Name: Quibila D. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 7:37 AM – 713

Subject: Parity

Message: Every school should have the same quality staff, buildings, equipment and transportation.

Name: Tom W. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 8:03 AM – 714

Subject: School funding

Message: I believe each member of the commission is already aware of the terms adequacy and equity and what they mean for real impact on our communities. I'm certain that you know of the casting out study, and the mandate to continuously update the adequacy targets. Take a honest look at what withdrawing from the progress it was being made under the Rendell administration has done to negatively impact our schools and ultimately the productivity of our state's economy. I live in a very impoverished school community: Greater Johnstown School District. Some of you may know what it's like to have grown up in a poor family or a poor neighborhood, if you have that understanding you also know that a poor community can't afford to provide classroom instruction and serious interventions for students in need. I doubt that any of you understand what it's like to grow up in a different level of poverty, dire poverty, where the struggles of family are unfathomable and where too many of students come to school without having any of the benefits of being aware of the basic concepts of numbers, prin, and self-control. Even in these communities, when the school has the adequate investments and enough teachers, interventionalists, along with the resources and materials, the students can be predicted to reach mental health maturity and academic literacy levels on par with every other student across the nation. The cost benefits of meeting adequacy targets ensures that if you invest in the 13 years of a higher quality of basic education, you'll save the expenditures necessary for a lifetime of dependency and non-productivity. For the sake of these children, for the love of God, I pray that you'll have the wisdom to do the work in front of you. Think long term, please!

Name: Gerald Z. **City:** Johnstown, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 8:15 AM – 715

Subject: Funding Schools

Message: I live in Schuylkill County, where 8 out of our 12 school districts are level up 100 schools which are most in need of funding! When my children started school, we lived in the Daniel Boone School District, a school district with a low poverty rate and a good tax base, then we moved to the Tamaqua School District. There was a definite difference. In Daniel Boone there was more help available in terms of school aides, there were nicer buildings, and more attention to my kids specific needs. I love the Tamaqua School District, it's great, but I had to make up for less staff by tutoring my youngest in an Orton Gillingham program so he could learn to read, and getting the answer book for my oldest so I could check his work and make sure he learned what he needed to in math class. I am particularly concerned about the Williams Valley School District, where I work as a minister serving two congregations. The Williams Valley school district is a high poverty, very low tax base district. There is no reserve fund. There have been teacher furloughs. One sixth grade class started the first three weeks of this school year without a teacher. There have been so many cuts, for example there is no longer a librarian, and the children are asking, "What will they take away from us next?" The kids are traumatized, teacher morale is at zero. There is a revolving door of district superintendents coming and going. Charter school payments are 15% of the school district budget and growing rapidly. You have an obligation, set out in the state constitution, to provide a system of education that supports this great state! Please provide adequate funding for EVERY school district and every child, and the kids need it NOW! Thank you for your work.

Name: Maureen G. **City:** Tamaqua, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 8:55 AM – 716

Subject: Public Schools provide some kids' ONLY chance at a brighter future.

Message: I am one of the lucky ones. I grew up the child of uneducated parents in a small factory town. My parents never encouraged me to do well in school, or that going to college was an option. I was fortunate enough to live in a community that VALUED their public school system. Now, as a parent, it is easy for me to see what a great public education I received and how it changed the trajectory of my life. I want that same opportunity for every child, not just some. Pennsylvania has a SHAMEFUL record on school funding. What does it say about us if we DO NOT VALUE our children and provide them an opportunity for a secure and hopeful future? Shame on PA for turning our backs on our kids, our future leaders, care givers, and protectors. Shame on Governor Shapiro for supporting nefarious voucher schemes to divert money from public schools to fund PRIVATE & RELIGIOUS schools. Throwing Pennsylvania kids under the bus to side with right wing extremists is antithetical to the reasons Democrats elected you. The Basic Education Funding Commission (BEFC) must issue a final report outlining a clear plan that will ensure public education is adequately and equitably funded across the state in accordance with the Commonwealth Court's decision. Thank you for working to make this happen. Pennsylvania kids are depending on you and their voting parents are watching.

Name: Sandy M. **City:** Birchrunville, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 10:19 AM – 717

Subject: Please meet the challenge

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, Pennsylvania schools in every district must receive equitable and appropriate funding as ordered by the Court. All Pennsylvania students deserve resources in their schools that will help them achieve at the highest levels. Students and their parents can not wait any longer for the General Assembly to fulfill its obligation to our children. Please prepare a clear and thorough calculation of the needs of each school district with a firm timeline for implementation. Ensure that there is no room for resource trading on our children's education. Thank you.

Name: Cynthia H. **City:** Port Matilda, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 10:49 AM – 718

Subject: Equitable funding for public education

Message: Growing up in Philadelphia, I attended the public schools. I raised my kids in Philadelphia, and they also attended the public schools. These particular schools - Powel, Masterman, Central High - had acceptable facilities and resources both because they were favored by the School District and because parents and alumni contributed generously to their respective Home and School Associations and to outside organizations that funded school libraries. All of Philadelphia's school children need schools with decent facilities and resources, not just those whose parents can afford to support their education with major contributions in addition to their tax payments. Pennsylvania's legislature must adopt a funding formula that provides adequate resources to all public schools in the state.

Name: Daniel S. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 10:54 AM – 719

Subject: Equality in Education

Message: Charter schools increase the socioeconomic segregation of our society. It's just another "legal" method for redlining. The Seattle Times reports: The opening of even one charter school in a district previously without one leads to a modest uptick in socioeconomic segregation within that district, suggests the research, published in the academic journal Educational Researcher. Data source: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.3102/0013189X19879714?journalCode=edra> Your job is to ensure equality of education. The easiest way to do that is through accountability: require the same educational requirements, staffing, credentials, and financial oversight of charter schools that is done with public schools. These requirements are already established in public schools. It should be pretty straightforward to come up with a plan for migrating them to charter schools. Additionally, we should study what makes charter schools work well and incorporate these methods into public schools. I understand this won't be as easily accomplished, or done so within a short time frame, however, I think there's important information that we can learn. Thank you.

Name: Sondra H. **City:** Bensalem, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 11:22 AM – 720

Subject: Public education funding .

Message: The only way the US can compete with China and others, economically, is by educating ALL our kids well-so let us pay for a good education for everyone.

Name: Nick S. **City:** Fort Loudon, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 12:24 PM – 721

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. For that matter, state reimbursement for such underfunded mandates as special education and transportation is woefully inadequate for all districts. As the PA courts have ruled, children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in wealthier districts. We want all children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a new tomorrow. Your time to act is now.

Name: Stacy S. **City:** Malvern, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 12:52 PM – 722

Subject: Statement from a School Director

Message: I have been a school director in the State College Area School District (SCASD) for the past eight years. During that time diversity and poverty have increased in our community. Additionally, the need to address long-standing inequities have been growing in urgency as well. Despite being an affluent area where property taxes support a relatively high-quality education for our students, we are increasingly recognizing how neglected our struggling students have been. Affluent districts often have a false sense of quality because higher-level socioeconomic students inherently do better, even if their education is simply adequate. State College Area School District relies on 80% of our budget being covered by local taxes – this is a huge burden on our local homeowners and economy. Now, facing growing social-emotional struggles for students, exploding mental health crises and an increasing ELL and migrant community – SCASD may need to ask more of our local taxpayers if state contributions do not change. While here in State College we would benefit from better support from the state, the inequities found by the courts is a pressing matter for our commonwealth and an embarrassment for our citizens. The BEFC must clearly articulate the needs of each school district and set appropriate adequacy targets and meet the commonwealth’s constitutional obligation to ALL our students. And this must be done without sacrificing funding to private vouchers where private schools use state funds while being permitted to discriminate against any student by denying admission. The BEFC has a responsibility to set a reasonable timeline to accomplish these goals. There is absolutely NOTHING more important that the government does then educate its populace. NOTHING. Make funding in our commonwealth constitutional and do it now.

Name: Amy B. **City:** State College, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 2:51 PM – 723

Subject: On the Constitutional School System Funding

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: Even though I graduated 11 years ago, I am still a concerned enough citizen that I participate in community affairs when I can, and as such, I have come to the conclusion that our state needs help. My community needs your help. Our students are bright, determined, and hopeful. They want to learn and thrive like all students in our state. They have dreams for their bright future. However, our schools are so underfunded that there are not enough teachers, no libraries, and not enough resources to buy books and supplies to meet the needs of our students. Our children cannot continue to wait for people in Harrisburg to recognize their responsibility to fix this problem. The Court recognized the problem and the General Assembly’s obligation to address it. Please ensure that your final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. The Court ordered it and our students deserve it. The time is now and you have the power to do it for all our children, as well as your own.

Name: Leo K. **City:** Phoenixville, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 3:43 PM – 724

Subject: Funding public education

Message: We often see public schools described as 'failing' and the solution for families is to transfer their children to private schools. Public schools have been underfunded for years; giving taxpayer money to private schools will only worsen this problem. Public money should stay in public schools. Perhaps the current way of paying for schools is at the root of inequity across the state. Funding private charter schools with money that public schools need is not a solution to the education problem.

Name: Bernar B. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 6:19 PM – 725

Subject: Fair Funding for All PA Students

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: Poorer communities are suffering from decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools. All children deserve the same educational opportunities: clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. Basic Education Funding Commission’s final report must say how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and give a timeline for the state to meet its obligations to our children. The time to act is now.

Name: Susan B. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 6:54 PM – 726

Subject: Equitable funding and standards in rural areas

Message: My name is Marian. In my 40-year practice as a forester and scientist, I have applied my teaching certificate skills to public and private educational efforts and enrolled my now-adult child in the Pennsylvania Public School System (Johnsonburg School District and Wallenpaupack School District). I am submitting comments to the Basic Education Funding Commission regarding the recent Supreme Court decision that requires equity and accountability in education for all school districts. Johnsonburg and Wallenpaupack School Districts are rural schools. Student populations are lower in rural schools which presents unique challenges. For example, one student with a rare learning profile that needs special education with an IEP may stretch school resources beyond what is considered practical. Therefore, rural schools have challenges that may be uniquely different compared to underfunded urban and suburban schools. Also in rural areas, home schooling, cyber schools, religious schools, and private schools may be options for parents. Rural school districts may welcome these alternative schools to relieve limited public-school resources. Certainly, your final report should show a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lay out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. However, there are other means to adequate, equitable, and constitutional state funding for children in our educational communities, which should also be in your final report: • Special education for children with rare learning profiles should be adequately understood, resourced, and funded. • Voucher programs should guarantee equal access for all children to receive taxpayer funding and assistance. • Educational standards should be the same and enforced by the Department of Education for all types of schooling - home schooling, cyber schools, religious schools, technical, and other private schools. Pennsylvanians are counting on your Commission to develop excellence for all children in our schools.

Name: Marian K. **City:** Rowland, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 6:58 PM – 727

Subject: Comment

Message: I am an old, white property-owning resident of the City of Harrisburg. We are an economically low-wealth community, but rich in the wealth of student talent to be developed. I want the public school students of Harrisburg to get a fair crack at quality education. Our society needs every one of them to be headed for positive adult contribution—to home life, work life, and to community life. It is your moral and constitutional obligation to report how much each Pennsylvania district needs to help its students get there—including historically state-underfunded districts like mine. It's your job to set the funding approach; it's our job to maximize that state support. Please hold up your end. I urge you to report out clear and thorough calculations that respect all the entities involved—public school students, Pennsylvania taxpayers, school board members, school staff, state bureaucrats. I urge you to be prompt in laying out the timeline for the state to finally meet its obligation for thorough and efficient funding of public schools. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: Cordell A. **City:** Harrisburg, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 7:16 PM – 728

Subject: School / Property Tax

Message: Currently, we the people have no say in tax increases. Local school boards arbitrarily seem to do what they want. Constant yearly tax increases seem to me to be an unsustainable model. We are RETIRED! Our income does not increase. I recommend studying other funding methods for schools like the sales tax alternative.

Name: Philip B. **City:** Exton, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 7:44 PM – 729

Subject: PA education funding is unconstitutional

Message: I was an educator, a teacher and an elementary school principal for 40+ years. During that time I worked in both Catholic and Philadelphia public schools. Pennsylvania's funding of elementary education, a state responsibility, is totally adequate. In more wealthy areas, school districts can supplement the state funding with local taxes. Even if this were possible in economically poorer districts, like Philadelphia, the needs of the children could never be addressed by the few local taxes available. Without quality education, our more impoverished children can never hope to reach the achievement of students in wealthier school districts. They are second class citizens by the location of their schools Unconstitutional behavior would not be tolerated by some individuals. Why is it allowed by Pennsylvania's courts and politicians?

Name: Mary M. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 9:42 PM – 730

Subject: Fair Public School Funding

Message: Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. Calling on the state General Assembly to cease all funding requirements from public schools to Charter schools would certainly be a good place to start in finding the funding for the effort. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a new tomorrow and your time to act is now.

Name: Frank E. **City:** Mechanicsburg, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 10:15 PM – 7301

Subject: School funding

Message: Every child in every public school deserves the right to a good education in a safe school. The courts require it.

Name: Lynn S. **City:** West Chester, PA

Sent: Sunday, October 29, 2023 10:20 PM – 732

Subject: Gifted Education Funding

Message: Gifted education should be a part of the Pennsylvania educational fund for several reasons: 1. Equal Opportunity: Providing resources for gifted education ensures that all students have an equal opportunity to develop their full potential, regardless of their abilities. 2. Fostering Talent: Gifted programs nurture and develop the talents of exceptionally capable students, allowing them to excel in their areas of strength. 3. Economic Benefits: Gifted students often go on to make significant contributions in various fields, which can benefit the state's economy and workforce. 4. Innovation: Gifted individuals can drive innovation and solve complex problems, which can have broader societal benefits. 5. Addressing Achievement Gaps: Inclusion of gifted education can help address achievement gaps by ensuring that high-ability students receive appropriate educational support. 6. Meeting Diverse Needs: Every student has unique learning needs, and gifted education helps cater to the needs of high-ability students. 7. Preparedness for the Future: Gifted students are more likely to pursue higher education and careers in STEM fields, which are essential for the state's future competitiveness. 8. Attracting and Retaining Talent: Investing in gifted education can attract and retain talented educators who can provide specialized instruction. 9. Social and Emotional Development: Gifted programs can offer social and emotional support to gifted students who may face unique challenges in a standard classroom setting. 10. Positive Impact on the State: A well-rounded education system that includes gifted education can contribute to Pennsylvania's reputation for excellence in education, potentially attracting families and businesses to the state. By including gifted education in the educational fund, Pennsylvania can better support the diverse needs of its students and prepare them for future success.

Name: Katrina S. **City:** York, PA

Sent: Monday, October 30, 2023 2:45 AM – 733

Subject: Final Report Outlining Clear Plan to Ensure Public Education is Adequately and Equitably Funded Across the State.

Message: Dear BEFC, We ask that you issue a final report outlining a clear plan that will ensure public education is adequately and equitably funded across the state in accordance with the Commonwealth Court's decision. The Basic Education Funding Commission's plan must: - include adequacy targets for each school district and - lay out a reasonable timeline for the state to fully fund a constitutionally compliant school funding system. There are serious concerns that the legislature and Governor Shapiro may continue to kick the can down the road and fail to develop and fund a constitutional school funding system beginning with the 2024-2025 state budget. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Name: Janet D. **City:** West Chester, PA

Sent: Monday, October 30, 2023 10:35 AM – 734

Subject: Please fund mandated gifted education.

Message: Gifted programs must be funded in order to fulfill Chapter 16's mandates of specialized education for gifted students. These students should have the same opportunity for education tailored to their specific intellectual, developmental and emotional needs that every other student population receives - unfortunately for these students, that opportunity may not always be present in the traditional classroom setting. Resources for educators certified in gifted education and accelerated classroom materials will go a long way toward supporting districts in complying with Chapter 16. Funding for

additional screening is also vital for these students - I am personally aware of at least one close call where learning disabilities initially masked a student's gifted attributes. Without intervention, this student would have been dismissed as a "below average" learner, not qualifying for special education OR gifted education help. Demographically, these twice-exceptional learners are not uncommon and often are passed over with the current under-funded testing available. It is terrifying to think of the number of gifted learners in the state that will not reach their full potential (and even believe themselves to be "below average" students) because the current system let them fall through the cracks. Setting aside statutory mandates, providing resources to the gifted student population in the state should be viewed as an investment in the future of the state and nation. This should not be a political issue - all students deserve the resources they need to receive a quality public education. If these students are given the tools they need to achieve academic and educational success, the lifelong love of learning, intellectual capabilities and quality Pennsylvania K-12 education they receive from their gifted programming will pay dividends when they enter the workplace.

Name: Heather H. **City:** Canonsburg, PA

Sent: Monday, October 30, 2023 10:51 AM – 735

Subject: School Voucher Programs

Message: The recently passed Senate Bill 757 PASS voucher program proposes \$100M in vouchers to students attending what the Senate has determined are Pennsylvania's lowest-performing schools. This would further erode funds for public education and splinter a system that is still roiling from the impact of the pandemic. Plus, there is ample evidence in the States that have implemented vouchers that they do not work; they are simply a way to divert public dollars to private schools. In addition, research shows most voucher programs are academically ineffective and economically a disaster, eventually ballooning in costs as more private schools "pop up" in response to the new funding, only to close within a few years and leave struggling students even further behind. Senate Bill 757 also includes new authorizing language for \$555 million in tax credits that go primarily to businesses that contribute to private school voucher funds. This is in addition to the \$2B in EITC and OSTC programs funded by the State since 2001 - with no evidence of effectiveness - further reducing the amount of State revenue available for public education. It explains the recent \$10M infusion of funds from the Commonwealth Partners Chamber of Entrepreneurs to continue the fight to expand voucher programs. Groups like the Commonwealth Foundation, the Commonwealth Partners Chamber of Entrepreneurs, and billionaire Jeffrey Yass have financially benefited from voucher programs such as EITC and OSTC in the past. Campaign contributions from Yass' PACs over the last ten years are more than \$55M. According to Education Voters PA, on October 4, 2023, the PA House passed House Bill 27 by a vote of 103-97. HB 27 included \$460M for vouchers each year - \$330M for EITC and \$130M for OSTC - representing a \$120M increase from 2022-2023 funding levels (or 35% more annual funding for vouchers in total). Despite the PA Constitution clearly stating that public funds should not be used to support sectarian schools, most of the money will go towards private and religious (i.e. sectarian) K-12 schools, as has been past practice. However, HB 27 does include, for the first time, some provisions for tracking students who receive vouchers, including the proportion of schools receiving vouchers that include students with disabilities. This data will be published on the DCED public website starting November 2025. Given the lack of information regarding the effectiveness of Pennsylvania voucher programs, such as EITC, and OSTC, and the overwhelming evidence of the negative academic effects in the states that have substantial voucher programs, it is concerning that recent legislation in favor of new PASS vouchers would further their expansion. Expanding private school funding in light of the public school funding situation is moving Pennsylvania in the wrong direction. It also goes directly against the February 2023 Commonwealth Court order requiring that the State develop a system that provides more equitable funding to Pennsylvania's current 500 public school districts, as per the State Constitution. This will require setting adequate funding targets for Pennsylvania public school districts in a timely manner, rather than diverting more public school funds to private schools. Data and research supporting this statement can be found at <http://bit.ly/paschoolfunding>

Name: Tracy S. **City:** Macungie, PA

Sent: Monday, October 30, 2023 1:20 PM – 736

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: The Courts have determined that education funding across PA is not equitable. The BFC needs to issue a final report detailing how to remedy this situation and a timeframe for doing so! A zip code should not determine a child's future!

Name: Karen P. **City:** Fleetwood, PA

Sent: Monday, October 30, 2023 5:10 PM – 737

Subject: Basic Education Funding Commission

Message: Communities around the state continue to face challenges caused by decades of our collective failure to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in these communities are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. It is in our collective self-interest that every child has the opportunity to attend a clean and safe school with adequately paid teachers, and the resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical, therefore, that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear calculation of how much each school district needs in order for us to meet our constitutional obligation to our students, and lays out a clear timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations. Thank you for doing the job you are being paid to do.

Name: David H. **City:** State College, PA

Sent: Monday, October 30, 2023 5:16 PM – 738

Subject: Gifted funding

Message: Gifted children have needs that are not being met. They and their parents do not have the same rights as special education students and we need those rights to help meet our gifted children where they are and to help them soar! Teachers also need training on best practices for gifted students. There is much time devoted to special education students when preparing to be a teacher but none, or very little for gifted students. Please consider funding gifted education.

Name: Sarah B. **City:** Altoona, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 8:28 AM – 739

Subject: Fair School Funding

Message: Please send funds to schools equally, and not based on property taxes which is so unfair to children in lower socioeconomic neighborhoods and school districts. Please elevate the funding to create equitable education for all children regardless of where they live. Please give the proper amount of funding to allow schools in lower socioeconomic districts to have the same or more funding than those in higher socioeconomic areas where the parents can afford to buy the supplies and electronic devices their children should have. Fair Funding is essential. thank you

Name: Frank C. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 10:57 AM – 740

Subject: Advocating for our gifted students

Message: We as a country should be investing in our most promising students, not cutting their funding essentially abandoning them because "they'll be fine". My gifted student deserves an enriched educational experience. She does not deserve to be told to "put her head down and be quiet" when she completes her work. She needs the time and attention of professionals who care and know how to grow developing minds. She, and other students like her, deserve MORE from us.

Name: Amanda C. **City:** South Williamsport, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 11:52 AM – 741

Subject: BEC/Fair Funding

Message: As a School Board Director and a former educator, I understand the importance of public schools and the need to properly fund our public school system. Twenty years ago when we started to fund charter schools, this was the beginning of the downward spiral many communities have faced. Many of us have been underfunded for decades. Our local citizens who are mostly elderly have had to deal with tax increases year after year. This has contributed to the anger many people have towards educators and has certainly not helped in encouraging young students to want to grow up to be teachers. The state mandates that are not funded must be absorbed by the local community. But the mandates continue with no help from the state. Our leaders should be ashamed of themselves and that it took a lawsuit that took almost a decade to complete only delayed what is fair to all of our students in this state. YOU need to get it together NOW not in five years. We can no longer wait for the right thing to be done. Giving tax dollars away with vouchers is also something that should not happen at least until you straighten out public education first. Let's get moving....

Name: Carol C. **City:** Scranton, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 2:43 PM – 742

Subject: Urban League of Philadelphia Written Testimony

Message: Basic Education Funding Commission From: Darrin Anderson, President & CEO, Urban League of Philadelphia Written Testimony By: Darrin Anderson, President & CEO, Urban League of Philadelphia Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony to the Basic Education Funding Commission. My name is Darrin Anderson, and I am the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Urban League of Philadelphia. The Urban League of Philadelphia is an affiliate of the National Urban League, which aims to empower underserved communities in under-resourced neighborhoods. We aim to secure economic self-reliance, parity, power, and civil rights for African Americans throughout the Greater Philadelphia region. This work ensures that every citizen, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to achieve success and contribute to our society. These principles are fundamental when we talk about educational opportunities. As leaders, we are responsible for ensuring that younger generations have the resources and knowledge needed to succeed. After years of litigation, on February 7th, 2023, the Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court ruled that Pennsylvania's education funding was unconstitutional. The current unequal formula does not provide enough funding to uphold Pennsylvania's constitutional requirement that every child receives a "thorough and efficient" education. The Court decision was about equity and equality. These principles are why the Urban League of Philadelphia has been an active member of the PA School Works Coalition since the Commonwealth Court hearings in January 2021. How can we achieve equity and equality if our resources and funding are unequal to each school district? Every child deserves a school with up-to-date infrastructure and adequate resources to enrich the learning experience. When a student's surroundings crumble, their ability to focus on school work diminishes. Philadelphia has a clear example of how inequitable funding has impacted school infrastructure and performance for students in underserved communities. In the City of Philadelphia, the average age of a school building is 75 years old (Graham, 2023). With this age comes leaking, ceiling collapses, walls crumbling, lead paint, and asbestos. We can only expect our children to be invested in their education when we invest the dollars needed to attend school safely. These infrastructure issues directly impact our student's classroom performance, as countless schools have closed due to repairs. Since March of this year, seven schools in Philadelphia have needed to close due to asbestos (Graham, 2023). These closures have affected thousands of students and disrupted the learning environment due to education in the City being underfunded and inequitably distributed. Our efforts must be focused on promoting that every individual can live a life of self-sufficiency regardless of where they reside. The first place for us to begin this mission is at our schools. A fair funding program prioritizes the needs of the most vulnerable and ensures that every child can obtain an equal, high-quality education. To do this, we need to look at who is struggling the most: the underfunded communities across our Commonwealth. If we want to talk about fixing poverty, crime, and economic development, this is where our focus must be. These children need us the most, so we must develop an equitable funding system to uplift those communities and enrich education outcomes throughout the entire Commonwealth. The City of Philadelphia has very bright and talented young individuals relying on our government to provide them with the resources they need to succeed. To ensure that our Commonwealth's funding formula is equitable and helps strengthen our schools, stakeholders at all levels must participate in the conversation. Community groups that directly impact local schools need to be involved in the decision-making process. Thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony. Graham, Kristen A. "Seven Philly Schools Have Closed since March Because of Damaged Asbestos. Here's the Full List." <https://www.inquirer.com>, The Philadelphia Inquirer, 27 Oct. 2023, www.inquirer.com/education/asbestos-closure-philadelphia-school-district-20231027.html.

Name: Darrin A. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 3:06 PM – 743

Subject: School District

Message: Please be aware that just because one lives in a school district that is functioning, has all the bells and whistles does not meet that all the homeowners with-in that district can afford the school taxes. Many are being forced to move, I am very curious of the turnover rate in my community. Our property taxes range \$6000 to upwards of \$13,000 with no end in sight. Currently 50 years old and school taxes are currently \$6500, with an increase a minimum of \$300 per year just in school taxes. So, when I am 65 years old my school taxes will cost me \$11,000 that is nearly double. The property tax rebate program I would not qualify for because in order to survive and pay upkeep I need to maintain a minimum income of \$60,000. I ask you... when does it stop! There is no cap on school taxes and SWSD Board is planning to increase our taxes due to \$68 million dollar renovation, and every 10 years a school gets a remodel. Do not assume everyone in the community can afford school taxes. We should not be forced to move or lose our home. School board members should not have the power to increase school taxes and make frivolous purchase.

Name: Kim M. **City:** Hanover, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 3:10 PM – 744

Subject: Please change School funding and eliminate the burden on homeowners!

Message: Hello, I am writing today to urge you to totally eliminate school taxes as they are presently being collected. The way it is being done now is unconstitutional! People are only supposed to be taxed on their ability to pay! I have watched many seniors lose their homes due to this taxing. It's not fair to anyone as you are not looking at our incomes when sending the big tax bill. As time goes on the taxes grow higher, but income doesn't. When seniors retire, they don't have the same income. They also don't always qualify for the rebate. Seniors aren't the only ones who's income goes down. People become disabled which causes a great hardship when they aren't able to work any longer. We the people should not have to lose our homes due to this unfair taxing!

Name: Nancy B. **City:** Meshoppen, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 5:40 PM – 745

Subject: I Support Equitable Funding for Public Schools Statewide

Message: I am a resident of Pittsburgh and our kids went to Pittsburgh public schools. I believe that public schools are the foundation of our democracy. For too long, school funding has been distributed so as to reward high income communities as opposed to low income ones, which are often majority Black or Brown. This inequity deprives our children of the quality education they deserve. The country suffers when schools cannot do their jobs and educate the future leaders of America. Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. Every child in this state is a valuable member of our community. I ask you to act now for their benefit and our future.

Name: Laura H. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Tuesday, October 31, 2023 5:59 PM – 746

Subject: SLP

Message: I have read many messages regarding the elimination of property taxes to pay for public education. Of those who want this tax eliminated, how many of them have older children who were educated in the public school system? My husband and I have paid this tax before we had children, while our children were in public school, and now when they are in college. Don't we owe it to all children, not just our own, to provide them a good education? I know some argue that they shouldn't have to put money into a flawed and failing system. In an ideal world the system would work perfectly; however, there are many variables that educators cannot control (student attendance, student motivation, support from care givers, etc.). Also, many of the people making laws, doling out money, etc. do not have a background in education. They are doing their best but they truly don't understand how to educate children. There is also the complaint that teachers are unqualified and do a poor job and I agree that there are some. However, there are people in positions that are not qualified for every type of business, not just schools. Others might complain that educators get paid too much money for only working 9 months of the year. They don't realize that educators get together with their teams over the summer to revamp their lessons to ensure that they are following state regulations that change often. Also, teachers are required to obtain their master's degree, sometimes paying for it themselves to keep their teaching certificate. It would be nice if those that are unsatisfied about the public school system get involved and be part of the solution.

Name: Elaine G. **City:** Pottstown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 1, 2023 6:18 AM – 747

Subject: An Undue Burden

Message: I am a public school teacher, a parent, and a taxpayer. I live in and work for the same school district my children attend. As a teacher, I feel the impact of larger class sizes, limited class offerings, and student/faculty exodus to schools not (as) impacted by unfair funding (charters, private, and parochial schools). As parents, my wife and I lament the situation for our own children, who sit in overfilled classes in overcrowded buildings. But, as a taxpayer in an era of ever spiraling costs at home, we see our budgetary margins growing thinner and thinner with each subsequent tax cycle. Where once the escrow on our mortgage was more than enough to cover our taxes, we are now being asked to increase our payments to cover the shortfall since the taxes were raised. Yet still, our students face underfunding to the tune of nearly \$5000 per student per year based on

the fair funding formula. This has been ruled unconstitutional, yet the legislature continues to drag its feet in yet another instance of political grandstanding as a substitute for actually doing the job they were elected to do. Please right this wrong. Find our schools fairly and remove the undue burden you have placed on the local taxpayers and schools.

Name: Jacob B. **City:** Olyphant, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 1, 2023 9:39 AM – 748

Subject: Property Tax Elimination Group

Message: Please take the time to listen to The Taxpayer Group fighting for property tax elimination. We have asked and asked, we are at the point of begging now to get rid of this antiquated and unfair tax. Seniors are really being hurt financially by this tax and can not continue to pay it.

Name: Ralph H. **City:** Kennett Square, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 1, 2023 2:36 PM – 749

Subject: HB13

Message: I am trying very hard to keep up with my taxes My school taxes are \$4750.00a year. I'm on SS. I'm 80 years old and fear that I will loose my home every year . My son lives with me and he has bin fight lung and brain cancer for 6 years now. I can't loose my home we both need it. Lease help pass HB13 asap Thank you.

Name: Rebina B. **City:** Bristol, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 1, 2023 4:04 PM – 750

Subject: Fix K-12 Public Education Funding

Message: I am a taxpayer in Silver Spring Township, Cumberland County, Cumberland Valley School District. I watched the live feed from the Commonwealth Court trial and began to really understand that Pennsylvania’s public schools aren’t broken. School funding is broken. The testimony from school superintendents was most difficult to hear as they described the unimaginable tough decisions they had to make to keep the school doors open. Every child in Pennsylvania deserves to receive a “meaningful opportunity to succeed academically, socially, and civically.” not just the kids in wealthy districts. Pennsylvania’s school funding system was declared unconstitutional in February 2023. In his budget address on March 7th, Governor Josh Shapiro stated, “[The judge’s] remedy was for us to get around the table and come up with a solution that ensures every child has access to a thorough and efficient education.” As an appointed member of Pennsylvania’s Basic Education Funding Commission, you are sitting at that table. To fulfill the Court’s mandate, I expect the BEFC’s report to deliver the following. • Thorough review of the distribution of funding via the Fair Funding Formula. • Identify how much each district needs for the state to meet its constitutional obligation that every student receives a “meaningful opportunity to succeed academically, socially, and civically.” • Calculate funding targets that also address unmet needs beyond K-12 basic education funding that were identified by the Court as critical to ensuring meaningful opportunities for all PA public school students, such as facilities, special education, and pre-K. • Ensure that the state meets its constitutional obligation by establishing a fair and equitable “state share” for those targets so that low-wealth school districts can reach adequate funding at a reasonable tax effort. • Provide a reasonable timeline, for the state to meet its share of those targets – a roadmap for the governor and state legislature to meet their constitutional mandate. I am seriously concerned that the legislature and Governor Shapiro may continue to kick the can down the road and fail to develop and fund a constitutional school funding system beginning with the 2024-2025 state budget. It is time for Pennsylvania’s Basic Education Funding Commission to step up, do the hard work, and end this decades-long problem. All the children of Pennsylvania depend on you. **Name:** Ann P. **City:** Mechanicsburg, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 1, 2023 5:34 PM – 751

Subject: Support for Basic Education Funding Commission

Message: I live in the Centennial School District in Bucks County. I worked in schools and higher education throughout my career. I know how important quality education is for children and young people to gain the knowledge and self-confidence needed to become successful members of our community. Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission’s final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a new tomorrow and your time to act is now.

Name: Alice M. **City:** Southampton, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 1, 2023 6:37 PM – 752

Subject: Full and Fair School Funding Across PA

Message: Dear Commissioners, The children of PA are receiving vastly unequal resources for their schooling. I raised my daughter in Lower Merion, where the schools benefit from a robust property tax base. Our district's schools have sturdy, functional buildings, plenty of supplies and extracurricular offerings, beautiful libraries, and librarians. Just a few miles away from me, in Philadelphia, an elementary school had to close abruptly last week because of asbestos contamination, disrupting the children's school year with no notice. A friend of mine taught for years in a mold-infested school building, causing her health problems. So many children are growing up exposed to such toxins in their schools. Another example of inequality: many schools in Philadelphia no longer have librarians. Volunteers and dedicated teachers are doing their best to create and manage book collections for students, but what a ridiculous situation! The children in Philadelphia and other underfunded districts deserve the same level of safety and educational resources as their peers in wealthier districts. Please ensure that your final report includes a calculation of how much money each district needs to meet its constitutional obligation to educate ALL of our children and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its obligation to provide full and fair funding. The Court has found that the PA General Assembly has this constitutional obligation. Current and future generations of Pennsylvania children are counting on the BEFC to complete its work and make this happen.

Name: Shobhana K. **City:** Bala Cynwyd, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 8:38 AM – 753

Subject: no taxes on my home!!!

Message: please do not tax my home to fund schools and teachers union. No taxes should be on my home! i should not lose my property-that i paid for- over taxes!!

Name: Michelle M. **City:** North Huntingdon, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 9:51 AM – 754

Subject: Gifted education

Message: Please consider funding gifted education. These students are in need and deserve services to keep them engaged in school.

Name: Christine S. **City:** Phoenixville, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 9:53 AM – 755

Subject: Gifted Funding

Message: I am an educator in a small, rural district (Apollo-Ridge). Year after year, my colleague and I talk about students that are not being identified. The lack of knowledge about gifted in our district is astounding. In fact, she and I have no certification or special training, and yet we are the two teachers that handle the entire gifted program in our district. This is unacceptable. In our research we have learned so much about gifted needs and we know these are not being met. They can not when the majority of our staff have zero knowledge or exposure to this information. We need help. We need funding to make this available to EVERY educator. We are failing the gifted population.

Name: Danielle W. **City:** Creekside, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 12:14 PM – 756

Subject: Equitable Funding for Schools

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a new tomorrow and your time to act is now.

Name: Ana Y. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 12:26 PM – 757

Subject: PA needs good public schools

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I am parent of 3 public school students in the School District of Philadelphia, a volunteer librarian at a public school, and a lifelong citizen of this commonwealth. Public schools are often mischaracterized as failing when what is really failing our children is the chronic underfunding of public schools. The teachers, staff, and students are doing great things in many public schools, but it is not right that they must do the work of educating our citizens and our future workforce in outdated buildings without the resources they need. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children regardless of where they live.

Name: Katie G. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 12:35 PM – 758

Subject: Gifted Education

Message: Please add \$73 million to the state budget!! Gifted education needs to be a funded mandate. Do the right thing. Help appropriately fund this initiative. These kids deserve state support.

Name: Sondra M. **City:** Rome, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 12:38 PM – 759

Subject: Gifted

Message: Please earmark \$73 million as an annual line item in the budget to support gifted education in Pennsylvania. The days of this being an unfunded mandate need to end. Our brightest students deserve better. Thank you!

Name: Jennifer K. **City:** Middletown, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 12:39 PM – 760

Subject: Gifted

Message: Upper Darby school district needs gifted funding

Name: Jessica C. **City:** Clifton Heights, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 12:41 PM – 761

Subject: Gifted

Message: Please vote to earmark 73 million to gifted education as a line item in the budget. Having an unfunded mandate is not fair to the 60,000 students in PA! We can do better!

Name: Michelle K. **City:** Hummelstown, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 12:42 PM – 762

Subject: Funding for Gifted Ed in PA

Message: We are asking for \$73 million to fund gifted education.

Name: Marcia G. **City:** Downingtown, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 12:46 PM – 763

Subject: Gifted Funding

Message: As a Gifted Facilitator I am aware of the importance of funding needed to support the gifted students with materials, opportunities, personnel to educate students , staff and parents. We currently working with very little in all of those.

Name: Kathy S. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 12:49 PM – 764

Subject: Gifted Funding

Message: All too often Gifted students are overlooked because they're the kids who "can". The gifted programs in school need to be funded! Just because someone behaves and does what they're supposed to, doesn't mean they should be left behind. Just because gifted kids aren't problems, doesn't mean they should be overlooked. Do the right thing and allow the kids who can to live up to their potential. Fund gifted education!!!!

Name: Katie H. **City:** Lock Haven, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 1:08 PM – 765

Subject: Property Tax

Message: Please get rid of this antiquated tax, and find better means of funding

Name: Ralph H. **City:** Kennett Square, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 1:12 PM – 766

Subject: Increase Education Funding

Message: To whom it may concern, Please increase basic and special education funding asap! Students who reside in school districts with low property values and incomes are deprived of the same opportunities and resources as students who reside in school districts with high property values and incomes; The disparity among school districts with high property values and incomes and school districts with low property values and incomes is not justified by any compelling government interest nor is it rationally related to any legitimate government objective. As a result of these disparities, students attending low wealth districts are being deprived of equal protection of law. All new education funding should be designated to real traditional public schools not charters or voucher programs.

Name: Angel G. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 1:33 PM – 767

Subject: Quality Public School Education for All students in Pennsylvania

Message: It is a great moral failure not to offer an equal and fair public education for All children. It has been unequal for decades, as well as racially biased when we see that majority black and brown school districts are generally the most underfunded. As a result, communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of not adequately and equitably funding our schools in low-wealth communities. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a better tomorrow and your time to act is now.

Name: Bruce M. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 1:48 PM – 768

Subject: Critical Need for Education Fair Funding for all Pennsylvania Public Schools

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a new tomorrow and your time to act is now.

Name: Ann D. **City:** Ambler, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 1:49 PM – 769

Subject: Basic education funding

Message: I am the grandma of a Philadelphia school student. I believe he and all children have the right to a fairly funded system. Please help so that all children can be educated in a healthy environment, not a building poisoned by asbestos and with poisonous chemicals in the water. Thank you.

Name: Noreen M. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 1:53 PM – 770

Subject: School Taxes

Message: I watched your hearing today and I now understand why you do not allow the people burdened and losing their homes to speak, YOU DO NOT CARE!! There was a bill discussed that would solve families being made homeless, people having to go without food, medicine, electric, and many other things but most of you have no interest in making anything fair about this! Two questions I would like everyone on this panel to answer at your next meeting are: EXPLAIN WHY THEY ARE CALLED PUBLIC SCHOOLS WHEN THEY ARE NOT FUNDED BY THE PUBLIC. EXPLAIN WHY YOU THINK IT IS FAIR FOR FAMILIES TO LOSE THEIR HOMES THEY WORKED THEIR WHOLE LIFE FOR DUE TO ONLY THE INABILITY TO AFFORD EVER RISING SCHOOL TAXES

AND YOU ALLOW THOUSANDS NOT TO PAY A DIME WITH NO WORRY ABOUT LOSING ANYTHING. I BET YOU WILL ALL HIDE FROM GIVING ANSWERS TO THESE 2 QUESTIONS. I JUST HOPE ONE DAY YOU WILL BE IN THE SAME CIRCUMSTANCE OF THE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE YOU SUPPOSEDLY SERVE. OH WAIT A MINUTE WE PAY YOU EXTREMELY WELL SO THESE TAXES DONT AFFECT YOU AS LONG AS YOU USE OUR HOMES TO FUND SCHOOLS IT WILL NEVER BE FAIR AND EQUITABLE

Name: Dawn N. **City:** Honey Brook, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 2:31 PM – 771

Subject: public school funding

Message: The property tax used to fund PA public schools is the most regressive tax possible. It's also cumbersome and to some extent random since home values change all the time and home assessments are based on the personal opinions of so called experts. Just because some "expert" has done it before does not make their personal opinion correct. Basing school funding on the basis of arbitrary values of some asset that does not produce revenue is antiquated and unfair to PA residents. Retired people are over taxed each and every one of them each and every year. Property tax is the most regressive tax and it's even worse than PA student performance.

Name: Ernest M. **City:** Elizabeth, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 3:18 PM – 772

Subject: AAUW Pennsylvania Urges Action

Message: Dear Members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, AAUW Pennsylvania urges you to develop a final report that is both comprehensive and crystal clear about the funding needed to meet all Pennsylvania school children's educational needs across all school districts. Funding equity must be ensured as the Court recognized and ordered. Waiting for more deliberation from the General Assembly is not an option. A definitive timeline must be included in the Commission's final report. Public education is the foundation of a healthy democracy and educational equity through fair resource allocation is a right. No student residing in poorer districts should receive poorer education. AAUW Pennsylvania.

Name: Cynthia H. **City:** Port Matilda, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 5:22 PM – 773

Subject: Gifted

Message: Please earmark \$73 million as an annual line item in the budget to support gifted education in Pennsylvania. The days of this being an unfunded mandate need to end. Our brightest students deserve better. Thank you!

Name: Jennifer K. **City:** Middletown, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 6:15 PM – 774

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: I am a parent of a child who attends school in the School District of Lancaster. My child's school and my child deserve equal funding - the same all of the other schools in Lancaster County and PA. Our school district is diverse and serves all children who walk through our doors - black, white, brown, unhoused, low socioeconomic status - all of them. And our school district is proud to educate them. Those students deserve everything that our state has to offer to help them reach everything they are capable of. We demand fair funding for the School District of Lancaster.

Name: Kimberly C. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 6:20 PM – 775

Subject: Change Now!

Message: We demand full funding for the School District of Lancaster!

Name: Abigail A. **City:** Mechanicsburg, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 6:20 PM – 776

Subject: Equal Funding

Message: Hello, my niece attends Hamilton Elementary in the School District of Lancaster and I believe that her school has been unrightfully funded. This is a diverse community that is being served an extraordinary education and because this is a racially diverse community, they receive less funding than predominately white school districts. This is unfair and unjust and the community demands a change and full funding!!!

Name: Karlee W. **City:** Oley, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 6:23 PM – 777

Subject: Fair funding for school district of Lancaster

Message: I'm a teacher in the School District of Lancaster. Year, after year, we teachers fight for enough funding to educate our students the way they truly deserve. Every teacher I know uses our own personal income to supplement our classrooms because we don't have enough to get what we need to provide for our students. Our school doesn't have enough funding to provide all of the staff members that we need in order to educate our students. Our schools deserve equal funding, comparable to all of the other districts throughout Pennsylvania. Our STUDENTS deserve to have every opportunity as every other student throughout Pennsylvania. Please do what is right.

Name: Chantelle D. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 7:56 PM – 778

Subject: Change Now!

Message: We demand full funding for the School District of Lancaster!

Name: Abigail A. **City:** Mechanicsburg, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 2, 2023 9:17 PM – 779

Subject: Property taxes

Message: Please eliminate the property tax in PA and replace it with an increased sales tax amount. The property tax, especially in my area is a real burden on senior citizens ah I are on fixed incomes,

Name: Jean J. **City:** Kennett Square, PA

Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 1:10 AM – 780

Subject: Poor education has sky rocketed in costs stop the nonsense

Message: Stop property tax and replace with sales tax on food so it's a consumption based tax. Charge \$0.05 per bag no more free plastic bags to eliminate property tax. Pensions must be reduced it's bankrupt education Bring back phonic, memorizing multiplication, and animal farm.

Name: Shawna I. **City:** North Huntingdon , PA

Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 5:04 AM – 781

Subject: No to school funding through property tax!

Message: No to school funding through property tax! Use sales tax instead!!!

Name: Timothy B. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 8:04 AM – 782

Subject: The need for comprehensive and Equitable School Funding

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a new tomorrow and your time to act is now. Thank you in advance for your support!

Name: Mary A. **City:** Media, PA

Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 9:11 AM – 783

Subject: Adequate and Equitable Funding

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: As a former public high school teacher, I know all too well how inadequate and inequitable funding can be in our schools, especially in our economically disadvantaged communities. Every child in Pennsylvania should be given the same chance to succeed. All children should be able to attend clean, safe schools with enough teachers and resources for them to learn. The Basic Education Funding Commission's final report must contain a clear calculation of how much each district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lay out a clear timeline. It is your job to ensure that each child is given a fair chance to succeed. Thank you for your time.

Name: Heather N. **City:** Douglassville, PA

Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 11:11 AM – 784

Subject: BEFC-school property tax elimination

Message: Following the November 2 hearing, it's intriguing to hear that in 2015, as HB76 was nearly passed, it's outcome would have been an 1:1 exchange on how funding takes place. But with further testimony from former Representative Frank Ryan, we also learn that with HB13, the state would see a revenue earning. It appears that failing to approve HB76 was negligent. It appears to the current Commonwealth Court ruling of school districts relying too heavily on real estate property taxes, and without proper action through legislation, Pennsylvania taxpayers will see more negligence. As Philadelphia has valid concerns to another 2% tax increase for goods, representatives from Philly CAN NOT dismiss the courts ruling. It has taken time for HB13 to be written, and I do believe Frank Ryan was diligent in its creation. I do not believe Harrisburg has much more time to waste. Let's Roll on HB13!

Name: Rachel Z. **City:** Greensburg, PA

Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 12:03 PM – 785

Subject: PA state budget gifted education funding

Message: Please add line item funding for gifted education to the PA state education budget. We need 1,000 educators to meet the state mandated caseload limit of 65 students. Given the average salary of 73,000, I am asking 73,000,000 be added.

Name: Emily L. **City:** Wallingford, PA

Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 12:13 PM – 786

Subject: Public School Funding

Message: I live in the Allentown School District, and even though I don't have a child currently enrolled in the district, as a taxpayer and a parent I am very interested in the proper education of our students and the adequate funding of our schools without adding to the considerable burden borne by property owners. Allentown has raised school taxes every year since 2016-17, with the exception of just one year. Estimates are that the district is underfunded by up to \$90 million. Such funding shortfalls directly affect the educational opportunities of our student and creates an unfair tax burden on homeowners such as myself. Recently, the current school funding formula has been ruled unconstitutional, so it's time - well beyond time, really - to revamp the funding formula so that students, teachers, and taxpayers get fair and equitable treatment. Thank you.

Name: Jack A. **City:** Allentown, PA

Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 2:03 PM – 787

Subject: Reading School District

Message: Due to lack of resources, our schools have very few after school programs and those that exist are very limited and very few of our children have the opportunity to participate.

Name: Claudia G. **City:** Reading, PA

Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 2:35 PM – 788

Subject: School taxes associated with homeownership

Message: Dear whoever it may concern. Something i just posted on my Facebook page with over 12,000 Facebook friends and followers, I am a disabled person living on less than \$17,000 a year on SSDI and a homeowner. I don't have any biological children. I When you have a mortgage taxes associated with your home are a part of that mortgage. Check out how much a month you are paying those taxes in your mortgage statement. You may be shocked. When you own a house without a mortgage you are totally aware of those taxes. You pay those taxes yourself. When I purchased my house I wasn't fully aware of the costs of those taxes. It seems that the government puts more of a burden on homeowners than renters. Pennsylvania homeowners have to pay regular school taxes, school taxes associated with homeownership, property taxes, employment taxes, state income tax, federal income tax, one of the highest gas taxes in the country, and other taxes. It gets overwhelming to say the least. Homeowners pay water, sewer and trash as well. It's a constant stress for me since I am low income living on SSDI. Pennsylvania taxpayers need to wake up. Taxes are one of the reasons that Pennsylvania is the 4th state people are leaving and moving to less tax burdensome places. I may be forced to move out of Pennsylvania and sell my home if taxes get more expensive. Poor homeowners are hit the hardest in the Commonwealth. Just something to think about today! I am sending this fighting cancer at the moment. It's important to me and many others. Respectfully submitted.

Name: Stephanie F **City:** Lykens, PA

Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 3:54 PM – 789

Subject: Eliminate school property taxes

Message: How difficult is it to eliminate school property taxes with an increase in sales tax and income tax. You have no idea how difficult it is to raise several thousand dollars every year, and have you ever talked to people who have lost their properties due to unpaid taxes. Maybe if you met and talked to them you might find motivation to eliminate property taxes. I am 81 years old and do not believe I will live to see this happen.

Name: John H. **City:** Shrewsbury, PA

Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 4:41 PM – 790

Subject: Requests related to the BEFC Final Report

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a new tomorrow and your time to act is now. Thank you.

Name: Alisa B. **City:** Rydal, PA

Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 4:59 PM – 791

Subject: School Property Tax

Message: I have been living at this address for almost 33 years. When we moved here our total taxes were \$9500.00. After 15 years I hired an attorney to help reduce them. We were paying the highest in our neighborhood. They were reduced to \$4500. Today they are \$8600.00, The school tax was increased by \$400.00. My husband died in 2007. Losing his income has placed a huge burden on me & I do not qualify for any help except for the homestead which is Pennie's compared to what I owe. I am at a loss to understand how this state expects retired people over age 65 to continue with this travesty, but would rather see us forfeit our homes because we cannot afford them! Other states have programs addressing this matter. Can you please consider some form of HB76 to help myself & others continue to live in our homes!!

Name: Mary Jo S. **City:** Clarks Summit, PA

Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 6:23 PM – 792

Subject: Fair taxation on school tax

Message: While I understand the need to fund education, recently we have piggybacked a new tax supposedly for education that pays a fixed amount to under privileged students every year. Now while this monies may somewhat assist these students, I'm a realist and feel a better plan for those funds would have been to have the needed school supplies on hand at the schools that the students could access using a prepaid card of sorts that would have a reverse balance on it and add any charges made at school onto the card, and the card would only activate on the schools system. We already have a food program to give those same children at least two meals a day again a taxpayer supported fund. While I have been fortunate enough to provide to mine without public assistance while they received an education and paid the annual school tax. that was 7 years ago and my income has been reduced over the intervening years and I'd like to see some tax relief as my funds grow tighter. Maybe we should look at more cost effective ways to use the already available funds as opposed to wanting more funding for somewhat redundant programs. REMEMBER THIS IS A GOVERNMENT SUPPOSEDLY WORKING FOR THE PEOPLE, NOT THE PEOPLE WORKING FOR THE GOVERNMENT. And remember if you want to enact any form of financial burden on the public make sure you don't excuse yourself from the burden you set on others.

Name: David M. **City:** New Salem, PA

Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 6:40 PM – 793

Subject: property tax resolution

Message: I feel strongly that the income and sales tax be increased in order to eliminate school property taxes. This would make it a fair tax that almost everyone pays a share. It would make money available per student an equal amount no matter what school district they attend. We need a change it has gone on for far too long.

Name: Deborah S. **City:** New Cumberland, PA

Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 7:05 PM – 794

Subject: Gifted Education funding

Message: Gifted Education is a mandated program in Pennsylvania but it is not funded. In order to support our gifted population and give adequate and equal education for all \$73,000,000 needs to be allocated for our population so they are educated in PA public schools and stay in PA to work and continue to make Pennsylvania great!

Name: Lorraine C. **City:** Mt. Wolf, PA

Sent: Friday, November 3, 2023 9:01 PM – 795

Subject: Property/ School Tax

Message: I am all for eliminating property and school tax. As Americans we grow up being taught that home ownership is one key component to living the American dream. As adults and homeowners we learn the harsh reality that you never own your property, we only rent it from the government through the collection of property / school taxes. I truly believe there is a better way to fund education. Whatever politician can eliminate these taxes and allow us to truly own our property will go down n history as a legendary individual who actually represented their constituents! The majority of people want these taxes eliminated. We want to own our property. Let's get the school tax elimination act passed.

Name: Wayne L. **City:** Glen Rock, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 8:21 AM – 796

Subject: My kids

Message: I have 4 kids. I need help with education after school. I need good education. Can you help my kids and me because education first? Thanks.

Name: Tigist A. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 10:25 AM – 797

Subject: School Property Tax

Message: It's time to end these out of date taxes that cause a heavy burden onto the homeowner, especially seniors. Everyone should pay this tax - not just a select group of people!

Name: Donald S. **City:** Phoenixville, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 12:56 PM – 798

Subject: Reading School District

Message: The lack of funding in the Reading School District limits the learning and development of our students. We need more teachers, extracurricular programs, counselors, school supplies, etc.

Name: Milka U. **City:** Reading, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 1:00 PM – 799

Subject: School Property Taxes

Message: We need TOTAL School Property Tax ELIMINATION for all property owners! Article III, Section B, § 14. States: "The General Assembly shall provide for the maintenance and support of a thorough and efficient system of public education to serve the needs of the Commonwealth." So according to our PA Constitution, funding education is the State's (Commonwealth's) responsibility, not that of homeowners/property owners. There is also a lot of waste in the school budgets. Why do we need 500 school districts (Administrators, bus contracts, etc.) for 67 counties? Why are we providing tuition reimbursement for teachers to obtain a master's degree? A master's degree benefits the teachers. It does nothing to help the students. I could go on, for instance the disparity between health care insurance for teachers and that of the private sector, and much more. Just research it. Shelter is one of life's necessities. NO TAX SHOULD HAVE THE POWER TO LEAVE YOU HOMELESS!

Name: Margaret L. **City:** Stewartstown, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 1:00 PM – 800

Subject: Reading School District

Message: The lack of funds affects my son's interest in music and sports. He practices the trombone and it was necessary to rent one for him to practice daily because the school does not have instruments. In the same way, it was necessary to practice baseball and enroll him in an out-of-school program.

Name: Norkelis M. **City:** Reading, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 1:13 PM – 801

Subject: Reading School District

Message: Due to the lack of funds, my children have a learning gap since they need therapists, guidance and more teacher assistants. The district does not have enough money to cover the needs that my children have.

Name: Maribel M. **City:** Reading, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 1:14 PM – 802

Subject: School tax relief

Message: Give folks 65 and older 30% reduction in school taxes, and spread 30% reduction between ages 18-64.

Name: Gary P. **City:** York, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 1:17 PM – 803

Subject: Reading School District

Message: Due to the lack of resources, my children cannot eat at school and they come home hungry because the food they are served at school is out of date or spoiled. The district needs to change suppliers and that costs them more money.

Name: Benita M. **City:** Reading, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 1:22 PM – 804

Subject: Reading School District

Message: Due to lack of funds, my daughter has been left without a math and biology teacher for two consecutive years. Teachers leave for other districts because they are paid better salaries. We need teachers not to leave, salary increase.

Name: Amanda M. **City:** Reading, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 1:27 PM – 805

Subject: Reading School District

Message: We need more money to be able to pay teachers to be trained to deal with special children. We have a great lack of teachers who are trained for special children. My son is limited because he is special.

Name: Maria H. **City:** Reading, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 1:45 PM – 806

Subject: Reading School District

Message: The Reading School District has many needs to be able to meet the needs of its students. It needs enough funding because students need after school programs and to keep students off the streets.

Name: Leonarda B. **City:** Reading, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 1:49 PM – 807

Subject: Reading School District

Message: Due to lack of resources in our school district, the classrooms do not have air conditioning and the first days of school were very difficult. They also do not have much security. Fights are always happening between students at school due to lack of security.

Name: Camila L. **City:** Reading, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 1:53 PM – 808

Subject: Reading School District

Message: There is not enough funding in the Reading School District to help my child with counseling and guidance. My son feels lost. The district's need for funds is urgent.

Name: Ramon D. **City:** Reading, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 2:08 PM – 809

Subject: End taxing homes

Message: Posted by Shelly T. following 11/2 BEFC meeting. "yeah it kills me how they're worried about 2% increase in sales tax but not worried about people losing their homes over property taxes!"

Name: Julia B. **City:** Collegeville, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 4, 2023 3:06 PM – 810

Subject: Reading School District)

Message: The Reading School District lacks funds to meet the requirements and needs of students. We need to improve the school system, better food quality, safety and more after school programs.

Name: Yesenia R. **City:** Reading, PA

Sent: Sunday, November 5, 2023 5:54 AM – 811

Subject: Property Taxes

Message: The government should eliminate the Property taxes and replace them with a different type of sales tax. People who do not have children in a public school should not be paying to fund these schools.

Name: Mike K. **City:** Elizabeth, PA

Sent: Sunday, November 5, 2023 8:58 AM – 812

Subject: School Tax

Message: I am 72 years old and have never had children. I don't believe that, since I've seen the benefits of the taxes I've paid all my adult life, that I've been served by those taxes. Abolish School taxes now and be thankful that I don't demand the refund of all the past taxes of which I've been robbed. At least with sales taxes I can choose to purchase or not. Taxation without representation did not end well for the British 247 years ago!

Name: Jeffrey S. **City:** Macungie, PA

Sent: Sunday, November 5, 2023 9:36 AM – 813

Subject: Fund Chapter 16

Message: Did you know that in Pennsylvania, we spent \$2,777,989,000 on the Department of Corrections in 2022 and \$0 on our most promising and talented K-12 students? On behalf of the more than 60,000 children in Pennsylvania who are identified as gifted learners, I want to draw your attention to the fact that Gifted Education in Pennsylvania is an unfunded mandate. Chapter 16 of the PA School Code dictates how schools and districts are required to support gifted learners, however, there is no money allocated to support these students in the State budget. With little support and little oversight, many districts, especially in more impoverished areas, are likely to provide minimal, if any, support for these students. Sadly, many people incorrectly assume that gifted students will be just fine. As a Gifted Support Specialist in a "cornfield district", I can tell you this is not true. Gifted learners are neurodiverse individuals who need specialized education, just as students with learning disabilities do. Consider adding \$73 million as a line item for Gifted Education in your next proposed State Education budget. Funding at this level could go towards improving equity by funding teaching positions as well as providing greater levels of administrative support and oversight to ensure that students across the State of Pennsylvania are getting the educational support that they need to grow and thrive. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: Susannah P. **City:** New Holland, PA

Sent: Sunday, November 5, 2023 11:14 AM – 814

Subject: School Property Tax

Message: Being a senior citizen and being retired, never having children, I feel that this School Property Tax is unfair. I understand the need to support the schools in the city of York, but without an income and just for owning property in York I have to pay this additional tax. Even with the Homeowners Rebate something else has to be done. I question the educational costs in a comparison between school year 2022 and one of the COVID years when everything was done online. If the costs were less during COVID, can education be structured around a mostly online schooling? That would reduce the costs associated to the school buildings. Everyone either desire to go back when things were easier and where schools were more than just "baby sitting services". Or to move into the future, where most if not all educational services are online. With required community athletic activities. And once the population gets in the groove, education will move forward, helping to educate those that want to advance.

Name: Eric G. **City:** York, PA

Sent: Sunday, November 5, 2023 3:38 PM – 815

Subject: Three requests for the BEF Commission

Message: The Commonwealth is constitutionally obligated to ensure that Pennsylvania communities have the resources required to adequately and equitably educate their children. And so I'm asking the commission to do three things: 1) Look at what you have, 2) look at how those things aren't working, and 3) remember that money matters. Look at what you have: The Commonwealth spent substantial time and energy developing funding formulas to allocate BEF and SEF dollars; it created the Level Up program to specifically target resources to the most under-resourced school districts; it recently revised its PlanCon process for funding school construction projects; and it has strong relationships with federal officials who make decisions on funding that flows to schools (particularly Title I and special education funding). Together, these are tools that can respond to the funding shortfalls identified by the Commonwealth Court. Look at how those things aren't working: The Commission has done an incredible job tapping the expertise of teachers, school administrators, researchers and community stakeholders over the last several weeks. (Please continue to seek these experts' advice as you continue your work!) From them, you've heard about problems specific to all of these tools. Concerning the Fair Funding Formula, school business officials worry about its volatility and funding "cliffs" (as districts hover around cut-offs) and all have stressed the fact that while it guides the allocation of funding, it has no mechanism for quantifying how much districts actually need; adequacy targets are missing. State support for special education students is also far below what districts are required to spend, and with charter tuition for special education students based on districts' average special education costs rather than those charter students' actual needs, even more of these dollars are siphoned away from the students who need them. Lastly, while Act 70 of 2019 modernized PlanCon, the program hasn't been funded or accepted new applications since 2016. These weaknesses in otherwise powerful tools should be one focus of your work. Remember that money matters: To quote the Commonwealth Court, "the Court concludes that money does matter, and economically-disadvantaged students and historically underperforming students can overcome challenges if they have access to the right resources that wealthier districts are financially able to provide." This was based on substantial evidence, presented over the course of the trial, that showed time and again the impact of adequate resources on student outcomes. Getting a clear sense of the resources required to meet students' constitutional right to a quality public education should be the other focus of your work.

Name: Karen P. **City:** Bethlehem, PA

Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 11:35 AM – 816

Subject: I'll be 73 this month.....

Message: And still working.....I'm still working because my Social Security must go towards Taxes and Insurance....Specifically, School Taxes. I no longer have a Mortgage but my SS must go towards Taxes , Insurance , Keeping the lights on , Cable TV and Gas for the Car so I can go to work to earn money for Food.... We don't have any children in the Schools, we never did. My School Taxes are now \$5000 every year... At 73 I have no desire to pack up my house and mover to another state....It looks like the only way for me to get out of school taxes is to die. Please do something about School Taxes in Pennsylvania....Let me enjoy my last few years before working kills me....Thank You.

Name: Salvatore Z. **City:** East Stroudsburg, PA

Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 1:05 PM – 817

Subject: Stop Funding Schools With Property Tax !

Message: Eliminate School Funding with Property Tax

Name: Brian Z. **City:** Lower Burrell, PA

Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 1:14 PM – 818

Subject: School district of Philadelphia

Message: Good morning, I am the Child Advocacy Director at the Arc of Philadelphia and have been in this position for 8 years. I attend meeting with families across the county, including charter schools. Our children are not being afforded an appropriate education or a FAPE with those students who have IEP's. Teacher shortages were happening prior to COVID and continues to a problem. The biggest areas I have noticed as an advocate are as follows: 1. We have limited access to curriculum 2. Staff need to be properly supported to be able to deliver curriculum with fidelity, but also know how to trouble shoot if a child is not making progress. 3. We need more evidence based interventions 4. We need more reading specialists 5. Schools need to be held accountable when delivering instruction to both students with and without disabilities. 6. We need more related service providers. 7. Most of our schools are in poor condition and still have asbestosis. Our children need certified teachers in the classrooms, who are properly supported to deliver evidence based interventions with fidelity. Thank you.

Name: Bonita M. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 1:42 PM – 819

Subject: ECE Funding/ Pre-K Teacher Pipeline

Message: ECE teachers are being paid “inadequate” wages and there is a warning of an impending mass exodus from the field. Early childhood education advocates in Philadelphia and statewide feel that our sector is “on the brink of a breakdown.” Early childhood programs are losing teachers to businesses like Amazon that can pay higher wages and offer more immediate healthcare benefits. The Start Strong report said that the child care sector in Philadelphia “is in crisis.” Its analysis found that 83% of Philadelphia-area programs have a staffing shortage, with 616 open positions across the city and 2,831 children on waitlists. Using 2021 earnings data, the most recent available, the report also found that in all of Pennsylvania’s 67 counties, early childhood teachers’ earnings “failed to meet the cost-of-living” and were not sufficient to cover “basic necessities like housing, transportation and food.” How can we put more money into the pocket of our Early Childhood Education teachers to ensure that future generations of children have strong educational foundations and high quality learning?

Name: Aisha A. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 3:41 PM – 820

Subject: My Concerns

Message: There is much that can and should be addressed by the Commission. Your deliberations are of the highest importance to the future of PA. I regret that I cannot at this time provide you with greater information, yet I hope the following will be helpful. *** PA citizens can be proud of the State’s early commitment to public education. In 1834, the State mandated that all school districts provide free education to all ages 5 to 21. Toward the end of the 19th century, funding was put in place, curricula were designed, and teacher certification was implemented. Unfortunately, this long commitment to public instruction is being dismantled, as conservative/GOP members of the PA legislature insist on programs that allocate millions of funds with no attention to how they are used and what benefits they produce. Considering all these factors, the PA Commonwealth Court determined that the State’s system for funding public education was constitutionally flawed. Through the Basic Education Funding Commission, It is up to the Governor and the legislature to divine an adequate and equitable system. I want to ask the readers of this article to join me in asking the Commission to restore our honorable tradition of public education and develop the best public education system in the United States. How can this be achieved? Adequate funding – The Court determined that the State’s funding prevents too many students from fulfilling their educational potential. Education is expensive because most of its expense is for labor, i.e., teachers. The State is now one of the worst in the country for teacher shortages. It will take years to rebuild the system so that an adequate supply is available for every district. However, labor is not the only significant expense for school districts. As you might suspect, roofs need replacement or repair, HVAC wear out, and windows break. New needs for security, fire safety, etc., go on. Don’t give up on public education – PA has experimented with new forms of education. However, PA appears to be more interested in experimentation than in the benefits of such experiments. This is clearly the case with the following unaccountable programs: Pennsylvania Award for Student Success (PASS), i.e., school vouchers and its Opportunity Scholarship Tax Credit Program (OSTCP) and the Educational Improvement Tax Credit (EITC). These programs are designed to appeal to students in failing schools to leave the public school system for a school of their choice. PA has well over 300 failing schools. Why not address their needs instead of resorting to pernicious, policy-empty schemes? More than ever, we need a robust, vibrant public education system. We need to honor those who pioneered public education in the State by addressing the needs of failing schools and by making PA’s system the best in the country.

Name: Anthony M. **City:** Gettysburg, PA

Sent: Monday, November 6, 2023 5:02 PM – 821

Subject: Support our Pre-K Teachers by Increasing their Salaries

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: I work as an Instructional Specialist in Early Childhood Department of School District of Philadelphia. The mission of the Office of Early Childhood Education is to provide high quality, comprehensive, developmentally appropriate programs for children from three to age five and their families, and to deliver on the civil right of every child in Philadelphia to an excellent public school education. The focus and purpose of our work is to ensure that every child in our care is safe, healthy, and arrives at school ready to learn and succeed. The issue is that we are losing our Pre-K teachers because of their low salaries and our children's learning is affected greatly. Please help us support our children and families effectively by increasing our teachers' salaries.

Name: Entela B. **City:** Wynnewood, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 10:23 AM – 822

Subject: Equity funding for public schools

Message: As a Philadelphia resident and taxpayer, I see firsthand the damage done by inadequate and unequal funding of public schools. My son and his young family left Philadelphia for New York State because the Philadelphia public schools were so terrible. That's not only a personal loss for me, it's also a braindrain, a loss of taxpayer funding, and a missed opportunity for my grandchildren to grow up in a vibrant, ethnically diverse community. But I couldn't blame them. I've volunteered in the public schools in our neighborhood and they look and function like prisons. Let's put the money we spend on prisons into the schools and then we won't need the prisons.

Name: Jennifer L. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 10:27 AM – 823

Subject: Official Comments to the BEFC from the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC, On behalf for the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania, we are calling on you to submit a final report to the General Assembly that includes the following: A meaningful adequacy target for each school district as part of a formula that determines how much each district needs to provide its children with a comprehensive, effective education. The report should also state how funds will be distributed to the districts. Acknowledgement of the unmet fiscal needs beyond basic K-12 education as identified by the Commonwealth Court, and includes these needs in the adequacy funding targets. These needs, such as facilities, special education and Pre-K, were created by years of underfunding to low-wealth districts, and are critical to ensure meaningful opportunities for all Pennsylvania public school students. Establishment of a fair and equitable "state share" to ensure that the state meets its constitutional obligation for those targets, so that low-wealth school districts can reach adequate funding at a reasonable tax effort. A plan with a reasonable timeline for the state to meet its share of those targets, a plan that guides the governor and the state legislature to meet their constitutional mandate. Establishing fair, comprehensive funding for public education is the right thing to do for our children to ensure that every child has the chance to manifest their own potential. However, it is also the right thing to do for Pennsylvania. Appropriately and equitably funded public education produces citizens who are prepared for a competitive workforce and who will be future taxpayers. Educated and meaningfully employed young adults will reduce the level of social problems that plague the Commonwealth and will be an active part of finding solutions to the challenges we will face in the future. Ensuring equitable and adequate funding for every school district is a moral and constitutional obligation, and the League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania calls on the BEFC to meet this obligation. Sincerely, Maria Delgado-Santana, LWVPA President and Susan Boser, LWVPA Director of Social Policy.

Name: League of Women Voters of Pennsylvania **City:** Harrisburg, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 11:56 AM – 824

Subject: PA Funding Formula-Needed Changes!

Message: Good Afternoon, I am writing today to advocate for the expansion of state and federal funding for education in Pennsylvania. The current funding formula places a disproportionate amount of the responsibility for funding schools on local property taxes, when compared to a majority of the states in the U.S (Local 54.1%, State 34.1%, Federal 8.6% when compared to national averages of Local 44.1%, State 45.3%, Federal 10.5%). This problematic formula not only leaves resource/property poorer districts without needed educational assets year after year, but also is poised to lead to greater disaster as the cost of living continues to balloon, and home ownership continues to become more and more out of reach for younger workers, with first time home owners now older than ever, therefore contributing to property taxes for less years overall. Over time, a less educated, or more poorly educated populace, will continue to lead to poorer and poorer outcomes for Pennsylvanians. Investing in education is not just investing in student's ability to learn, it is an investment in each other as Pennsylvanians across generations, combating poverty, improving health outcomes, and more. I hope that the legislature will continue to push to ensure that property-poor districts have alternate means to obtain support funding and continue to push for Pennsylvania to have a funding formula more aligned with national averages. References:

<https://nationalmortgageprofessional.com/news/55433/zillow-average-first-time-homebuyer-33-years-age> Funding formula at 42:26 : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=alLSN2ocA> <https://www.penncapital-star.com/government-politics/report-pa-has-17th-lowest-minority-homeownership-rate-monday-morning-coffee/> <https://www.childfund.org/about-us/education/>.

Name: Val W. **City:** Canonsburg, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 12:30 PM – 825

Subject: Equitable school funding is a must to secure our kids' future and the future of our Commonwealth

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC, I am a parent and taxpayer in the Rose Tree-Media School District. While our school district is well-funded, other communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund schools in low-wealth communities. Children in these underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in my district. All PA children deserve to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a new tomorrow and your time to act is now.

Name: Stefanie A. **City:** Media, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 3:08 PM – 826

Subject: Gifted Education Funding

Message: Hello! I am a gifted facilitator in the School District of Lancaster and this is my 20th year in gifted education. I am also the parent of two gifted students. I find it extremely frustrating that the state mandates gifted education but does not provide any funding for the mandates. How can you mandate something but not support it with funding? In an urban school district like mine, gifted education gets pushed to the back burner because we don't have the funding to support it. We are not able to provide adequate services to students because we are stretched between so many schools. Currently, I support 7 different schools. I struggle to meet the needs of my students because I am just not able to spend enough time in every school to give students the services that they deserve. I urge you to find a way to make gifted education a priority by providing students with the funding they deserve. Please consider making a change that will provide so many students with the services they deserve.

Name: Lori B. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 7, 2023 8:04 PM – 827

Subject: Property taxes

Message: Something must be done about our property taxes. Every year they go up \$200 raising our mortgage payments. I'm a senior and want to retire but can't for fear that in a few years my income won't allow me to stay in my home. Other options must be made - we should not lose our home that we worked hard for because we can't pay for something that has been deemed illegal.

Name: Mary B. **City:** Coatesville, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 8, 2023 8:00 AM – 828

Subject: School Tax

Message: I'm on a fixed income and can't afford \$4,000 a year for the school tax. I'm going to lose my home because I can't pay. Please help!

Name: John L. **City:** Gibsonia, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 8, 2023 8:00 AM – 829

Subject: Pre-K Education in Philadelphia

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a new tomorrow and your time to act is now.

Name: Taheerah I. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 8, 2023 9:22 AM – 830

Subject: Fair Funding of Pennsylvania's Education System

Message: I am submitting my letter of support towards a fair and balanced funding of the Pennsylvania education System. The taxation of Property Owners is archaic and needs to be updated. the rising cost(s) can't continue to be placed on the back of property owners. Assessments are old outdated and unfair. The State leadership needs to sit down and figure out the complex

fix necessary to fund all education equally. I am a homeowner, taxpayer and parent of current students in the Pennsylvania Education system. I have served on a school board where we worked hard the past 4 years to maintain the fiscal line and not increase taxes however the mounting pressure of programs, cyber schools are just 2 examples which continue to escalate budgets with the taxpayer (property owner) on the hook. It is wrong. Please fix it as it is a MESS and worsens everyday you fail to do what is right!

Name: Scott P.

City: Jim Thorpe, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 8, 2023 2:09 PM – 831

Subject: Property Taxes and School Choice

Message: I read, and greatly appreciated, the testimonies of Alex Halper, Warren Hudak, and The Commonwealth Foundation. Their testimonies have very interesting and important data that too few people seem to know about. I also appreciate that the BEF Commission has been holding these hearings; I just hope that it results in positive solutions. My comment is two-fold – from my experience as a school board member, and also as a parent. I served on my district's school board for 12 years, and then I helped found a brick-and-mortar charter school and currently serve on its board. I have seen both sides of the coin. While on the district's board, our board was taught that the property tax system is the most stable way to have reliable funding for schools. While this may be true, it doesn't make it the right thing to do to people – especially those who are retired and on fixed incomes, or those who experience job loss/decrease in income. Superintendents and all public school employees get what is probably the best retirement plan in the country. Pensions that taxpayers contribute to. Pensions that are far and above better than most retired people receive. It's Feudalism – the peasants being forced to pay so that the lords can live better than them. I can remember voting against tax increases to simply pad the coffers for "rainy day" reserves after the state added limits to how much taxes can be raised in a single year. And as per some of the testimonies, it looks like this a common practice among school districts. On the district's board, I was also led to believe that charter schools are bad for children, do nothing but suck away money, etc., etc. But when I became involved in the charter school system, I learned the other side of the story – there are kids who, for a multitude of reasons, don't fit and can't succeed in a traditional classroom. They need another way to learn. My middle child was one of those students. Our oldest graduated from the district school and did great there. She now has a master's degree and is in her ninth year of being a music teacher, and I give the district a lot of credit for instilling her love of learning. This wasn't the case for the middle child. Same school and many of the same teachers, but by the 6th grade, things went downhill, and this was in spite of an IEP (hearing impairment/HFA) and GIEP. The district's own psychologist tested him in the 2nd grade and determined that he was in the 99th percentile of intellectual functioning, and yet he gave us a dire warning at that point that our child would be at high risk for being a school drop-out when he reached high school. How could a child that highly gifted fail at school?? The school's psychologist explained that the highly gifted children have the highest dropout rate simply because the traditional school classroom system doesn't match up with the student's learning needs. The psychologist's prediction ended up coming true. At the beginning of our son's sophomore year, he said he couldn't take it anymore and asked to drop out. This was a boy, deemed highly gifted, and who had been building and programming multiple computers from scratch since he was 12, and now faced with the reality of not being capable of graduating high school. Why? Not because he didn't want to learn, but because the school wasn't the right fit for him and how he learns. In a move of desperation, we asked him to at least try our local charter school, and it quite literally saved his life. After the first week of classes, he came home happy and said it felt like the weight of the world had been lifted from his shoulders. He graduated in 2017, earning \$23K in scholarships and awards, including a national level autism award for overcoming challenges in his education. In 2021, he graduated cum laude with his degree in computer science and was hired at his first job interview in Altoona, lives independently, and now makes over \$70K and just yesterday told us he is up for a promotion. Compare that to what his alternate trajectory would have been had it not been for the charter school. A high school dropout, living with his parents. And with his disabilities, it would have been oh so easy to just put him on disability (at the taxpayers' expense) for the rest of his life. But what a waste of a life, and intelligent mind, that would have been. And I know that there are many other stories out there just like his. (highly gifted children have the highest dropout rate simply because the traditional school classroom system doesn't match up with the student's learning needs.) So we have to ask ourselves, what are we doing? Are we really focused on meeting the needs of each and every individual child to get them on their path to success, or are we just trying to cheap it out and fit them all into the mold and cattle chutes that our so-called experts in government say is the right way because they think they know better than parents, all while hoarding the money in reserve accounts and making sure we get the highest possible pensions? Remember the old saying, you get what you pay for. And by the looks of what our education system has produced in the last 30 years, it proves the adage to be correct. As I read down through the comments posted on this site, I can see that the false beliefs about charter schools still exist, so I would like to give correct information here. Charter schools are not private, they are public education. Charter school students are required to take the same state testing as any district student. There not only is accountability in charter schools, but even

more so than the school districts because charter schools can, and do, go out of business quickly when they fail at their job and students leave and take their money elsewhere, or when the school can't get its charter renewed. Name even the worst school district that has met that same fate for not doing a good job. No matter how bad a school district is, it will continue to exist because it is a government entity. At the worst, it will get consolidated into another district if its enrollment gets too low to stay viable. As for the comments about charter schools sucking the money away from school districts, charter schools only get about 70% of a child's money. The school district keeps the rest. The school district pockets about 30% of the funding for a child they aren't educating. For example, if a school district allots \$15,000 per student and that student goes to a charter school, the school district keeps about \$4500. And the charter school gets about \$10,500 to give as good, or better, education as the district. If the district would have 25 students (about the amount of a classroom of students) going to charter schools, it would gain about \$112,500 per year for students it doesn't educate. This is the student's money. Money that should be used by the student, not the district! As for student transportation, if the district's boundary line is within 10 miles of the charter school, then the district is responsible for transporting the student. And yes, there is a cost to the district that comes out of the money they keep. But the cost is nowhere close to their 30% cut, and what many people don't know is that the district also gets a 50% subsidy for charter student transportation, which is 20% more than the subsidy they get for their own students. And not all students ride a bus or van. There is a percentage that walk, drive, or have family transporting them, but the district still gets the money for them. In closing, I again thank you for holding these hearings. I hope and pray that the commission moves forward with courage to effect the right change we need in education funding. I agree that the property tax system needs revamped. I also agree with previous testimonies that the state needs a direct system of contracting and funding charter schools – take the school districts out the middle. If we truly want the bang for our buck, then all parties need to realize that there is not a one size fits all in education. As much as I believe in my own charter school, I know that not every child would do well there, and that's ok. Children are unique and have specific learning styles and needs. And those who don't fit into the traditional school, have the right to a free and appropriate [for them] education. That means that they should also have the right to go to a school that fits their needs and to take all of their funding with them.

Name: Angela C. **City:** Mobile, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2023 9:28 AM – 832

Subject: Equitably Funding Pennsylvania's Public Schools

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: I am a parent in PA Wallingford Swarthmore School District. This is a relatively well-funded school district. Even so, i was a Board member for many years of a community non-profit solely focused on raising funds to support teachers and schools in our district with acquiring classroom technology and tools to advance students education. I can't imagine what other significantly underfunded districts do to meet those needs. Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same education. We live next to an underfunded district. I don't know how that district meets its educational goals when there are no new books, there is no AC, there are too many students in classrooms and children do not receive the attention they need. Those children deserve the same opportunities as our districts' children. Our children cannot continue to wait for people in Harrisburg to recognize their responsibility to fix this problem. The Court recognized the problem and the General Assembly's obligation to address it. Please ensure that your final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to its students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to its children. We are counting on the Commission to complete its important work. Now is the time to act. Pennsylvanian children can't wait any longer. Thank you.

Name: Ann M. **City:** Rose Valley, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2023 9:29 AM – 833

Subject: Equitable School Funding

Message: I am a parent of a Philadelphia School District graduate and the aunt of Lower Merion School District graduates. The difference in the school buildings, the resources at their schools and the types of classes offered was immense. We have the opportunity to provide equitable school funding for all of Pennsylvania's school children no matter where they live. Your final report must contain a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students. You must also lay out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children, so Pennsylvania's inequitable funding stops NOW! We are counting on the Commission to complete its important work. Now is the time to act. Pennsylvania's children can't wait any longer. Thank you.

Name: Marcy B. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2023 10:15 AM – 834

Subject: School tax

Message: I'm an 80 year old retired veteran living on a fixed income, I'm too old to move away and being forced to pay 20% of my income to school taxes. I fought for this country and now find myself cutting back on my medication and every pleasure in life, just to put food on my table. I know you can find a fairer way to pay for schools, so why are you not doing it?

Name: Michael V. **City:** Cresco, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2023 2:27 PM – 835

Subject: Basic Education Formula

Message: Please don't forget there are 500 public school districts in the state. Solving the problem for 480 or 490 still leaves thousands of students within failing schools. There is no formula that will be able to address every single problem with the state system in its current form. I implore you to make drastic recommendations to completely overhaul a broken and inadequate system across the state. Whether it's the high achieving schools and its taxpayers complaining that they don't want to pay property taxes, or lower funded school districts and their inability to provide an education to its students and even a basic level. A massive and historic mandate was handed to you by the court allowing you to do what is best now, and for the near future of the children of the commonwealth. Please do not take this opportunity and allow it to pass with a half measure.

Name: Robert N. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2023 2:40 PM – 836

Subject: School funding

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a new tomorrow and your time to act is now.

Name: Beth H. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2023 2:45 PM - 837

Subject: BEF Commission

Message: BEFC Members, I am a parent in Bristol Borough School District. The Commonwealth Court made it clear that the General Assembly has a constitutional obligation to fully fund our schools, which it has failed to do for decades. My kids' zip code shouldn't determine the quality of education they receive. Between the General Assembly and the Governor, it is now on you to be champions for our kids' futures by using the BEFC to layout a clear plan for how much each school district needs to be fully funded and to establish a strict timeline to fully fund our schools within a short time period. Any failure to do so, is a failure to act as the Court has directed. The time to fully fund our schools is now. Our kids cannot wait any longer. Thank you.

Name: Dan O. **City:** Bristol, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2023 5:07 PM – 838

Subject: Increased and Equitable Funding for Pennsylvania's School Libraries

Message: Dear Members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, The Pennsylvania School Librarians Association (PSLA) is the professional organization for school library professionals and library educators in Pennsylvania. As a chapter of the American Association of School Librarians, PSLA is dedicated to transforming teaching and learning through excellence in school library programs. High quality school library programs, staffed by trained, certified school librarians, benefit the entire school community by actively working against educational inequities. These school library programs help students grow academically through literacy and reading achievement opportunities as well as providing a place for lifelong learning. Decades of research indicate that reading and writing test scores and graduation rates improve when schools employ certified school librarians. School librarians also support students' readiness for career paths, trade schools, and branches of the military. A 2012 Pennsylvania study further verified that at-risk learners – those who are economically disadvantaged, Hispanic, Black, and those with IEPs – benefit proportionally in schools with a school library program staffed by a certified school librarian (1). School librarians particularly matter when it comes to closing the achievement gap in districts with high poverty levels. But sadly, these districts are among the most likely to be without a school librarian. Pennsylvania currently has 54 school districts without a single school librarian. This is a dire disservice to our K-12 students. School librarians engage students in the lifelong

habit of reading for enjoyment as well as for academic purposes. They also teach critical information literacy and digital citizenship skills, helping students navigate the vast array of resources available to them. Librarians teach students how to be discerning consumers of news media, and how to identify misinformation and bias in sources. These essential, lifelong learning skills are critical in an era of proliferating media outlets and artificial intelligence. A 2022 study by Rutgers University found that college freshmen with high school research experience, particularly those from schools with certified librarians, performed better in using academic research tools and demonstrating digital literacy (2). Certified school librarians are among the only teaching professionals in each school building who engage with every student and work collaboratively with every teacher to deliver quality, personalized instruction. An effective library program under the leadership of a certified school librarian is the only classroom used by the entire school community. Certified school librarians are skilled in developing and managing library collections that include both print and digital resources, as well as teaching students how to access these resources. Funding a school library's program and centralized collection of shareable resources is fiscally sound policy that positively impacts all students. As an organization, we staunchly support the goal of at least one certified librarian per public school building as a means to ensure that all Pennsylvania students receive an equitable public education. A school library staffed by a certified librarian should not be a privilege for only the wealthiest school districts. We ask that the BEFC prioritize the importance of school libraries and school librarians by investing in their continued development and growth. Increased funding directed to school library services and certified staff will benefit students across the Commonwealth. Every child deserves to learn and benefit from a quality school library program. Our website, www.psla.org, has more detailed information about our work to support critically literate, connected learners in the Commonwealth. We at the Pennsylvania School Librarians Association thank you for giving us the opportunity to share the important work of Pennsylvania's certified school librarians, and to advocate for increased and equitable funding for school libraries. Sincerely, Leah Lindemann and the PSLA Board of Directors
PSLA President. 1. Lance, K. C., & Kachel, D. E. (2018). Why school librarians matter: What years of research tell us. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 99 (7), 15-20. <http://www.kappanonline.org/lancekachel-school-librarians-matter-years-research> 2. Valenza, J. K., Berg, C., Bushby, R., Charles, L. H., Dalal, H. A., Dalrymple, J., & Demspey, M. (2022). What's in a Frame? Perspectives of high school librarians and first-year college students. *College and Research Libraries News*, 83(9), 393-397. <https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.83.9.393>

Name: Leah L. **City:** Hummelstown, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2023 5:32 PM – 839

Subject: Don't forget Old Forge!!

Message: I am a board member, parent of children and former student of Old Forge School District. Please do not forget about us! We may be small, but we are mighty. We need funding to help the education of our children!

Name: Alexandra R. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2023 5:51 PM – 840

To: Dawes, James <JDawes@pahouse.net>; jhopcraft@pasen.gov; vwilken@pasen.gov; bslate@pasen.gov;

Subject: OLD FORGE

Message: Please do not forget about Old Forge SD. Why do children in 18518 deserve less than our similar sized peers down the road?

Name: Alisha H. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2023 6:23 PM – 841

Subject: Old Forge School District

Message: Hi. I am writing this as a graduate of Old Forge, an Old Forge School Board Director, an aunt to kids in the district and mother to a future student. Old Forge is a great district with tons of potential and it's not fair that we are left behind with funding because of our zip code. Similar districts in the state see double and triple the amount of funding from the state than we do. All students deserve the same education regardless of the zip code they live in. Our district is falling way behind because our tax dollars can not make up for the funding missing from the state. Our kids deserve more.

Name: Shannon E. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2023 6:32 PM – 842

Subject: Fair Finding

Message: As a board member of a small school district in Northeastern PA, my SD, Old Forge, for years has been not funded to the extent of schools similar in size and not the same as those on our area that are actually smaller. This message, as I witnessed for the last 30 years, has told me as an educator and policy maker, that a zip code determines what programs and services are offered to students around the commonwealth. We as the adults need to do better for all of our children, because the challenges are great and the funding differences are growing rather than becoming more fair and our small district's students either fall behind or rely on a tax base that can no longer afford to be the supplement necessary to provide even the basics that other districts around us offer. You can scrutinize our budget and contracts, and we pale in comparison to those immediately around us and far more than those similar to us in size around the commonwealth. Please consider equity for schools like ours to put our students on the same field, which may still be far from level compared to others. I am a fifth generation graduate of my school and would love to see it grow and prosper into the 21st century and beyond.

Name: Christopher T. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2023 6:34 PM – 843

Subject: Zip codes

Message: Zip codes shouldn't determine the quality of education

Name: Tim G. **City:** Covington Township, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2023 7:31 PM – 844

Subject: Equitable funding is essential for PA students to thrive!

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: I am a taxpayer in Philadelphia. Each year, I've observed families in my neighborhood hoping for the best year yet, but then we often face the reality that comes with attending an underfunded school. There are no new books, there is no AC, there are too many students in our classrooms, and children do not receive the attention they need. As some who hopes to have children one day, our children deserve the same opportunities as our neighboring districts' children, and we are tired of waiting and hoping. Please ensure that your final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. We are counting on the Commission to complete its important work. Now is the time to act. My children can't wait any longer. Thank you.

Name: Ulises R. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2023 7:35 PM – 845

Subject: Fund Our Schools NOW! It's SOLVABLE!

Message: I'm the parent of three college aged children who attended Lower Merion schools. They had the resources and supports they needed to succeed, but many other students, including those in surrounding districts don't have what they need and that's wrong & SOLVABLE. The Lower Merion school district shares a border with the Philadelphia school district. There couldn't be a more distinct or reprehensible difference in the resources these two districts have to offer their students. All children deserve the same opportunities to reach their potential and school communities throughout the Commonwealth are demanding it NOW! Please ensure that your final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations. We are counting on the Commission to complete its important work.

Name: Shirlee H. **City:** Bala Cynwyd, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2023 7:39 PM – 846

Subject: Equitable funding is essential for PA students to thrive!

Message: Hello, I am a concerned citizen living in the Philadelphia school district. Currently, I am a student studying social policy at the University of Pennsylvania. Studying social policy, it is important to understand historical contexts when developing policies benefiting the people you serve. The Court has ruled that funding in Pennsylvania is inequitable, this has been known for decades. You have the ability to positively change history, it is your duty to care for our children. Equitable allocation of funding affects all students, rural, urban, and suburban schools. I have had the privilege to attend schools that adequately met the threshold to provide education allowing me to be in a position of success. Inequitable education produces so many negative outcomes for students, not just in test scores. Students who are not fairly given the proper tools to succeed in the classroom will feel as if they do not belong in the classroom. This further hurts a child's ability to perform and go beyond the means of studying in their classroom. Unfair funding gives teachers less resources to engage students in important topics

to unlock the curiosity of each child's brain. It is important to consider the development of each child. In order for our society to progress positively, it starts with education. Education is the key to unlock social mobility and we are giving our children a disservice by not providing a basic right to adequate education. You are where you are at because you received a basic level of adequate education to put you in a position to learn, grow, and explore opportunities to impact your community. Each student, each child deserves the same experience you all have experienced in your educational journey. It is time to act now, act with a sense of pride and dignity. Gather holistic data to ensure that each county receives the funding they deserve.

Name: Jalen B. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2023 7:57 PM – 847

Subject: Fair Funding for Schools

Message: Dear BEFC, I am a teacher educator, a parent, and resident of Rose Tree Media School District. I have been preparing teachers for almost 30 yrs and for counties across PA. I listen to teachers' and realize the disparity across districts. Fair funding for schools is important for our children, our future, and our economy. All PA children Prek-12 deserve to attend clean and safe schools with enough current books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. (Quote) The amount of money allocated to each student and each school ranges widely and is largely determined by state funding policies. Disparities in school funding can shortchange children, with those in low-income and marginalized communities bearing the brunt of inequities. In his September 13 testimony to the Pennsylvania General Assembly, LPI Senior Researcher and Policy Analyst Michael Griffith shared insights with state lawmakers on school funding solutions that can foster equitable access to a high-quality education for all students. The testimony was part of a hearing held to address Pennsylvania's funding policies, which were ruled unconstitutional by the state's Commonwealth Court last February. Griffith told the legislature's Basic Education Funding Commission that increasing the state's share of school funding, especially through primary funding formulas tailored to student and district needs, is a key step. He emphasized that it is essential to ensure that state funding is directed toward districts and students in the most need. <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/news/testimony-pennsylvania-works-address-inequitable-school-funding> It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. We are counting on you to ensure all of our children thrive in schools.

Name: Lynn H. **City:** Media, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2023 8:02 PM – 848

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: Remember Old Forge.....18518.

Name: Marie C. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2023 8:08 PM – 849

Subject: School taxes

Message: School taxes are paid here in PA until the day you die or lose your house, because you can no longer afford to pay. Seniors should never be taxes, they have been taxed all their lives. School taxes are meant to pay for the school and the staff and teachers. The teachers pay the unions, the unions pay the politicians to do their bidding. Nice money laundering racket. School unions should be eliminated. What a savings to the taxpayers. A law should be written to forbid any, and I mean any politician from taking money from anything affiliated with the schools.

Name: Lisa P. **City:** Middletown, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 9, 2023 8:37 PM – 850

Subject: Property Tax Relief

Message: Senior citizens are getting battered by school taxes. HR76 and SR76 should have been passed years ago! I've paid property taxes all my adult life, and had one child in school for 10 years (two years in private school). Seniors who do not have luxury pensions simply should not lose their homes for non-payment of school taxes. If our government gives free education to illegal aliens, they shouldn't be making the elderly pay so dearly for it. For low and mid-income citizens their home is their largest asset. My reverse mortgage has been paying my school taxes each year. It is now at maximum. School taxes will have eaten up all my equity in my home of 31 years. There HAS to be a better way to fund our schools, and a way to assure that the system produces adults who can read, write, have math skills, and knowledge of world and American history. That, alone, would be head and shoulders above what we have now.

Name: Geraldine C. **City:** Coopersburg, PA

Sent: Friday, November 10, 2023 7:36 AM – 851

Subject: Gifted Education Budget

Message: I am writing today on behalf of the more than 60,000 children in Pennsylvania who are identified as gifted learners. In particular, I wanted to draw your attention to the fact that Gifted Education in Pennsylvania is an unfunded mandate. Chapter 16 of the PA School Code dictates how schools and districts are required to support gifted learners, however, there is no money allocated to support these students in the State budget. With little support and little oversight, many districts, especially in more impoverished areas, are likely to provide minimal, if any, support for these students. As a mother of a gifted child and as a teacher in a public school, I see first-hand the impact of this unfunded mandate. Sadly, many people incorrectly assume that gifted students will be “just fine” because they are good students and like school. The reality is that gifted students need specialized education, just as students with learning disabilities do. Measured intellectual ability is visible as a bell curve: those with the most need are at the ends, demonstrating this point. I am writing to ask you to consider adding \$73 million as a line item for Gifted Education in your next proposed State Education budget. Funding at this level could go towards improving equity by funding teaching positions as well as providing greater levels of administrative support and oversight to ensure that students across the State of Pennsylvania are getting the educational support that they need to grow and thrive. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: Lisa Q. **City:** Willow Grove, PA

Sent: Friday, November 10, 2023 8:38 AM – 852

Subject: Funding for Gifted Services

Message: I am the Gifted Case Manager for a Title I school district. I do not have a budget to work with, so students on my case load are being provided with minimal services. I have to rely on grants, and the application process takes time away from my regular duties. I also have to rely on borrowing educational technology tools from our local IU. In addition, the school is not proactive in identifying gifted students because there is no funding for gifted services. Therefore, unless a parent makes a direct request to the school district that their child be tested, students are not being assessed for high IQ potential. Finally, I am the only gifted case manager for my district, and I support K-12 students and their teachers in five buildings. Funding would help support the hiring of additional teachers to provide mandated services to gifted students. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: Kara D. **City:** Northampton, PA

Sent: Friday, November 10, 2023 9:21 AM – 853

Subject: Consolidation

Message: It is well past time to address the significant duplication of administration positions by consolidating school districts. With modern transportation and the disappearance of small schools, the need for multiple school districts in counties is antiquated and well past their usefulness. 500 school districts is an absurd amount. Think of the savings that could be accomplished by consolidating roles in reporting, purchasing, maintenance and most especially administrative roles. Think of the equity throughout an area where the tax base is so much greater. Think of the ability to consolidate the workforce and move resources, including personnel where needed. Instead of a multitude of teacher contracts, bus contracts etc. those costs and inequities would be eliminated. Artificial or antiquated school boundaries would be lost to history. Any consideration of tax reform needs to keep in mind the promise that this state made to retirees that their pensions would go untaxed. The state already taxed the money deposited into IRAs and 401ks. Double taxation is inherently unfair.

Name: Eric S. **City:** Shrewsbury, PA

Sent: Friday, November 10, 2023 10:25 AM – 854

Subject: Funding for Schools

Message: Please consider legislative changes to the funding formula for schools in Pennsylvania. As it currently stands based on residency and municipality, the system creates a public school system of "the have's and the have not's". Additionally, the post-COVID era, students are struggling with missed academic skills lingering from online learning while also navigating mental health concerns. As a school counselor, I have directly witnessed an increase in externalizing and internalizing behaviors in students. Appropriate funding for districts of any size can provide for additional teachers to help fill learning gaps so that students have a solid foundation to build additional skills on. Effective teacher-student ratios set all parties up for success in facilitating rapport between teacher and student while also being more able to meet individual student learning needs. Furthermore, funding provides an opportunity to prioritize adding support faculty, such as school counselors and social

workers, to help students meet their basic mental health needs so they can do their best learning. If viewed through the lens of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, students cannot achieve higher level thinking and learning until their more basic biological and social/emotional needs are met.

Name: Tarah K. **City:** Orangeville, PA

Sent: Friday, November 10, 2023 10:25 AM – 855

Subject: School funding for School Counselors and other student services staff

Message: Dear Basic Education Funding Commission, I am a Pennsylvania taxpayer but I am also a School Counselor in Pennsylvania. I am the only School Counselor at a Middle School of approximately 500 students. This is the 20th year I am in this position. The mental health needs of students has increased significantly in the past several years. Issuing more funding for school counselors would give my school the ability to add another School Counselor. This would allow me to have the time to create and deliver school counseling curriculum that would be proactive and preventative. Currently most of my time is spent being reactive to student mental health and behavioral issues. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Name: Anne C. **City:** Orefield, PA

Sent: Friday, November 10, 2023 10:27 AM – 856

Subject: Drowning in Mental Health Crises!

Message: I'm split between two very needy elementary buildings. I have a caseload of 522 kids. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) currently recommends a ratio of 250:1. I feel like I'm running ragged between the two buildings. There are always things popping up when I'm at the opposite building and there is no way to prevent that besides having one full time counselor in each of our elementary buildings. The mental health epidemic is plaguing even our youngest students. Social media and continuous exposure to content is overwhelming our children's brains. We should be getting ahead of these crises by teaching proactive measures. There is no time to do so because we are constantly providing abortive/reactive services to kids who are already in crisis. While I'm so thankful for my job, I do think we are doing kids a disservice by not providing a stable support person in the role of School Counselor to every school in the Commonwealth.

Name: Megan H. **City:** McDonald, PA

Sent: Friday, November 10, 2023 11:32 AM – 857

Subject: Funding for School Counselors

Message: I find it egregious that this submission needs to be made. Political representatives pretend to value the lives and future of our children. Here we go into another election season where people will run on a platform of protecting the health and safety of our children, blame mental health for many of the issues of society and then refuse to fund said mental health professionals in schools, it gets to be defeating to serve. The standard is 250:1 for a ratio of students to certified school counselors. We are nowhere near this ratio in our public schools, and especially in our elementary schools. You all should be embarrassed to call yourself the "Basic Education Funding Commission" when you do not support the most basic of needs in our schools. Until every school in the state has a ratio of 250:1 for every student, we are below basic.

Name: Patrick M. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Friday, November 10, 2023 11:33 AM – 858

Subject: Old Forge SD Funding Issues

Message: The Old Forge School District is dramatically underfunded compared to its peers (size and demographics). Due to funding issues, the students of Old Forge SD miss opportunities for learning and enrichment that are commonplace in other schools; such as, but not limited to: Advanced Placement (AP) offerings, robust elective offerings including STEM, and platforms to build comprehensive interventions. Moreover, the district is unable to have a strong athletic and extra-curricular program as well, limiting exposure and experience for students. As our students head for college and career exploration, they are behind their peers due to lack of programming that is a direct effect of lack of funding. Once the pandemic ESSER funds expire, the choices Old Forge SD will be forced to make directly impact the teaching and learning opportunities in the school, along with the possible elimination of mental health wrap around supports, so greatly needed. Most essential to note, our population is becoming poorer, more diverse, and transient which is further taxing our already strained budget. No district should have to make decisions that impact the overall education of a child; education opportunities should not be based upon zip code.

Name: Erin K. **City:** Edwardsville, PA

Sent: Friday, November 10, 2023 11:35 AM – 859

Subject: Basic Education Funding Commission Hearing Comments

Message: Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on education planning for Pennsylvania students. Thank you for holding local hearings. I was able to attend and found them very interesting. Recommendations/Comments: Virtual access should be used extensively to supplement/extend educational services and to lessen the blow of the shortage of classroom teachers. Virtual education seems particularly fitted to more mature/older students--perhaps 7th grade thru 12th grade. Considering the overwhelming amount of high technology developed over my lifetime (e.g. zoom, teams, Facetime and others), we need to utilize it to its fullest potential. Using technology would no longer necessarily require dependency on expensive brick and mortar structures with the necessary upgrades and maintenance to provide education. Also, working conditions would be more flexible. Teachers could rotate to locations occasionally, so each class of students was familiar with them. Consider different levels of education preparation to support school staffing. For example, healthcare has providers(doctors) and provider extenders, such as, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, and certified nursing assistants. Provide better preparation of school aids (possibly certified teaching aides) to support classrooms in general and extend the efforts of inadequate number of current teacher's efforts. Then, also prepare aides to support in room virtual classroom without a teacher needing to be in the room, but rather shared virtually. Plan on using virtual education in new and creative ways. Set up demonstration projects and special grants to support the development and expansion of effective virtual education models which share services across district and state lines as well as among charter, private/parochial, homeschool, and public school settings. "Hunger Games" reference was used in some testimony I witnessed. It is a sad but all too true reference I have personally witnessed through the years. It appeared to be what is essentially plundering weaker areas of the state or weaker districts and lower socioeconomic areas to fund large education and purported "better" opportunities in "centers" of bigger towns/cities. This approach is reprehensible, not convenient nor desirable to urban and rural students and children. I obtained my early education in and have lived and volunteered in Bedford County over my lifetime, first serving on Bedford Area School District Board of Directors and Bedford Everett Area Vocational Technical Board and now on the Hope for Hyndman Charter School Board. The district relationship has historically been at best unsupportive and at worst, an adversarial relationship between the southern end of the county and the northern segment. Most superintendents (exception of Dr. Patrick Crawford) did not improve that relationship, but rather exacerbated the divide. A feasibility study was performed years ago on consolidation/merger. The board was split based on population and opposed each other and would not support the recommendations of the study. Parents were opposed. In my opinion, people who really don't advocate for what is truly in the best interest of the students appear to be operating from a position of greed for their geographic location. Currently, district personnel have oversight for the local charter school, and that relationship definitely reflects a conflict of interest. The relationship tone is very negative. It is obvious that equity of education for all students is definitely not central to the district administrative behaviors. For example, transportation is to be provided through the district, but is always contentious, poorly managed and sorely lacking. More often than not there is a regular message to parents that the bus will be late or not running to various areas to the southern rural end of the county's charter school students. Large (30 %) portions of the per pupil amount allocated are taken to provide said transportation as well as vocational technical education leaving the charter school financially short. Exorbitant rental fees of old school structures are additionally egregious. Consider providing any per pupil educational funds to family choice for use at any accredited school (e.g., public, private, parochial, out of district, or out of state, etc.). I have personal experience with private parochial school, public and charter. The public and charter school can't compare to the parochial academy education (Classical Christian Education) I have seen. Fully funding complete school choice would help weed out nonfunctional dysfunctional nonperforming school approaches that are not achieving desired outcomes and not using evidence based practice. Consider standardizing exactly what constitutes basic education (e.g. subjects and extracurricular activities) and fund/support only that basic slate. The education product offered to all Pennsylvania school students should be easily and clearly delineated. Is having 27 sports essential? No! Is providing exotic non mainstream classes essential to basic education? Absolutely not! And certainly not at the taxpayer's expense. Develop a phased in and well communicated approach to reflect population and enrollment decline. Develop long term plans based on thorough and accurate unbiased critical analysis of population changes and student needs. Do not bow to unions and biased representation of needs for unsupported additional staff. Carefully consider future work force and professional needs based on solid data before proceeding. Be very cautious of developing inflated starting salaries and paying student teachers when they have not been oriented nor have they developed skill in field of education (PSEA recommendation). Be sure you're attracting ideal candidates and not just people in search of a paycheck. Instead, perhaps develop laddering of wage increase potential based on merit requiring teacher performance

demonstrating achievement of desired outcomes in student performance based on clear evidence based outcomes, goals and objectives. Require the professional educator to prove their performance based on student results. During the shortage recruit personnel (e.g. perhaps retired from other professions) who have advanced degrees to assist with classroom teaching. Avoid forced mandates and forced consolidations or mergers that while they may be district driven, will not necessarily gain the public/population support. Give incentive to develop new and creative models rather than forcing. Seriously consider upcoming population projections before making any decisions about incentives, salaries, and future plans of action. Baby boomers are retiring in large numbers with less available income for outdated and extreme property taxes on properties they've already paid to own. School age population/enrollment is clearly projected to decline remarkably within the next 10 years. Additionally, the need for teachers and brick and mortar school buildings is projected to decrease as well. Share professionals among numerous schools. This could be done with ancillary staff, such as athletic directors, curriculum directors (economy of scale if curricula are standardized across schools), school psychologists, various specialized teachers (e.g. science, physics, etc.) Consider enlisting/partnering with already established services such as Federally Qualified Health Center staff/local police, etc. Share involvement in extracurricular activities. Provide incentives to sharing services at all levels. Challenge educators to develop new models of sharing supported by demonstration projects and grants which lead to secure funding and not unfunded mandates. Eliminate barriers to partnering with all forms of education efforts (e.g. charter, private/parochial, homeschooling and public). Develop ability to share services not only across district lines but also across state lines for population who often live closer to out of state services than in state services. Don't reward schools nor teachers/staff for decreased enrollment. Make the incentive based on outcomes and utilization of well implemented evidence based educational programs. Eliminate or greatly decrease and revise the property tax support for education. Property owners have already worked hard to own the property. Don't penalize them to continue to live in Pennsylvania on their property. The large baby boomer population is retiring on fixed incomes and will be unable to support an education system that continues to vote itself raises by its authority over property taxes, provide extreme non standardized and ineffective education as a product, while appearing to be unable or unwilling to wisely utilize the funds it has and building padded budgets by increasing taxes. Thank you again for reading this and allowing input.

Name: Rena L. **City:** Hyndman, PA

Sent: Friday, November 10, 2023 11:39 AM – 860

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: The Old Forge School District is dramatically underfunded compared to its peers (size and demographics). Due to funding issues, the students of Old Forge SD miss opportunities for learning and enrichment that are commonplace in other schools; such as, but not limited to: Advanced Placement (AP) offerings, robust elective offerings including STEM, and platforms to build comprehensive interventions. Moreover, the district is unable to have a strong athletic and extra-curricular program as well, limiting exposure and experience for students. As our students head for college and career exploration, they are behind their peers due to lack of programming that is a direct effect of lack of funding. Once the pandemic ESSER funds expire, the choices Old Forge SD will be forced to make directly impact the teaching and learning opportunities in the school. Along with the possible elimination of mental health wrap around supports, so greatly needed. Most essential to note, our population is becoming poorer, more diverse, and transient which is further taxing our already strained budget. No district should have to make decisions that impact the overall education of a child; education opportunities should not be based upon zip code.

Name: Christopher G. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Friday, November 10, 2023 12:04 PM – 861

Subject: Constitutional School Funding

Message: Please consider the need for equitable and sufficient school funding, to include funds allocated for school counselors and school social workers. Schools are the hearts of communities, and with this role comes the duty to support students in academics as well as in personal growth, social-emotional learning, and career & college readiness. Students from varying circumstances have diverse needs; school counselors and social workers are highly trained (minimum of a Master's degree) to identify and meet the needs of each individual student. They serve as advocates, liaisons, and mentors to all students. These are essential to success in all schools, and yet our commonwealth does not officially recognize their value in requiring and funding school counseling programs in all PA public schools. Please move forward with this important initiative.

Name: Christina B. **City:** Enola, PA

Sent: Friday, November 10, 2023 12:56 PM – 862

Subject: PreK Teacher Salaries

Message: Dear BEFC Members, One predictor of success in education for students, and future success beyond the classroom, is a foundation of high quality early childhood education. As a PreK Instructional Specialist within the School District of Philadelphia, I have the opportunity to collaborate with Head Start, PreK Counts, and PHL PreK Teachers within the district, as well as those who are partnered with our district. These teachers must adhere to the same requirements- regardless of their employer- including education qualifications, certification, and demonstrated progress with students. However, pay parity is non-existent, with teachers in district positions making as much as 3x as some of their non-district peers, as child care programs are left out when it comes to the funding rates that are received by public elementary schools. As you can imagine, this leads to high teacher turnover for those within the field, as well as a shortage of staffing overall, as people are reluctant to enter this branch of the workforce with its high demand and often poverty-level pay rates. Please consider how this not only impacts children's education, but the impact that it has on their future progress and those that they come into contact with. The urgency here is at a level beyond comprehension, and we look to you to help support initiatives that would increase pay parity among teachers in a variety of public settings (both traditional and nontraditional). Thank you for your consideration, and for taking action toward quality wages for teachers of our youngest learners.

Name: Zaina C. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Friday, November 10, 2023 3:00 PM – 863

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: Pennsylvania is the only state in America that does not presently require defined school counseling programs or school counselors in our schools. School funding is one way we can remedy this. Please dedicate funds to rectifying this huge oversight.

Name: Kelly L. **City:** Mertztown, PA

Sent: Friday, November 10, 2023 3:45 PM – 864

Subject: Equitable Funding

Message: Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Pa School Funding and the Basic Education Funding Commission. My comments are from the perspective of a school Business Manager. As the Business Manager of a severely underfunded school district, I have spent countless hours with some of the most committed school board members and administrators presenting our case to state legislators begging for additional funding with the hope of achieving an “adequate” funding status. So far, we have failed miserably. The Old Forge School District is just the right size, poverty level and has just the right community factors to continue to fall through the cracks of Fair Funding. While other districts of similar size and composition continue to benefit from their bloated legacy funding (hold harmless) plus the additional fair funding and level up funding, the Old Forge School District continues to rely heavily on the local tax payer to fill the gaps in an effort to provide adequate programing for our students. All students deserve better than adequate programing and all tax payers should know that their hard-earned dollars are being used to supplement state funding for public schools. Please Basic Education Funding Commission, your focus should be that every public school district receives the necessary funding to provide a quality education to every public school student in every geographic location and economic status.

Name: Brian R. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 11, 2023 9:40 AM – 865

Subject: School Counselors in PA Schools

Message: As a high school counselor and education equity advocate, I recently facilitated a conversation between researchers and educators about the changing landscape of college admissions, a landscape that impacts K-12 education. One of the points I raised illustrated the persistence of the communication gap and opportunity gap due to large school counselor caseloads. If we expect students to successfully be prepared for, apply to, attend, and graduate from college to contribute as good citizens in Pennsylvania, maintaining barriers to those goals is unacceptable. Applying to college, one of many duties school counselors assume, is no longer a simple process. Finding scholarships for low-income students is an enormous task. Supporting families who are unable to assist their high school graduates takes time and effort. School counselors are uniquely positioned to do all of this work and should be equitably placed in schools across the state. Otherwise, students will continue to fall through the cracks. The evidence is available should you need it to support your efforts to fairly fund schools to hire more school counselors. Thank you for your time.

Name: Alicia O. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 11, 2023 1:08 PM – 866

Subject: Providing the BEST funding possible for Pennsylvania's public school districts

Message: I was recently made aware of Pennsylvania's impressively inequitable funding of public schools – that 87% of funding comes from local sources. What a waste of human potential! I happen to believe in the American dream, but how is a child who lives in a low-wealth community supposed to overcome the almost insurmountable challenge of a resource-deprived 'education' in a probably dilapidated school to become a contributing member of society? I live in Radnor Township, in Delaware County, a region with high incomes and high achieving schools. The opportunities for the school children here should be available to every school child in Pennsylvania; comfortable and maintained school buildings, adequate staffing, a great library and ancillary services for children with special needs. The Basic Education Funding Commission must consider Pennsylvania's future as they formulate a method to equitably fund each of Pennsylvania's 500 school districts. It is in our best interest to provide the BEST, we can for our children, not the bare minimum designed to satisfy the state's constitutional obligation. Please ensure that your final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school districts need. An investment, beginning now, and sustained through the years to come, will result in more state revenue from taxes and reduced expenses for incarceration and substance abuse disorders. It is your job to level the playing field for ALL children in the great state of Pennsylvania, so each one has the opportunity to make meaningful contributions to their own and our greater community.

Name: Diana P. **City:** Wayne, PA

Sent: Sunday, November 12, 2023 12:40 AM – 867

Subject: Career and intervention School Counselor

Message: As a second year school counselor, and a graduate student during the initial outbreak of Covid-19 the world of education has changed and is continuing to change. I have worked in public education for several year across public, private and charter school platforms. All of these educational entities struggle in meeting the needs of students by not having or having enough school counselors. The social emotional needs and mental health needs have increase across the board and by not having enough school counselors is detrimental to the overall well-being and future of students.

Name: Marissa D. **City:** Monaca, PA

Sent: Sunday, November 12, 2023 3:15 PM – 868

Subject: State benefits from adequately funding Underfunded School Districts

Message: I live in the New Hope Solebury school district in Bucks County. I am also a member of the League of Women Voters of Bucks County and the American Association of University Women. I'm lucky. My school district has a high school graduation rate of 94%. The Central Bucks SD, among the largest in the state) is another well-funded district and it has a graduation rate of 96% overall, and 86% for the economically disadvantaged students it serves. These rates are much better than the average graduation rates across the school districts in the state (excl cyber/charter/tech), 88% overall and 80% economically disadvantaged. Here in Bucks County, Morrisville SD has a graduation rate of just 74% (69% among males). These rates haven't changed since 2016. I haven't looked back any further. Each student who doesn't graduate high school is estimated to cost the state in lost tax revenue and increased social service expenses, than the cost to give them the adequate education to do so. It has been estimated the cost in lost revenue and social services for a dropout is about \$150,000 over their lifetime. So an additional \$4,500 per year to meet their basic educational needs is a good investment, to say nothing of the social benefits (e.g. lower crime rate). Therefore, I'm asking the BEFC to propose the following: 1. Establish a meaningful adequacy target for each SD. Take into account needs of economically disadvantaged, black and Hispanic students which have significantly lower graduation rates. The methodology developed in 2008 takes these variables into account. 2. Ensure that the state meets its constitutional obligation to every K-12 public school child by establishing the state's share needed for each SD to achieve its adequacy target. This means that the state's share must be well about 37%, which is the state's current share of public education. That is a sad statement. Putting the bulk of the school expense bill on local property owners results in huge inequity between the wealthy districts and the low income districts. A child's access education quality (teacher quality, books, counselors, etc) should not depend on where you live. Some states also place a cap on spending to help ensure equity. There are private schools available to wealthy families who want more resources for their child. 3. Establish an aggressive timeline to ensure significant improvement in outcomes in the state's under-performing school districts (achievement of similar education standards). Achievement of outcomes will lag increased spending by several years, the increase in spending should be front-loaded. We need to see results. This might be done by increasing the level up spending, on top of the BEF, to \$400M, the first year then dropping gradually back to \$100M. 4. Phase out "hold harmless" over 2 years. It's outdated. 5. Change how charter schools are funded. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED620219.pdf>

Name: Ardith T. **City:** New Hope. PA

Sent: Sunday, November 12, 2023 9:53 PM – 869

Subject: Fair funding for all schools!

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a new tomorrow and your time to act is now.

Name: Erin L. **City:** Ambler, PA

Sent: Monday, November 13, 2023 3:29 AM – 870

Subject: Increase Funding for the Gifted and Talented Students

Message: I am writing today on behalf of the more than 60,000 children in Pennsylvania who are identified as gifted learners. In particular, I wanted to draw your attention to the fact that Gifted Education in Pennsylvania is an unfunded mandate. Chapter 16 of the PA School Code dictates how schools and districts are required to support gifted learners, however, there is no money allocated to support these students in the State budget. With little support and little oversight, many districts, especially in more impoverished areas, are likely to provide minimal, if any, support for these students. Sadly, many people incorrectly assume that gifted students will be "just fine" because they are good students and like school. The reality is that gifted students need specialized education, just as students with learning disabilities do. I am writing to ask you to consider adding \$73 million as a line item for Gifted Education in your next proposed State Education budget. Funding at this level could go towards improving equity by funding teaching positions as well as providing greater levels of administrative support and oversight to ensure that students across the State of Pennsylvania are getting the educational support that they need to grow and thrive. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: Tracey S. **City:** Shavertown, PA

Sent: Monday, November 13, 2023 6:43 AM – 871

Subject: Funding

Message: As a former school counselor and presently school educator I'd like you to think about this; the students I now train to become school counselors are all concerned about the number of students they will have to serve. We need more school counselors. Presently many administrators use them as substitutes which in my opinion puts students in danger and at the younger grades stops prevention and career education from taking place. Our profession for too long has been stretched to thin. Is there such a thing as a substitute school counselor? No and there should not be. We are the pulse of the school. We know and love our students and families. There simply needs to be more of us. Please consider the increased mental health concerns of our schools since the pandemic. You've given schools social workers but they are not trained in the ASCA model. And with more school counselors focused on the academic, career and social emotional concerns of all students, future students will be better equipped for success in these area.

Name: Patricia B. **City:** Reading, PA

Sent: Monday, November 13, 2023 9:12 AM – 872

Subject: School Counselors.....

Message: School Counselors should be an integral part of each and every school district! I love my job and have a wonderful faculty and staff. However, without their support and help, I wouldn't always accomplish what I need to in a day. The demands of public schools continue to increase with so many home problems and the fallout from COVID. We NEED to have more program to support students and families. Thank you for your time and consideration to the needs of our students and families.

Name: Mary G. **City:** Lansford, PA

Sent: Monday, November 13, 2023 10:02 AM – 873

Subject: Appropriately Fund the Old Forge School District!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Message: As a parent, taxpayer and employee of the Old Forge School District, I implore you to consider the funding issues we face because of our lack of appropriate state funding! The District is dramatically underfunded compared to its peers (size and demographics). Due to funding issues, our students miss opportunities for learning and enrichment that are commonplace in other schools; such as, but not limited to: Advanced Placement (AP) offerings, robust elective offerings including STEM, and

platforms to build comprehensive interventions. Once the pandemic ESSER funds expire, the choices Old Forge SD will be forced to make directly impact the teaching and learning opportunities in the school. Along with the possible elimination of mental health wrap around supports, which are so greatly needed. No district should have to make decisions that impact the overall education of a child. Even with the tax burden disproportionately placed on our local revenue, we still cannot make up the difference to give our students what they deserve. Educational opportunities should not be based upon zip code. My children deserve the same educational and extra-curricular opportunities as their cousins who live in neighboring districts!

Name: Jenna S. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Monday, November 13, 2023 10:25 AM – 874

Subject: Education Funding

Message: It is your solemn responsibility to insure that every child has the opportunity for an excellent education. Anything less is and would continue to be a national shame.

Name: Andrea G. **City:** Wilkes-Barre, PA

Sent: Monday, November 13, 2023 10:46 AM – 875

Subject: Gifted funding - educational fund

Message: As a teacher and parent of gifted students, I believe that gifted education should be a part of the basic educational fund. I taught gifted children and adults for forty years and was a part of the team (State Board of Education, Basic Education Commission, and Pennsylvania Association for Gifted Education) that developed Chapter 16: Special Education for Gifted Students. At the time that Chapter 16 was voted and passed by the Legislature, funding was of the table for discussion. So now is the time to move forward and add this to Pennsylvania's support for gifted learners. The regulation has been critical in providing a foundation requiring districts to provide identification and gifted programming services via the GIEP. At the time I met with Dr. Earl Horton (former Superintendent in Landisville School District and Chair of the Basic Education Committee,) who agreed that his teachers would not systematically challenge gifted students if there was no regulation. Hence, he and several others developed Chapter 16. Pennsylvania now received a Javits Grant to provide \$3.5 million dollars in funding for disadvantaged, underidentified gifted students. With the regulation and Javits Grant (5 years) in place, please take the next step to add funding to our list of supports for Pennsylvania's gifted students through the Basic Education Committee.

Name: Frances M. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Monday, November 13, 2023 10:52 AM – 876

Subject: Gifted education should be a part of the educational fund

Message: As a teacher and supervisor of gifted programs, I am writing to support funding of gifted education through the educational fund. Chapter 16: Special education for gifted students provides a framework for identification, programming, and the development of GIEPs for gifted students. However, the piece missing is the funding. Districts have found sources for the salaries of gifted support teachers, in-service training, gifted teacher endorsement courses, conferences, and resources. Please consider financially supporting gifted programs through the educational fund.

Name: Frances M. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Monday, November 13, 2023 6:14 PM – 877

Subject: Fair Funding For All PA Students

Message: I have been fighting for fair funding for PA schools and specifically the Upper Darby community for over two decades. IT IS TIME to fix this situation. Our students are constitutionally guaranteed this to happen NOW. Do not kick this can down the road again.

Name: Denise K. **City:** Drexel Hill, PA

Sent: Monday, November 13, 2023 7:30 PM – 878

Subject: BEFC

Message: Here we are attempting to make lawmakers understand the need for Fair Funding for our schools. Not certain what is missing in the common sense thought process as nationwide we are failing our children because of poor decisions made by those who constantly down play those who don't live work look like them. We will fight rally and March until the fair funding is distributed to our schools

Name: Karen L. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Monday, November 13, 2023 7:53 PM – 879

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: I do not belong to any particular organization but have been following this issue closely. I live in a well funded school district, Council Rock and am strongly in favor of every school district receiving fair funding. It is embarrassing to be on the receiving end of more than we need when others do not receive enough. It's not fair that we get more than those living in the city and find it despicable to learn how the current formula perpetuates the disparity and discrimination children from poorer schools experience. For the sake of our future, we need all Pennsylvania children to receive an excellent education. Rising tides lift all boats!

Name: Sharon H. **City:** Newtown, PA

Sent: Monday, November 13, 2023 7:54 PM – 880

Subject: Support adequate, equitable, and constitutional state funding

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC, I am a mom and a tax-paying citizen in the Bethlehem Area School District, who is deeply upset about the inequities in public education and the teacher shortage crisis. In my own sons' schools, we've seen the harm: * Classrooms lack basic tools like pencils, crayons, and current books. * Students don't feel safe to use the bathrooms at school. * School counselors are forced to substitute as teachers and thus can't give the proper emotional support and training to the students. * Teachers are pulled from their roles to cover other needed positions. * This results in cancellations of classes and after school activities for kids – which is not just a loss of "fun" but also a time for creativity, community and stability. I urge you to support fair public education funding so every child gets the support and resources that they need. It is imperative that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. The time is NOW to make a difference for generations to come. Please help our children shine!

Name: Trisha M. **City:** Bethlehem, PA

Sent: Monday, November 13, 2023 8:09 PM – 881

Subject: Concerns and Personal Insights Regarding School Funding in Pennsylvania

Message: To Whom It May Concern, I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to express my concerns regarding the allocation of state funding for basic education in Pennsylvania, drawing upon my recent experiences as a teacher in a low-income school in Dallas. Having recently moved back to Dauphin County, I am compelled to bring attention to the challenges faced by underfunded schools and advocate for a fair and equitable distribution of resources to ensure all students have the opportunity to succeed. As you are well aware, the 2023 Basic Education Funding Commission (BEFC), as mandated by Section 123(k) of the Public School Code, plays a crucial role in reviewing the distribution of state funding for basic education across Pennsylvania's 500 school districts. I commend the efforts of the BEFC in striving to provide a fair share of funds to each district, as demonstrated by the implementation of the basic education funding formula recommended in 2016. My concern stems from the stark disparities I witnessed during my time as a teacher in a severely underfunded school. The lack of a proper building, scarcity of textbooks, and restricted access to essential facilities like restrooms significantly hindered the learning environment for both students and educators. Furthermore, the limited resources prevented us from adequately supporting English as a Second Language (ESL) students, despite ninety percent of the student body belonging to this demographic. One poignant moment that stands out is attempting to teach Brown v Board of Education to my students, only to realize the irony of imparting such lessons in a school with minimal funding, where a majority of the students were of Hispanic descent. The principles articulated in Brown v Board remain as pertinent today as when they were first established. It is crucial for the collective well-being of our commonwealth to ensure that every student, regardless of their socioeconomic background, is afforded the opportunity to enhance their education, stimulate their intellect, and pursue their happiness. In light of these concerns, I would like to share some personal insights regarding the requested additions to the 2023 BEFC recommendations:

1. Adequate funding is not just a financial matter; it is a critical step in breaking the cycle of poverty. Children born into impoverished circumstances deserve the same educational opportunities as those from more privileged backgrounds. Implementing adequacy targets for each school district is an investment in the future, providing every child with the tools they need to succeed.
2. Students with special education needs often face additional challenges. If these needs are not met, they may graduate severely undereducated, hindering their ability to become contributing members of society. Adequate funding for special education is not only an investment in the individual student but also a way to ensure a more inclusive and supportive educational environment. Furthermore, insufficient special education funding places an undue burden on teachers, contributing to potential shortages and affecting the quality of education for all students.
3. Develop a clear and reasonable timeline for the implementation of new recommendations, taking into account the urgency of addressing funding disparities. Ensuring that positive changes can be realized in a timely manner is crucial for the well-being of our students and the success

of our education system. I understand that any new recommendations by the 2023 BEFC will require legislative approval and gubernatorial endorsement before taking effect. I urge you to consider these personal insights as you work towards fostering an equitable education system that benefits all students. I appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to positive developments in ensuring the educational well-being of all Pennsylvania students. "All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth." - Aristotle

Name: Matthew M. **City:** Harrisburg, PA

Sent: Monday, November 13, 2023 8:18 PM – 882

Subject: RE: Elimination of School Property Taxes

Message: Dear BEFC Commission - I am writing to express my full support for the complete elimination of school property taxes and replacing them with a combination of sales/income taxes as is currently being proposed by the PTEWG (Property Tax Elimination Working Group) in conjunction with the Bipartisan for School District Property Tax Shift. The state was very close to passing a viable solution over ten years ago with the HB1776/SB1400 bills, and I would like to see the state make this a priority once again. School property taxes have become a major financial burden to the average working class homeowner in PA, and have shown to be grossly unfair and regressive in nature. I alone am paying over \$5,000/year in school property taxes and another 5,000/year in private tuition so that my child can receive the quality education that I feel is not currently available in my school district. As one can imagine, this is a major financial hardship for which a revised taxing system would provide much needed relief. Thank you for your efforts with this committee and I trust you will appreciate the dilemma PA homeowners face due to the outdated and regressive school property tax system we have in place. The state needs to take an aggressive posture with this issue and I think that this committee's guidance can go a long way in jumpstarting the process and creating some forward momentum towards a practical solution.

Name: David C. **City:** West Pittston, PA

Sent: Monday, November 13, 2023 9:21 PM – 883

Subject: Public School Funding

Message: We are counting on you to fully fund our underfunded school districts. Our children can't wait.

Name: Janis B. **City:** Yardley, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 6:08 AM – 884

Subject: Education funding

Message: Pennsylvania schools desperately need your help. Our students are bright, determined, and hopeful - they want to learn and thrive like all students in our state and have bright dreams for their future. However, our schools are so underfunded that there are not enough teachers, no libraries, and not enough resources to buy books and supplies to meet the needs of our students. Our children cannot continue to wait for people in Harrisburg to recognize their responsibility to fix this problem. The Court recognized the problem and the General Assembly's obligation to address it. Please ensure that your final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. There is no idea more central to our country than the idea that with education and hard work, each student has endless possibilities. The Court has ordered change, and our students deserve it. The time is now and you have the power to do it for all our children.

Name: Colleen C. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 6:36 AM – 885

Subject: PA Public School Funding

Message: I have grandsons in Derry Twp SD. It is a wonderful school district with talented teachers, great facilities and many opportunities. The class sizes are appropriate and they have libraries and librarians, counselors, psychologists, reading specialists, special education, music, art and physical education teachers. But all Pennsylvania's children deserve the same opportunities as the children in my grandsons' district. Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. Please ensure that your final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our children and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. We are counting on the Commission to complete its important work. Now is the time to act. All children in Pennsylvania can't wait any longer. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a new tomorrow and your time to act is now. **Name:** Anita M. **City:** Hummelstown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 7:58 AM – 886

Subject: RE: Elimination of School Property Taxes

Message: Dear members of the Basic Education Funding Commission, I have been deeply invested in this issue for the past 30 years and am a proponent of replacing school property taxes with a combined sales/income tax. I am also a 25 year public school teacher who has my pulse on what is really happening in public schools. After perusing the hundreds of public comments on this issue, I find it revealing that so many people blame a lack of funding for their school district's overall performance. This at a time when PA is expending a record 22K per student and teachers like myself are being paid very well across the state when you also take into account the generous benefit package. What is even more startling is that many people commenting are advocating for a windfall of additional funding, which would somehow be the elixir to improve their districts' academic performance. If all of this were true, PA schools would currently rank near the top in testing/achievement metrics, but instead we lag woefully behind and continue to decline. I submit to the commission that yes, all districts need to be equitably funded, but more importantly is oversight of these funds to ensure that the money is being spent wisely. In my many years teaching in public schools, I don't think I've ever come across an administrator who doesn't believe more funding is the answer to their problems. For most in public education, it's never enough money. Again, the state is now spending a record amount per student with abysmal results. So yes, come up with a solution to fairly fund schools, but reform the state education department to include a serious oversight component to ensure this money isn't being wasted.

Name: Dave C. **City:** Northeastern, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 10:10 AM – 887

Subject: Education Funding

Message: It is your solemn responsibility to insure that every child has the opportunity for an excellent education. Anything less is and would continue to be a national shame.

Name: Andrea G. **City:** Wilkes-Barre, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 10:31 AM – 888

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: Dear Members of the Commission, This past February, as you know, the Commonwealth Court declared that our system for funding public education was unconstitutional. It is now incumbent upon the Governor and the Legislature to fulfill their constitutional and court-ordered mandate to fund our schools in a manner that is equitable, adequate, and just. As a parent, taxpayer, and voter, I am following your work closely. Because my child attends an underfunded district (School District of Lancaster), I have seen firsthand the cost of the state government's inaction. Our district is wonderful, with dedicated teachers and staff, an abundance of talented students, and...limited resources. Our kids deserve better, all of them, and it is in your power to transform their lives. As part of your work, I ask that you establish a clear timeline to meet this fundamental obligation, and I ask that you clearly report to the public both that timeline and the adequacy targets for each district. To be clear, expanding existing voucher programs (EITC/OSTC) or creating new ones (PASS) will not solve this problem; it will only make it worse, exacerbating existing inequalities across the commonwealth. I ask that you reject such a destructive course of action. A whole generation of students has been neglected. That should end now. Our kids have been waiting long enough.

Name: Erik A. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 11:43 AM – 889

Subject: Public School Funding

Message: We are counting on you to fully fund our underfunded school districts. Our children can't wait.

Name: Janis B. **City:** Yardley, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 6:34 PM – 890

Subject: Please act in the best interests of our students!

Message: I am a Director on the Salisbury Township School District Board of Directors. Salisbury Township School District comprises an 11-square-mile area in Lehigh County - a small district with limited space for development and several large non-profit organizations as landholders (25% of our tax base). Our tax base is fixed and raising taxes to the Act 1 index for the last 11 of 12 years still leaves us making critical decisions each budget year. An increase in funding or a reduction in required spending in several key areas is crucial to the sustainability of our district's strong educational experience. We need some relief from the relentless budget pressures we face each year. We call on the members of the BEFC to issue a report that contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much money each school district needs (known as adequacy targets) in order for the

state to meet its constitutional obligation to our students. We also call on members to include a reasonable timeline for the state to meet its share of funding for those targets.

Name: Rebecca G. **City:** Allentown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2023 8:35 PM – 891

Subject: Property tax

Message: Why can't the issue be seen no school property taxes? Why can't time be taken to look how other states fund schools without property taxes. The school property tax isn't a fair tax admit it. The chance is now to make the education rights equal for students.

Name: Dennis M. **City:** Middletown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2023 11:47 AM – 892

Subject: Funding our public schools

Message: We are writing in representation of the Fox Chapel Area branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and the school districts we live in: Fox Chapel, Pittsburgh, Riverview, and Seneca Valley. We are fully supportive of much better funding for Pennsylvania's public school districts, and urge the Commission to take into account the following: • adequacy targets for all 500 school districts • pre-K, special education, and facilities • a reasonable timeline for implementation While we are fortunate to live in districts with reasonable property tax bases, we recognize that many Pennsylvania children do not, and relying on property taxes to fund schools is by definition unfair. Public education is the very foundation of democracy, and all children need the best start we can give them for that and other reasons. Please make the hard but necessary decisions now while the state is enjoying a surplus, and don't kick the proverbial can down the road.

Sincerely, Cheryl T. and Nancy W., Co-Presidents Fox Chapel Area Branch AAUW

Name: Cheryl T. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2023 2:17 PM – 893

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a new tomorrow and your time to act is now.

Name: Lynn M. **City:** Mars, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2023 3:32 PM – 894

Subject: Lancaster County Needs Your Help

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: On behalf for the League of Women Voters of Lancaster County, we are calling on you to submit a final report to the General Assembly that includes the following: • A meaningful adequacy target for each school district as part of a formula that determines how much each district needs to provide its children with a comprehensive, effective education. The report should also state how funds will be distributed to the districts. • Acknowledgement of the unmet fiscal needs beyond basic K-12 education as identified by the Commonwealth Court and includes these needs in the adequacy funding targets. These needs, such as facilities, special education, and Pre-K, were created by years of underfunding to low-wealth districts and are critical to ensure meaningful opportunities for all Pennsylvania public school students. • Establishment of a fair and equitable "state share" to ensure that the state meets its constitutional obligation for those targets, so that low-wealth school districts can reach adequate funding at a reasonable tax effort. • A plan with a reasonable timeline for the state to meet its share of those targets, a plan that guides the governor and the state legislature to meet their constitutional mandate. Establishing fair, comprehensive funding for public education is the right thing to do for our children to ensure that every child has the chance to manifest their own potential. However, it is also the right thing to do for Pennsylvania. Lancaster County needs your help. Our students are bright, determined, and hopeful. They want to learn and thrive like all students in our state. They have dreams for their bright future. However, our schools are so underfunded that there are not enough teachers, few adequate libraries, and not enough resources to buy books and supplies to meet the needs of our students. Our children cannot continue to wait for people in Harrisburg to recognize their responsibility to fix this problem. The Court recognized the problem and the General Assembly's obligation to address it. Please ensure that your final

report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. The Court ordered it and our students deserve it. The time is now and you have the power to do it for all our children. Sincerely, Amy F., LWVLC
Chairperson

Name: Amy F. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2023 7:02 PM – 895

Subject: Bethlehem Area School District needs correct funding!!

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: I am a parent in the Bethlehem Area School District. Each year, my family starts the year hoping for the best year yet but then we often face the reality that comes with attending an underfunded school. There are no new books, there is no AC, there are too many students in our classrooms and my child does not receive the attention they need. My children deserve the same opportunities as our neighboring districts' children and we are tired of waiting and hoping. Please ensure that your final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. We are counting on the Commission to complete its important work. Now is the time to act. My children can't wait any longer. Thank you.

Name: Elizabeth F. **City:** Bethlehem, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 15, 2023 8:21 PM – 896

Subject: Equitable School Funding

Message: As a graduate of the public school system in the Bethlehem Area School District, I want my children to have a similar education experience. Property taxes are paid each year by the community to fund public education, but it is not shared equitably when you consider the influx of low-income housing that will place a greater strain on the public school system vs. private schools. Private schools do not provide equal access and do provide greater opportunities for students. BASD is already an overcrowded school district with limited funding, underpaid staff, and strained public resources. Allocate the education budget in an impactful way to help those families who can't afford another alternative to receive a fair education.

Name: Joe F. **City:** Bethlehem, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2023 7:43 AM – 897

Subject: Equitable funding for schools in Pennsylvania

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: I live in the Bethlehem Area School District. My community, and communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. I am the pastor at a church which draws members from 4 local school districts and the difference is clearly apparent between them. The resources and facilities available to students in low-wealth communities fall far behind those for students in other districts. My child is in a school program which is run by two adults in his school, the same program, with similar number of students is run by 14 adults in a nearby district. While I greatly appreciate the dedication and skill of the adults who run the program my child attends, the inequity between the schools and the experience for the students is glaring. This is just one specific example that illustrates the difference in opportunities for children in low-wealth areas. We want all of our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. We want them to be in classrooms throughout the school that are adequately heated and cooled. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. The Court recognized the problem and it is the General Assembly's obligation to address it. Our students, all of them, deserve your attention. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a reasonable timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. The time is now and you have the power and responsibility to address this for all of our children.

Name: Eileen E. **City:** Bethlehem, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2023 10:23 AM – 898

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: I am the Executive Director of In This Together NEPA, a Luzerne County resident, and a mom. My son started kindergarten this year in the Crestwood School district. He won't get to learn about art like I did while attending a public elementary school. He won't get to experience library programs that mean so much to kids of all ages. Why? Because of cost cuts, the school district ended art and library programs this year in the elementary school. The problems aren't only about art

and the library, though. The district furloughed several teachers before this school year started. Due to continued cost increases, they will likely furlough even more this year. What happens when we furlough teachers? Class sizes get bigger. Elementary school kids can't get as much attention as they need in a larger class. While we live in what is considered to be a "rich" school district in Northeastern Pennsylvania because property values are high, the adequacy gap for the district is \$3,524.86 per student. That's more than \$10 million! We can do better for our kids. Our children deserve a quality public education, no matter where they live!

Name: Alisha H. **City:** Mountain Top, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2023 10:29 AM – 899

Subject: ensure public education is adequately and equitably funded across the state

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: I am a parent in Bethlehem Area School District. Each year, my family starts the year hoping for the best year yet but then we often face the reality that comes with attending an underfunded school. There are no new books, there is no AC, there are too many students in our classrooms and my child does not receive the attention he needs. My children deserve the same opportunities as our neighboring districts' children and we are tired of waiting and hoping. Please ensure that your final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. We are counting on the Commission to complete its important work. Now is the time to act. My children can't wait any longer. Thank you.

Name: Shannon P. **City:** Bethlehem, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2023 1:28 PM – 900

Subject: Funding

Message: The American School Counselor Association's recommended ratio of School Counselors to students in a school is 1:250. The '21-'22 school year ratio of School Counselors to students in Pennsylvania was 1:343. This leads to an inadequate support of students' academic and social and emotional functioning. The BEFC needs to take this under consideration when determining the next steps on how to constitutionally, ethically, and equitably fix the school funding system. As a broad statement, education nation-wide is simply underfunded and it is unacceptable. Pennsylvania can take the appropriate steps and serve as a guidance for other governing bodies across the US by making education a priority, and to ensure that students have the supports they need for WHOLE STUDENT wellness. As a School Counselor and doctoral candidate studying the support and wellness of pupil service providers, there is a lot of work to be done in the education system to ensure that all students AND educators feel supported and are having their needs met. Allocating funds to the health and wellness of our people is essential, and can start here with your decision. Thank you for reading.

Name: Jennifer H. **City:** Holmes, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2023 2:37 PM – 901

Subject: Board of Directors

Message: 11-16-2023 Basic Education Funding commission meeting Rep Nelson- If dollars are provided, what methodology would you use to address tax return or reducing property tax rates to constituents. Mr. Frank Gallagher- Probably have to go with what our Board of Directors want to do. Does anyone else have issue with this. Board of Directors should not have this power. Eliminate school taxes

Name: Kim M. **City:** Hanover, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2023 4:13 PM – 902

Subject: Funding commission

Message: I'm a resident of the Shadyside neighborhood of Pittsburgh. I'm expecting my first granddaughter next May. I'm hoping that she will grow up nearby and attend the public schools, if not in the city itself (where her parents live now) then in a nearby suburb. I'm far from an expert on public education, but it seems to me that every school in every district should be adequately and fairly funded. As a long-time Pirates fan, I see the impact of one team starting out with more money than another each year. It's just not right. It's just not fair. Fairness also demands that the equitable funding begin as soon as possible. Children only pass through the system once. Every school year matters. No more kicking the can down the road.

Name: Harry J. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2023 5:41 PM – 903

Subject: Concerned Educator, Age 25

Message: More funding for not only Norristown, which is the school district I work with, but all Pennsylvania public schools would mean that students would be able to be provided with an adequate level of education they deserve. So, they can become fully functioning members of our country in the future. My concern is that without proper funding is that we will fail our children, who are our country's future and in turn harm our country's standing in the world.

Name: Jacob M. **City:** Swarthmore, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 16, 2023 8:49 PM – 904

Subject: BASD Education Funding

Message: Basic Education Funding Commission: As a parent of a student in East Hills Middle School in the Bethlehem Area School District, I am writing today to express my concerns about the need for additional education funding and programing for students in my area. It's my understanding that BASD has been under funded, moreover that neighboring districts have been more appropriately funded for their educational needs. I have a child on the gifted spectrum of the Individual Education Program (IEP) and each year the school struggles to provide the tools, access, and exposure to quality developmental curriculum and experiences to challenge these children. When I'm speaking with parents and students within other districts they educational system is funding and fostering excellent programing to prepare the kids for their future. I ask you to please allocate funds that support the constitutional rights of the students in the Bethlehem Area School District in the immediate future, delaying funding for future years will set these children farther behind their peers from other districts. Thank you for your time and for considering my request.

Name: Carol P. **City:** Bethlehem, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 6:54 AM – 905

Subject: Property taxes

Message: School property taxes the biggest bill I have ever year at some point I'm going to need to sell my house and move out of state when I get older because taxes just keep going up and up. I understand schools need to be funded but I think everyone should have to pay not just a homeowner. I never had any kids. And I think this form of taxation is very unfair.

Name: John M. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 6:57 AM – 906

Subject: Property tax

Message: I'm 56 years old and I'm planning on selling my house within the next 10 years and moving out of state school property tax is the highest bill I pay every year and when I get older I will not be able to pay the tax. I think it's very unfair that the homeowner has to pay to fund the schools. I think everyone should have to pay because everyone benefits from the schools.

Name: John M. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 7:03 AM – 907

Subject: Tax shift

Message: I just can't understand why we can't eliminate the school tax on homeowners. A tax shift would take the burden of educating our children and putting it on all Pennsylvanians. That's the only fair way. Do you realize Pennsylvanians are losing their homes over this unfair tax?

Name: Calvin M. **City:** Dunlevy, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 7:06 AM – 908

Subject: School taxes are hurting my family

Message: The taxes where I live in the Towanda Area School district are ridiculous. Over \$3600 per year! I have not had kids in school for 5 years. Because of inflation and these confiscatory taxes, I am struggling to buy groceries and pay my other bills. As of yesterday, my bank account is overdrawn. This is an intolerable situation and MUST BE FIXED!

Name: Mitchell S. **City:** Monroeton, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 7:13 AM – 909

Subject: School property tax

Message: Our economy would boom if we would do a school property tax shift. How many more Pennsylvanians would qualify for a mortgage, home construction would take off and the real estate market would boom. It's a win,win for all of us.

Name: Sara E. **City:** Dunlevy, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 7:19 AM – 910

Subject: Taxes

Message: On fixed income, we need help!

Name: Darr D. **City:** Newville, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 7:20 AM – 911

Subject: Eliminate School Funding With Property Tax

Message: Funding Schools with Property Tax has been Found Unconstitutional. Eliminate it now. It's Mafia style Extortion at it's Worst ! It's totally wrong and should be eliminated ! Don't be selfish. Get rid of it.

Name: Brian Z. **City:** Lower Burrell, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 7:21 AM – 912

Subject: Property taxes

Message: my home is 247 years of age i think by now the property surely has paid it's debt to Pennsylvania

Name: JoAnn D. **City:** Stewartstown, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 7:25 AM – 913

Subject: Property taxes

Message: Property taxes are completely unfair and detrimental to the economy and the community. After paying my fair share in income taxes I then have to contribute an additional 7% of my income to property taxes. That adds an additional 800 dollars a month to my expenses. And if I want to make an improvement to my property I now have to not only pay sales tax on it but it will cost me many times more than that over my lifetime. Thousands of Pennsylvania residents are forced out of their homes every year because they cannot afford to pay the taxes. So now we create a new taxpayer liability to correct the homeless problem that we created because of property taxes. The only fair way to do it is through an income tax or a sales tax that everyone pays. Putting the burden of county government and school districts squarely on the homeowners is unfair when we already paid income taxes. Why should someone who rents pay less than someone who owns their home. They get access to the same services so why do they get a discount.

Name: Matthew K. **City:** Homer City, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 7:26 AM – 914

Subject: Homeownership in PA.

Message: Hello, It is far past time that our elected representatives protect homeownership in PA while also addressing equitable public school funding. Thousands here in Pennsylvania have lost their homes because of the outrageous school property taxes. PA public school funding should be accomplished through increases in income and sales taxes. Far past time to remove the over taxed homeowner from the equation, and have everyone in the state share equally in guaranteeing a quality public school education.

Name: Arthur H. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 7:28 AM – 915

Subject: School Property Taxes

Message: Come up with a FAIR system that provides an EQUAL amount of funding for every student in PA! Use sales tax or income tax or something that ALL adults 18-65 have to pay equally. Do not saddle the poor homeowners with footing the entire bill! I believe the school tax as it is now to be unconstitutional! We already voted on this and the majority of voters said the existing school tax system needs to be abolished. ALL students deserve an equal education, not better for the wealthy districts. And break this link to our homes for God's sake! No tax should have the power to leave you homeless!

Name: Lee B. **City:** Hatboro, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 7:29 AM – 916

Subject: Property taxes

Message: Remove property ownership completely out of the role of supporting education and place the taxes required on everything and every individual up to the age of 70

Name: Charles J. **City:** Sidman, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 7:29 AM – 917

Subject: School Property Taxes

Message: I have a feeling that all the people who make decisions about schools taxes can afford to pay school taxes. They live off the public trough and in a different reality. They cannot relate to the struggles of the average taxpayers who stress year after year when these bills arrive and wonder how on earth to pay them. That is if they have not already lost their homes due to unpaid taxes. Do you really even care? Appreciate this survey but not hopeful anything will actually happen. Thank you.

Name: Martha G. **City:** Red Lion, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 7:31 AM – 918

Subject: School taxes

Message: My taxes keep going up and up so much I can't afford them anymore. Where is is fair this is only on home owners . Everyone should be paying for this . Also the school district waste so much money .I also believe if our government can send billions to other countries why can't they fund our own school districts the future of this country. It's getting horrible for people to retire because they can't afford their taxes .people are loosing their homes.

Name: Karen A. **City:** Plymouth, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 7:39 AM – 919

Subject: Property tax

Message: Please help with this inherently evil tax!

Name: Joseph B. **City:** West Reading, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 7:40 AM – 920

Subject: School and Property Taxes

Message: Hello, I'm writing to ask you to please eliminate school and property taxes for senior citizens, and the disabled. There has to be a better way to fund education here in Pennsylvania. The current taxing situation is forcing seniors out of their homes they've long since paid for, and their children have graduated from high school many years ago. I am not able to save enough for retirement, especially in this economy. Also, disabled people are on a very limited budget and can't afford these taxes, so they also are forced out. So please, find another way to fund the school tax and local township taxes. Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns.

Name: Theresa P. **City:** York, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 7:45 AM – 921

Subject: Fix the School Funding System

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a responsible but effective timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations. I am a parent in PA's Bethlehem Area School District. The withholding of Level Up funding, left a \$1.6M deficit in our budget. Our district has faced the reality that comes with attending an underfunded school like the inability to provide internet access to low income families, effective class sizes, special education services, and building maintenance and expansions. Necessary programs have been cut like access to mental health and social services which has led to an increase in student violence, a decrease in attendance, and a decrease in school engagement. Teachers can no longer act as teachers. Instead, they become social workers and security guards. The time for action is now. By the state's own benchmark, 86% of Pennsylvania's students attend schools that are underfunded. The gap between the richest and poorest school districts is one of the highest in the country with the wealthiest districts spending, on average, \$4,800 more per student than the poorest. Pennsylvania continues to fail it's students as the state's share of public school funding is one of the lowest in the nation, at 38%. (National = 47%). Communities around the state are facing challenges

caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools. It's imperative that the commission in it's assessment work to reduce the burden placed on our property taxes. Pennsylvania school districts currently rely on 43.5% (National = 36.5%) of their budgets to come from property taxes. We are counting on the Commission to create a formula that will remedy the issue that one in six districts have seen funding increases that fail to match the pace of inflation. Thank you.

Name: Monica W. **City:** Bethlehem, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 7:55 AM – 922

Subject: School Tax

Message: As retired senior citizens on a fixed incomes, we believe that we should not be paying property taxes.

Name: Antonio C. **City:** Sinking Spring, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 7:56 AM – 923

Subject: Property taxes

Message: PA property taxes are unfair and result in hurting seniors as well as unfairly funding school districts. All school funding should come from the state on a per student basis and eliminate the property tax.

Name: Thomas M. **City:** Red Lion, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 8:04 AM – 924

Subject: School Property Tax

Message: Hello. Several years ago Pennsylvania voters voted to eliminate school property tax and rearrange school funding to local tax and income tax. There were SB76/HB76. At this point nothing is done. Seniors who retired having difficulty paying the school tax and renting their own properties that they paid from school boards and very often losing their properties to them. Is there anything in consideration to comply with voters decision on that referendum or voters decision is ignored?

Name: Boris T. **City:** Richboro, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 8:05 AM – 925

Subject: Abolish property tax

Message: The current system of funding schools through property taxes IS NOT WORKING. Homeowners are being taxed out of their homes. We need to raise the state sales tax so that EVERYONE is paying for the education of Pennsylvania's youth, not just a fraction of Pennsylvanians.

Name: Felicia M. **City:** Allenwood, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 8:11 AM – 926

Subject: Eliminate Property Tax

Message: There's no reason to keep raping the homeowners of Pa. We have worked our entire adult lives building our American Dream. Some of us began in our early teens. We learned to work and saved for what we wanted. We finally achieved our goals and now because of greed we are losing our American Dream. I'm 77 years old and I'm still paying for your children to go to school. I put my kids and grandkids through school and now I could lose my home because I may not have the money you want. The money we worked hard to get, HONESTLY. We elected you to represent us in Pennsylvania. It's time to represent us. It's time to eliminate the never ending property taxes. It was placed on the ballot years ago. We spoke. You didn't listen. It's time to listen.

Name: Victoria M. **City:** Lock Haven, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 8:29 AM – 927

Subject: School Property Taxes

Message: Bottom line is taxing primary residences should not be used to fund schools. Many ideas have come before the legislature over the last 20+ years and yet nothing has changed. Now is the time . We need to switch the funding of schools to a combination of increasing the sales tax by 1/2 percent and raise the state income tax. The elimination should only apply to primary residences which are listed as homesteads. Investment and commercial property should still be taxed as they provide income to the owners whereas your primary home does not.

Name: David L. **City:** Bethel Park, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 8:44 AM – 928

Subject: Fund our Schools

Message: I am a taxpayer in a PA School District. My community needs your help. Our students are bright, determined, and hopeful. They want to learn and thrive like all students in our state. They have dreams for their bright future. However, our schools are so underfunded that there are not enough teachers, no libraries, and not enough resources to buy books and supplies to meet the needs of our students. Our children cannot continue to wait for people in Harrisburg to recognize their responsibility to fix this problem. The Court recognized the problem and the General Assembly's obligation to address it. Please ensure that your final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. The Court ordered it, and our students deserve it. The time is now, and you have the power to do it for all our children.

Name: Marion W. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 9:00 AM – 929

Subject: School funding

Message: Enough already! Do away with school property taxes and go with a sales tax. At least we won't lose our homes.

Name: Sue W. **City:** Plymouth, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 9:11 AM – 930

Subject: School properly tax funding

Message: The current funding of Pennsylvania schools does not work. I am heartbroken when I see thousands of properties up for tax sale, knowing many are senior citizens that have been destroyed by school taxes consuming their income. My property taxes have gone from \$1250 per year to over \$6000 per year. Good citizens are losing their homes and absent landlords are consuming these properties and destroying our communities. At the same time, many school districts go underfunded, while districts in high business areas operate on the highest level. Totally Unfair to the people of our state. Please, please fix this by eliminating property taxes and update how we fund our schools, allowing our children access to a fair and proper education!

Name: Caputo M. **City:** Weatherly, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 9:18 AM – 931

Subject: School Funding

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: I am a taxpayer in a PA School District. Communities around the state are facing challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. It is your job to see that each child wakes up to a new tomorrow and your time to act is now.

Name: Diane H. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 9:18 AM – 932

Subject: School Taxes

Message: It is time to eliminate the unfair property taxes. PLEASE support the replacement with taxes that are more equally shared by our citizens.

Name: Jenis F. **City:** Reading, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 9:32 AM – 933

Subject: Property taxes

Message: I paid for my child 100%. I don't feel I should have to pay property taxes the rest of my life for other people's children who don't contribute anything to society.. it's sad when people only worry about how many free things they can get instead of working hard for everything they have.

Name: Sandra S. **City:** Nanticoke, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 9:34 AM – 934

Subject: School funding

Message: All children deserve a quality education. Philadelphia schools need to receive better funding as required by our constitution.

Name: Linda S. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 9:43 AM – 935

Subject: School Property Taxes

Message: Eliminate School Property Taxes for primary homes and tax commercial and income properties. Spread the expense to all PA citizens via sales tax and/or income tax (Income tax to be eliminated at age 65). There also needs to be a fair and equal distribution to fund each student.

Name: Jeannine K. **City:** East Stroudsburg, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 9:44 AM – 936

Subject: School Property Tax

Message: To the BEFC members. I would like to say that property taxes are the biggest strain on finances for people on fixed incomes weather it's disability or social security. The increases keep coming in the taxes but not in our income. It's coming to the point that we can't afford our taxes and may loose our homes. And no one in the administrations care when people loose their homes. They figure someone else will buy the home and taxes resume. But what about the people who loose? Lastly in 2017 a referendum was voted on and passed that property taxes be changed or eliminated and nothing has been done. Please be the voice of change and help the people of PA being crushed by these unfair taxes. Thank You.

Name: Mike S. **City:** Scranton, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 9:49 AM – 937

Subject: Basic education

Message: NO MORE PROPERTY TAXES!!

Name: Miriam S. **City:** Nanticoke, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 10:16 AM – 938

Subject: School tax

Message: We need a fair way to supporting schools. This year has been exceptional hard to pay our school taxes. Time to fix this mess so we don't lose our house we have been in for fifty years.

Name: Mary S. **City:** Fairless Hills, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 10:16 AM – 939

Subject: School Funding in PA

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: I am a {parent/student/taxpayer} in a PA School District. My community needs your help. Our students are bright, determined, and hopeful. They want to learn and thrive like all students in our state. They have dreams for their bright future. However, our schools are so underfunded that there are not enough teachers, no libraries, and not enough resources to buy books and supplies to meet the needs of our students. Our children cannot continue to wait for people in Harrisburg to recognize their responsibility to fix this problem. The Court recognized the problem and the General Assembly's obligation to address it. Please ensure that your final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. The Court ordered it, and our students deserve it. The time is now, and you have the power to do it for all our children.

Name: Cheryl R. **City:** Erdenheim, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 10:35 AM – 940

Subject: School taxes

Message: There has got to be a fairer way for public schools to be funded other than property taxes. People, (esp. seniors), could lose their homes or just be scraping by because of high property taxes. Those people who do not own a home and have kids attending public school pay zero. Find a fairer way, so everyone pays their fair share and is not a burden on homeowners only. Wake up!!!

Name: JoAnne W. **City:** Summit Hill, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 11:21 AM – 941

Subject: Ending property and school district taxes

Message: I would like to see a fair tax or a fixed tax across the state to fund property and school district taxes so that each person regardless of ownership is required to bear some of the burden. This tax should be used in place of the state tax of 6%. By adding this type of tax setup it will require school districts and counties to think more wisely about spending and help to reduce excessive and unnecessary spending.

Name: Kristin S. **City:** Danielsville, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 11:46 AM – 942

Subject: Property Taxes School

Message: It's been a long time since this funding system should have been eliminated how we fund school taxes is really "Unconstitutional". The current system picks and chooses who receives abatements, etc to give tax reductions. HB/SB76 in 2015 would have been passed but flip-floppers didn't vote at all others changed their vote to no. Now HB13 is the solution for free and fair funding for us the people and for School Districts to stay out of the tax business. Since the courts recognized funding is not equal per each student and school district we must change the system for " all " to eliminate unfair property taxes who pay more or less. It's pay or don't stay at home is unacceptable for all but especially our senior citizens. For example, in my district, Chartiers Valley SD hands are tied for the first 10 years on property tax abatement(from our local government)to generate only \$90K in revenue but the property is valued at \$131 Million. Funding by your ability will create more revenues than the current system without continuing tax increases without any knowledge people can afford it. Just look at the tax sales in the papers in each county. It's time to change the system or more and more will move out of Pa, why? TAXES are too high. I'm retired now with \$5400.00 a year of School property tax on a \$287k access value home, and now need to put aside \$450 per month. Crazy! SS gives me \$1868.00 per month. I've seen tax increases for the last 5 years where does it end? You the Legislatures cannot let this system continue to destroy the people in PA financially.

Name: Mark D. **City:** Carnegie, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 12:54 PM – 943

Subject: Eliminate property taxes. Elderly can't afford it so sad.

Message: Please eliminate property taxes so elderly people don't lose there homesteads they have paid all their life.

Name: Beverly S. **City:** Nanticoke, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 1:25 PM – 944

Subject: Support for Adequate and Equitable School Funding in Pennsylvania

Message: I am writing as a concerned citizen, an educator, and resident of the Lewisburg Area School District. I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts on the critical matter of school funding in Pennsylvania. Ensuring that every child has access to a thorough and efficient education is not just a legal mandate but a moral obligation. I firmly believe that the Basic Education Funding Commission plays a pivotal role in shaping the future of our education system. I urge you to develop a comprehensive plan that includes adequacy targets for each school district and establishes a reasonable timeline for the state to fully fund a constitutionally compliant school funding system. In my community and across the Commonwealth, adequate, equitable, and constitutional state funding would make a profound difference in the lives of our children. It would mean enhanced educational resources, better facilities, and more opportunities for students to thrive. As a resident of Lewisburg, I have witnessed the impact of funding disparities on our schools in my region and beyond, and I believe it is time for a systemic change that prioritizes the needs of every student. I urge the BEFC to issue a report that meticulously calculates the financial requirements for each school district, known as adequacy targets. This calculation is crucial to meeting the constitutional obligation to our students and providing them with the resources they need to succeed. Additionally, including a reasonable timeline for the state to meet its share of funding for these targets is imperative for ensuring accountability and progress. Thank you for your dedication to this important issue. I trust that the Basic Education Funding Commission will fulfill its role in delivering a plan that prioritizes the future of Pennsylvania's education system.

Name: David H. **City:** Lewisburg, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 1:42 PM – 945

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: Good Afternoon, My child is a Junior in the Bethlehem Area School District. I am an active parent and always have been. I have always been involved in the PTA, the PTO, and the Parent Advisory Committee in our district. I have always tried as hard as I could to help the school my child was in to raise money because it always seemed as if we never had enough. Every

student deserves the same chances and it is clear that this is not the case. It can sometimes be an issue in our district to keep the heat working properly in the winter and the AC working in the summer, yet other districts have state of the art equipment in their schools that we can only dream of. Our teachers work hard with what they have, however our children already seem to start two steps behind the rest. Classroom sizes have become an issue where teachers have over 30 children in a classroom. With one teacher available to this entire classroom, how can these children ever get the personalized instruction they so desperately need and deserve? My son currently goes to the same high school and went to the same middle school that I did over 20+ years ago, and it is very sad to say that not very much has changed in that time. I can navigate the school as easily as I could when I went to the school ages ago. With the need for increased technology and security in our district so does the need for the increase in money that should be allotted to each district. I should be able to feel safe that my child is in school today, but reading the news and hearing all of these tragic stories does not make me feel that way. The best our district can do at this time is order black out shades for the windows in our doorways because the funding is just not there to have anything better. If we, as parents, are not the advocates for our children and their needs, who will be? An education is something that is incredibly important as nowadays you cannot get a proper job without a high school education and really not even without a college education. Our goal is to keep children interested in schooling and to keep their mindset on always bettering themselves and furthering their education. Children spend most of their adolescents inside of a school. If they do not like it, how can you keep them interested and engaged, how do you expect them to continue their education? Times are changing, things are always evolving. Our teachers require ongoing education themselves in order to keep up with the times. Our schools need better equipment in order to stay relevant. Without the money that is needed to do this, we are clearly already behind like I said. Please feel free to contact me at any time. I have multiple stories to share and even more concerns. Thank you in advance for your time in this matter.

Name: Jessica H. **City:** Bethlehem, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 1:52 PM – 946

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: I think the current funding would be adequate if we got back to just BASIC Education. My husband and I are living on social security and do not have any children in the school district but our current property taxes are substantial. I think the whole premise that only homeowners are responsible for school funding is very unfair to start with. What about all the renters that have multiple children in school and do not have to contribute a penny towards their education? What if parents paid for the "extras" out of their own pockets and state funding covered just the "basics"? What if parents had a choice of one extra over the basic courses and had to pay for anything over and above? I think the teachers union is more in control than ANY government officials. Prove me wrong!

Name: Nancy B. **City:** Stevens, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 1:54 PM – 947

Subject: Property taxes

Message: Every person benefits from engineers who know what they are doing when they build bridges, roads, and buildings. And from every well trained doctor or dentist. And a plumber, an electrician, a carpenter, all need to know what they are doing. And teachers trained them all. So the general public should be responsible for schools, not only property owners, and certainly not only those who have kids in school!!! Time to replace property taxes with general taxes, and not just pile on to the regressive state income tax.

Name: Jane B. **City:** Mohnton, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 2:26 PM – 948

Subject: Support for the BEFC Project to Fund Public Education Adequately and Equitably

Message: I am writing to you as a resident of Indiana County, PA, as a member of the board of the League of Women Voters in that county (LWVIC), and as chair of that League's Child Advocacy Committee on Education (CACE). I am also a parent of two alumni of the Indiana Area School District. I have followed for a number of years the public-school funding practices of the PA state legislature. CACE carefully followed the recent school funding lawsuit, the earlier history of flat funding and of declining state shares of funding for our schools, and then the charter school funding policies that further damaged the budgets of our traditional public schools. It is no surprise to us that the funding lawsuit was finally heard and won. PA education policies have been strapping school districts, and especially lower wealth districts, in budgets that underserve students, squeeze taxpayers, and compel local school boards to compromise the equity and adequacy of curriculum, and the adequacy and safety of school facilities. Many, many districts have no more "efficiencies" to try. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with

enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. The Indiana County League of Women Voters' Child Advocacy Committee on Education is counting on the BEFC to submit a final report to the General Assembly that includes the following: ● A meaningful adequacy target for each school district as part of a formula that determines how much each district needs to provide its children with a comprehensive, effective education. ● Acknowledgement of the unmet fiscal needs beyond basic K-12 education as identified by the Commonwealth Court, and inclusion of those needs in the adequacy funding targets--needs such as facilities, special education, and school nurse and mental health resources which are critical to ensure meaningfully provided opportunities for all Pennsylvania public school students. ● Establishment of a fair and equitable "state share" to ensure that the state meets its constitutional obligation for those targets, so that low-wealth school districts can reach adequate funding at a reasonable tax effort. ● A plan with a reasonable timeline for the state to meet its share of those targets, a plan that guides the governor and the state legislature to meet their constitutional mandate. Establishing fair, comprehensive and predictable funding for public education is the right thing to do to ensure that every child has the chance to manifest their own potential. It is also the right thing to do for Pennsylvania. Adequately and equitably funded public education is an ethical and constitutional obligation, producing citizens who are prepared for a competitive workforce and who will be future taxpayers. We are counting on the BEFC to meet this obligation.

Name: Susan W. **City:** Indiana, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 2:33 PM – 949

Subject: BEFC Public Comment

Message: As a taxpayer—but more importantly, as a parent who firmly believes that in this divided time American public schools are the last bastion of unity, equity and tolerance the founders envisioned—I urge the state of Pennsylvania to fund public schools, fairly and constitutionally. These are real children who populate my life every day. The quality of their education—and the quantity of funds provided to support the tireless efforts of the educators around them—should not depend on their zip code.

Name: Megan A. **City:** Bethlehem, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 2:33 PM – 950

Subject: Education Funding in Pa

Message: I served as the COVID Director in Delaware County for over 2 years. During that time I had to interact with every school district in some capacity. I became increasingly disturbed by the blatant disparities in poor districts in our county & state. Basics such as adequate staffing, classroom resources & even in buildings many of which as a public health official I would felt shouldn't even be operating with children inside! We absolutely need to improve funding and supports for all schools in PA & recognize that failure to do so will impact our state for generations to come.

Name: Rosemarie H. **City:** Media, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 2:41 PM – 951

Subject: School Taxes

Message: Eliminate school property taxes. Tax basic items, such as, food and clothing, then even the illegal aliens will be paying taxes, too. Since they are here using our schools, roads,, etc., they should be paying, too.

Name: Jennifer H. **City:** Mechanicsburg, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 2:48 PM – 952

Subject: Elimination of school taxes

Message: I still can't believe the comment how seniors are the best tax base. Yeah schools get a lot of our money and don't have to give us anything in return. We are free money for them. We are the group of people being hurt the most by the school taxes. Thousands are losing their homed every year and I would have thought that would be a concern for you people and you would realize you need to change the way you fund schools but instead you rub your greedy hands together and just smile. I hope if you don't change he way schools are funded the rejects what you plan. A tax should be based on your income so you have the ability to pay my home doesn't make me an income in fact it costs me money for upkeep which I can't afford because if school taxes our homes should not be used to fund schools there is nothing fair and equitable about that

Name: Nichols D. **City:** Honey Brook, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 3:09 PM – 953

Subject: RE school taxes

Message: In the course of listing and selling real estate in Berks County, I regularly hear concerns from the public that they cannot afford to buy (or keep) the home they want much in part due to the annual real estate taxes. As we know, the school district portion makes up the majority. I would love to know the status of the movement to eliminate and/or redistribute this tax so that both homeowners and non-owners of real estate are contributing to this effort. Consider the disparity between a couple in their 80's (kids out of school for 30 years) and someone in his/her 20's renting an apartment (not paying real estate tax) who may indeed soon have children entering the local school district. Re-aligning some of this with revenue generated with State Sales Tax would be a good idea. Doing so might even take some of the burden away from developers/property managers considering building more apartment housing which is very much lacking.

Name: Scott W. **City:** West Lawn, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 3:21 PM – 954

Subject: Property Tax elimination

Message: I'm just disgusted this is going on for so long seniors are just gonna continue to lose their homes. People will continue to be out in the street with nowhere to live, and they are the ones who worked their whole lives, and for it to come to this is just not fair. it's a never-ending fight and everyone still continues to suffer. There is absolutely no reason that they can't figure this out when other states are doing it, they can get their money elsewhere by the working people just like we were. Please eliminate the school taxes so we can live in our homes. It's totally out of control , many of us are talking about leaving PA.

Name: Ann J. **City:** Bethlehem, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 4:36 PM – 955

Subject: per pupil funding for English Learners

Message: One policy issue that is of interest to the Folk Arts-Cultural Treasures Charter School is that ELD students receive no more in per pupil funding than regular education students. There are two issues here, one pertains to Pennsylvania school funding and one pertains to the School District of Philadelphia funding of charter schools. Currently approximately 30% of FACTS students receive ELD services, yet we receive no more in per student school funding than schools that serve zero English Learners. The cost of FACTS's ELD services amount to about \$500,000 annually. Title III funding is the only funding that is targeted to the needs of EL students and their families, but for FACTS our Title III funding is only \$30,000 which is less than the amount we spend on translation and interpretation services alone. Pennsylvania School Funding: Although recent changes to the Pennsylvania funding formula did provide additional funding for districts serving ELD students, this increased funding only applies to those state education funds appropriated over and above the hold harmless funding levels (and therefore represents a small fraction of the education funding is distributed through this funding formula). School District of Philadelphia Charter School allocations: The School District of Philadelphia receives increased funding for ELD students (multiplier of 1.6) under the recent funding formula change. However, unlike Special Education funding, these funds do not follow the students. Many charter schools serve no ELD students and about half have ELD student populations of 2% or less. In contrast, FACT Charter School has an ELD population of approximately 30% of our student population. It is not just that schools receive no more per pupil funding for educating English Learners. The Pennsylvania Department of Education sets forth requirements and expectations that schools and districts allocate resources for the provision of education for English Language Learners, as evidenced in this Basic Education Circular: "The purpose of this circular is to provide local education agencies (LEAs) with the requirements and interpretations of the legal mandates governing the education of students who are English learners (ELs). The information included should be used in designing, staffing, and evaluating effective programs for ELs. . . "State regulation, 22 Pa. Code § 4.26 declares: Every school district shall provide a program for each student whose dominant language is not English for the purpose of facilitating the student's achievement of English proficiency and the academic standards under § 4.12 (relating to academic standards). Programs under this section shall include appropriate bilingual-bicultural or English as a second language (ESL) instruction. . . "LEAs are required to provide adequate resources calculated to effectively implement the LIEP (Language Instruction Educational Program) chosen. A LEA is not taking appropriate action to remedy language barriers in accordance with federal and state laws and regulations if, despite the adoption of a promising or recognized LIEP, it fails to follow through with practices, resources and personnel necessary to implement the program or transform the theory into reality." Given the PDE's mandates for the services required to provide an adequate education to English Learners, it should follow that additional resources should be allocated by the Commonwealth to support schools in the provision of these services. The Education Commission of the States has conducted a study of how the 50 states approach the funding of Special

Education and English Language Development. They have found that only 2 states out of 50 do not have a funding mechanism that takes into consideration the special needs of English Learners. This study over generously categorizes Pennsylvania as a state that does provide special funding for English Learners. But as reviewed above, the Pennsylvania funding formulas are not structured in a way that adequately factors in the additional costs associated with educating English Learners. This is the chart showing how different states provide additional funding for English Learners: Education Commission of the States. The Basic Education Funding Commission's process provides a critical moment to revisit an education funding system that has heretofore overlooked the significant and specific needs of English Language Learners. We are asking that the BEFC develop a basic education funding formula that a) calculates the costs of adequacy of educating English Learners, b) sets in place a mechanism for the adequate funding of ELD services, and c) requires that the funding follows the EL students who need those services.

Name: Ellen S. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 4:42 PM – 956

Subject: School tax

Message: How many generations should we pay for? After age 70 the tax burden should be eliminated. Why should the elderly be forced to sell their homes because they can't afford the taxes!? It gets tougher and tougher scraping together the money for these taxes

Name: Stephanie R. **City:** Bethlehem, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 5:30 PM – 957

Subject: Elimination of property tax

Message: I feel it's about time to eliminate property taxes for Pennsylvania's especially senior citizens who are losing their homes. There are other ways to fund the school districts and not put the burden on homeowners, raise sales tax use HB 113, I think it's time the legislators in Harrisburg get off their butts and do something about it thank you

Name: Raymond E. **City:** Dover, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 5:33 PM – 958

Subject: Property Taxes

Message: A more fair and equitable system would be no property tax. Abolish the property tax and increase the sales tax. Senior citizens have very little resources to pay these taxes and often lose their homes. People who don't have children also shouldn't have to pay. Also one may live on a property but have been laid off or has a cut in pay or unable to work so they can't pay their property tax.. So while their property value may be the same they may not have any income! The current structure of property tax is archaic and outdated. Please. Please abolish the property tax.

Name: Tricia S. **City:** Christiana, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 7:31 PM – 959

Subject: School tax elimination

Message: School taxes are unconstitutional.

Name: David P. **City:** Bristol, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 7:36 PM – 960

Subject: property school tax

Message: This tax is a burden to all who are on Social security and have a limited/fixed income, especially if they have paid taxes all their life and had children in school. Since all my children are out of school and they are paying the school tax now, I feel it is a proper way to treat senior citizens by allowing the school tax not be leaved on seniors.

Name: Alex T. **City:** Cresco, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 8:07 PM – 961

Subject: Property Taxes

Message: Come up with a FAIR system that provides an EQUAL amount of funding for every student in PA! Use sales tax or income tax or something that ALL adults 18-65 have to pay equally. Do not saddle the poor homeowners with footing the entire bill! I believe the school tax as it is now to be unconstitutional! We already voted on this and the majority of voters said the existing school tax system needs to be abolished. ALL students deserve an equal education, not better for the wealthy districts. And break this link to our homes for God's sake! No tax should have the power to leave you homeless!"

Name: Karen W. **City:** Montoursville, PA

Sent: Friday, November 17, 2023 11:57 PM – 962

Subject: Eliminating real estate based school funding

Message: Pa school taxes are completely out of control! I would suggest a group look at modern taxation methods based on sales tax? Sales taxes are fair, because if you don't have money, you have nothing to purchase. Property taxes, especially on homes that have been paid for are really absurd. The state having the ability to just remove you from a home you've paid for just doesn't seem fair?

Name: Dennis L. **City:** Mertztown, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 18, 2023 4:57 AM – 963

Subject: Spending

Message: Thank you for the increase in education budget.

Name: William W. **City:** Shrewsbury, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 18, 2023 12:52 PM – 964

Subject: PA

Message: I am again writing to plead for property tax reform I'm Pennsylvania. As Senior homeowners we should not face the loss of our home because of UNFAIR taxes placed upon us. The Legislators have the responsibility to fix this atrocity that basically is the theft of our homes.

Name: Kimberly L. **City:** Sinking Spring, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 18, 2023 3:46 PM – 965

Subject: Fund the PSD

Message: Our kids need school counselors! Fund PSD!

Name: Caitlin D. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 18, 2023 4:07 PM – 966

Subject: Eliminate property tax and watch what happens

Message: I have data that shows the elimination of property taxes will spur economic growth beyond imagination.

Name: Edward W. **City:** Linesville, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 18, 2023 5:42 PM – 967

Subject: Board of Directors

Message: Commonwealth Charter Academy CCA Parents Facebook Common question- Does anyone know when Checks will be going out? Usually they have been mailed by now. CW:What check?? I'm new this year? SD: CW, every three months during the school year CCA issues a check to help with Internet fees. CW: SD, ohhh well thats awesome!!! Thanks for letting me know. Is it like a \$25.00 check? How did I not know this hahaha!!! KJ: CW,225.00. CW: Whattttt?!?!?! Ohh my. SD: no. They've always gone out in December, March, and June.[END].....So wonderful to read that our school tax dollars pay \$225 x 3 = \$675. per year per student household for internet. My children have schoolwork online and we also have to charge 3 computers each night. Where is our reimbursement for internet and electricity? Parents also receive checks for after school activities while we can't afford after school activities because we pay over \$6000. per year in school taxes. It has to stop somewhere. School taxes need to be eliminated. Cyber and Charter schools outside of the school district need to be held accountable and governed.

Name: Kim M. **City:** Hanover, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 18, 2023 8:51 PM – 968

Subject: School Property Taxes

Message: I'm copying this from a post I read because It reads exactly as I feel. "Come up with a FAIR system that provides an EQUAL amount of funding for every student in PA! Use sales tax or income tax or something that ALL adults 18-65 have to pay equally. Do not saddle the poor homeowners with footing the entire bill! I believe the school tax as it is now to be unconstitutional! We already voted on this and the majority of voters said the existing school tax system needs to be abolished. ALL students deserve an equal education, not better for the wealthy districts. And break this link to our homes for God's sake! No tax should have the power to leave you homeless!" I would like to add why are hospitals non profits and not paying taxes?

Name: Carol C. **City:** Coopersburg, PA

Sent: Sunday, November 19, 2023 2:31 PM – 969

Subject: Replace how the School Tax is funded

Message: I think they should either increase the state sales tax or make everything that is bought taxed that way everyone is contributing to the School Tax. After a person retires at 65+, they should not have to be burden with paying this property tax to the school district.

Name: Anita R. **City:** New Freedom, PA

Sent: Sunday, November 19, 2023 5:39 PM – 970

Subject: Level Up Funding for school districts in Pennsylvania

Message: Here is my plea for substantial level up funding for our less fortunate school districts . All children deserve a good and equal education. Presently that is not happening in Pennsylvania. There is a disparity among school districts which means some of our children are not getting an adequate education. That is detrimental to all of us. Good education is a known deterrent of crime. Many school districts do not have enough teachers, no or inadequate libraries, not enough resources to buy books and supplies as well as inadequate facilities. Poorer school districts also lack adequate numbers of school counselors as well as school nurses. Lastly, the court ordered adequate funding for all school districts and the students need it sooner rather than later.

Name: Susan J. **City:** State College, PA

Sent: Sunday, November 19, 2023 6:16 PM – 971

Subject: No school tax for seniors

Message: I believe the school tax as it is now to be unconstitutional. We already voted on this and the majority of voters said the existing school tax system needs to be abolished. A fair system that provides equal amount of funding for every PA student is possible, for example, increase the sales tax to 7% so that EVERYONE who buys in our state, including the out-of-staters, have to pay equally. All students deserve a good education, but homeowners who don't have students in schools and/or are 65 and older shouldn't have to bear the burden. Taxes tied to home ownership is draconian.

Name: Maryjane S. **City:** Bushkill, PA

Sent: Sunday, November 19, 2023 6:26 PM – 972

Subject: Underfunded Schools

Message: My name is Jane Doe and I am a taxpayer in a PA School District. I know that many PA students are attending underfunded school. Please show me how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students. The Commission should do this very important work and we are and will be following this issue.

Name: Joan B. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Sunday, November 19, 2023 8:43 PM – 973

Subject: Make funding fair for all kids

Message: Hello - As a former teacher, mother, and grandmother in the Neshaminy School District I'm writing to urge you to issue a report that has clear calculations of the money needed to foster the learning of ALL kids no matter where they live or what their parent's income is. PA has a constitutional obligation to all students. I've read about kids in PA who are forced to use textbooks that are old and spend their days in schools that are falling down around their ears. it's not right! We're counting on you! Thank you.

Name: Lynne W. **City:** Newtown, PA

Sent: Monday, November 20, 2023 10:58 AM – 974

Subject: Property taxes

Message: I'm on a fixed income of less than 16,000 a year my property taxes are 2500. I do believe that's more than my fair share. It is a hardship, and I'm afraid of losing my home. I have sacrificed food and Health needs so that I can pay my taxes

Name: Cindy B. **City:** Auburn, PA

Sent: Monday, November 20, 2023 11:40 AM – 975

Subject: School Taxes

Message: If the government keeps allowing companies to raise everything then people will become unable to survive. The people who work can barely pay their bills as it is. Hell I'm lucky if I have 50 dollars every 2 weeks for my food, gas for my car and household/personal needs. If you raise school taxes then I will have to sell my home and live in the mountains like the Amish people. They have the right idea of not paying for electricity, gas and telephone This would save so much money. Instead of giving it to the greedy companies wanting more and more every year. I can grow my own food and raise chickens etc. I am ashamed to call the US my home. People can't afford to live anymore because of the cost of everything is so high. Everyone got higher hourly rates except those that kept working through COVID-19. People who are capable of working aren't forced to work because they get food stamps and help with their housing costs. They should have to work at least 25 hours a week to get any benefits. Immigrants come to the US and get free everything. The US needs to change a lot or it will be the end of the world as we knew it. This is my opinion only!

Name: Paulette V. **City:** Forty Fort, PA

Sent: Monday, November 20, 2023 1:43 PM – 976

Subject: Property taxes

Message: Something must be done other than to tax people to death. And that's exactly what is being done with school taxes. I'm 67 years old and I can't afford to retire or I will lose my house. My taxes are higher than my mortgage. It's a crime. Something needs done.

Name: Mary B. **City:** Coatesville, PA

Sent: Monday, November 20, 2023 1:48 PM – 977

Subject: Property tax elimination!!

Message: How could anyone think that people like me are not concerned about losing the only real investment I spent my lifetime acquiring, of course there used to be two of us but then when my husband died it became only me!!! And now the constant worry every year of how I am going to live decently and pay the ever rising property tax, right now I am sitting here very cold so as not to use too much oil to keep warm!!! This place I have is my life long dream I worked more then 60 years to have it which included countless hours of overtime and more countless working weekends all so I could have a home and now at my age I need to worry about being put out on the street??? How do you people sleep at night??? Why is the education system placed on the shoulders of the homeowners, I am more then willing to pay a fair share if every citizen in Pennsylvania pays the same share!!!

Name: Carol Y. **City:** Quakertown, PA

Sent: Monday, November 20, 2023 2:37 PM – 978

Subject: School Taxes

Message: I want to voice my opinion on how unfair it is that school taxes must be paid by everyone. I never had children, I am 42 years old and have been paying school taxes since i was 23 for multiple schools. I since Married and I have 2 children with special needs that goes to a special school not in our township. We are asked to do fundraising and donations. I pay employee taxes, unemployment taxes (Which i have NEVER used) workers comp taxes, real estate tax on top of the tax I already paid for my house. My wages are taxed and the tax list goes on. How can we justify all these taxes when American people are struggling to survive as is. Something needs to be done about these taxes. At least drop school taxes if you do not have children in school.

Name: Angel H. **City:** Williamstown, PA

Sent: Monday, November 20, 2023 4:07 PM – 979

Subject: School Property Tax Elimination Act

Message: I am writing to express my deep concern about the issue of education funding in Pennsylvania and to advocate for the implementation of the School Property Tax Elimination Act. I support the efforts of the Property Tax Elimination Working Group and their recent submission of information regarding the urgency of implementing the School Property Tax Elimination Act to the Basic Education Funding Commission. Please enter this into the official record

Name: Joseph G. **City:** Reading, PA

Sent: Monday, November 20, 2023 5:55 PM – 980

Subject: Fund Our Schools

Message: Good evening BEF Commission, Thank you for undertaking this monumentally important work. I am a parent of a recent high school graduate and a 14-year-old. I strongly support education and am a taxpayer. Every child needs access to the tools, resources, and services THEY need to succeed. That will not happen unless the State of Pennsylvania adequately and equitably funds all of our public schools. It is not a question. It is not up for discussion. The Court has ruled that the way Pennsylvania funds its schools is unconstitutional and that lawmakers must work together (with policy experts and stakeholders) to make this right for our students. I encourage the BEF Commission to: (1) Determine the total cost to meet the constitutional standard by establishing a meaningful adequacy target for each school district as part of the formula that a) determines how much funding each district needs to provide its children with a comprehensive, effective, contemporary education, and b) how the funds will be distributed to the districts; (2) Calculate funding targets that also address unmet needs beyond K-12 basic education funding that were identified by the Court as critical to ensuring meaningful opportunities for all PA public school students, such as facilities, special education, and pre-K; (3) Ensure that the state meets its constitutional obligation by establishing a fair and equitable “state share” for those targets so that low-wealth school districts can reach adequate funding at a reasonable tax effort; and (4) Create a plan, with a reasonable timeline, for the state to meet its share of those targets – a roadmap for the governor and state legislature to meet their constitutional mandate. When we build a system of education that works for all students, WE work for all students. When we work for all students, PA SCHOOLS will work even better for them. When we adequately and equitably invest in our students, we WILL see a significant return on investment. When our students have what they need to succeed, PA will succeed. Moreover, PA's economy will grow, more highly skilled employees will go to work for our state's businesses and we will build a stronger state. If there is anything all sides of the aisle can agree to work together for - it is the promise of a better and stronger Pennsylvania. Thank you for your consideration and for putting our children first.

Name: Tomea S. **City:** Huntingdon Valley, PA

Sent: Monday, November 20, 2023 9:49 PM – 981

Subject: Forget vouchers, fund our schools

Message: Don't be distracted by efforts to undermine public education by proposals like the cynical and misnamed Lifeline Scholarships, also known as vouchers. These programs in other states have shown that they do not provide improved academic outcomes and that they siphon away funds from already underfunded public schools. Public schools have been the backbone of American democracy and prosperity. Our commonwealth is strengthened when the graduates of adequately funded public schools are able to enter training and the workforce to strengthen our economy, costs of public benefits are reduced, law enforcement and prison costs diminish, and the tax base grows. I call on the members of the Basic Education Funding Commission to develop a plan for adequacy for every district in Pennsylvania, to be kept up to date and recalculated on a regular basis, and to set a timeline for providing funding to meet the adequacy requirements. I know as you do that the \$6.2 billion estimate of needed additional funding is a steep climb and will have to be accomplished over a period of years. It may require changes to the tax code. The legislature has systematically reduced the commonwealth's share of education funding for a generation. You can't use your negligence of the past as an excuse for continued negligence for the future. Act now. Bring forward a clear plan to adequately fund education in every district in every corner of Pennsylvania. It will be good for our children, it will be good for the taxpayers of Pennsylvania, and you know in your hearts that it is the morally right thing to do.

Name: Patricia M. **City:** Newtown PA

Sent: Monday, November 20, 2023 10:25 PM – 982

Subject: Unequal funding of schools harms children and the society

Message: I believe the Court has stated clearly that the unequal funding of PA schools has in particular harmed children in communities of color. We owe these communities to repair the disinvestment and racially-motivated policies like redlining and lack of access to other government programs that resulted in a very disproportionate wealth distribution between Whites and Blacks. We ought to understand the history, and take serious responsibility to correct the wrongs. Equal funding of public schools is one of the ways in which we can improve these currently unequal outcomes. I am a taxpayer and wish for outcomes that are more just and fair. The whole society benefits when young people do well! Public schools should be funded! I am against vouchers and moving money away from public schools, as there is little accountability for such schools, and they accept students selectively, which results in students with higher needs becoming a proportionally bigger burden that public school then need to carry. Thank you.

Name: Lucyna D. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 10:56 AM – 983

Subject: Equitably Fund Our Schools

Message: I am a taxpayer in a PA School District. My community needs your help. Our students are bright, determined, and hopeful. They want to learn and thrive like all students in our state. They have dreams for their bright future. However, our schools are so underfunded that there are not enough teachers, no libraries, and not enough resources to buy books and supplies to meet the needs of our students. Our children cannot continue to wait for people in Harrisburg to recognize their responsibility to fix this problem. The Court recognized the problem and the General Assembly's obligation to address it. Please ensure that your final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. The Court ordered it, and our students deserve it. The time is now, and you have the power to do it for all our children.

Name: Inella R. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 1:24 PM – 984

Subject: Why we need more school counselors?

Message: School counselors fulfill multiple roles within the building. They are one of a few positions whose responsibility is a holistic approach to the student, and this is for every student in their building/caseload. The school counselor serves as an advocate for the student, the mental health professional in the building, the responsibility of enriching/educating students in the soft skills to have career readiness. This is quite the undertaking when you have upwards of 250 students. There are going to be gaps unfortunately because one person can only do so much. The populations that are affected by this the most are the schools that do not have the funding or resources to be able to support the hiring of more school counselors. The schools then find unsustainable ways to help the students that lead to inconsistency in care therefore creating a bigger issue. Pennsylvania is the only state currently that has no legislation to support the profession of school counseling hence why some schools have counselors juggling huge caseloads or even having to go between multiple buildings with large caseloads. School counselors are supposed to be proactive in their role. They are supposed to be teaching the coping skills, the soft skills, the calming strategies, the conflict resolution steps, etc. Most school counselors don't have the time or the funding to be able to do this because they are in a reactive state. They are just trying to be able to keep up with the demands of the day. And even with just handling the problems of the day they have limited resources that can be utilized because of funding to work with community resources. School counselors are a vital asset to the school. They handle the barriers to learning to ensure everyone is in a safe environment to be able have equal access to their education. But no one can do their job properly without the appropriate support and funding.

Name: Brianna E. **City:** Scottdale, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 4:57 PM – 985

Subject: Education Funding should include School Social Workers and Counselors

Message: As a Senior who pays property tax, I understand it is important to have appropriate funding for teacher's pay, teacher retirement, educational supplies and student support. I believe that student support should include Social Workers. Guidance Counselors are also an important part of guiding our children through the school and into future careers. Social Workers are needed to provide children the mental health support they need in world filled with inequity, fear and intolerance. Our children need our support to grow up with nutritional free breakfast and lunch and mental health support in a world where children are killed by guns at school and are bullied because of their color, gender and size. Education funding should be fair throughout the state and teachers should not be expected to pay for any school supplies. Keep me informed of your progress in passing a budget that is humane and supports the health, safety and welfare of Pennsylvania's children.

Name: Laurie K. **City:** Doylestown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 5:21 PM – 986

Subject: School funding should be managed by the state

Message: To eliminate inequities in school funding, all school funding should be distributed at the state level, based on the number of students served, i.e. schools in rich and poor municipalities should receive the same total funding per student. It is not necessary to eliminate the property tax for this purpose (such elimination would disproportionately benefit wealthy owners of mansions and landlords), but instead the property tax should be directed to a state-wide school fund, together with other funding sources.

Name: Ayres F. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 7:15 PM – 987

Subject: Public School Funding

Message: Please obey the court and provide adequate and equitable funding for Pennsylvania's school districts. We need to know how much money each district needs to give all its students a thorough and efficient education. Then we need a plan to get that money to them in a reasonable time frame. You need to include adequate Special Education, mental health and building funding. The quality of your education should not depend on your zip code.

Name: John M. **City:** Warminster, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 21, 2023 10:31 PM – 988

Subject: Education funding

Message: As a former business owner in North Hampton county, and presently coach and business owner of Vision Training, Soccer Camps and as a father and coach, I know we cannot grow our community when distinctions are made, as to who receives more opportunity for better learning. All students must be on an excellent and level playing field when it comes to education in our state. The legal mandate to address and solve the inequity in our Pennsylvania education system now runs up against continual debate and recalcitrance. To fund the fair and equal education of all Pennsylvania students, you, as leaders, need to muster all your integrity, character and smart resources. Pennsylvania now provides the least equitable education to black students of any state in our country. Pennsylvania citizens say not on our watch will we continue to permit such reprehensible unequal education. Stats show funding impacts school excellence. Let's change our stats by hearing your constituents who want young Pennsylvanians to grow and learn in a fair community. Find or create the funding, we need to address the legal mandate Our education commission faces now.

Name: Len B. **City:** Hellertown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2023 7:44 AM – 989

Subject: Adequate and equitable funding

Message: Equitable funding of schools is very important to me. Some schools are struggling. Some schools are flush with cash. Which ones should get significantly more funding going forward?

Name: Steve S. **City:** Newtown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2023 10:02 AM – 990

Subject: No to vouchers, yes to public education

Message: Don't be distracted by efforts to undermine public education by proposals like the cynical and misnamed Lifeline Scholarships, also known as vouchers. These programs in other states have shown that they do not provide improved academic outcomes and that they siphon away funds from already underfunded public schools. Public schools have been the backbone of American democracy and prosperity. Our commonwealth is strengthened when the graduates of adequately funded public schools are able to enter training and the workforce to strengthen our economy, costs of public benefits are reduced, law enforcement and prison costs diminish, and the tax base grows. I call on the members of the Basic Education Funding Commission to develop a plan for adequacy for every district in Pennsylvania, to be kept up to date and recalculated on a regular basis, and to set a timeline for providing funding to meet the adequacy requirements. I know that as you calculate the need, the estimated \$6.2 billion or more of needed additional funding is a steep climb and will have to be accomplished over a period of years. It may require changes to the tax code. The legislature has systematically reduced the commonwealth's share of education funding for a generation. You can't use your negligence of the past as an excuse for continued negligence for the future. Act now. Bring forward a clear plan to adequately fund education in every district in every corner of Pennsylvania. It will be good for our children, it will be good for the taxpayers of Pennsylvania, and you know in your hearts that it is the morally right thing to do.

Name: Patricia M. **City:** Newtown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2023 12:15 PM – 991

Subject: Fair Funding for All Schools and Students!

Message: Hi, I have been a school social worker/home and school visitor for 25 years in Pennsylvania and am a supporter of POWER Interfaith. I live in the Wissahickon School District. I am proud of the education my daughter received at Springfield Mont Co. School District. Please include a strong message for fair and equitable funding for all schools and all students in PA. I have seen up close the inequities and handicapping conditions of students from underfunded schools when they would transfer to our diverse but relatively well funded and successful school district. I recently see that Phila schools take up to 50 days to fix a broken toilet! How can that be! Let's do right by all kids. **Name:** Charles K. **City:** Blue Bell, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2023 2:52 PM – 992

Subject: Fund our schools fairly!

Message: I'm a Philadelphian who was luck to grow up in a well-funded school district, Tredyffrin/Easttown in Chester County. I now live just 17 miles away in our state's largest school district, where the conditions for students are like night and day compared to where I grew up. Schools in my city are plagued with asbestos, lead, and a dwindling teacher workforce. As a former middle school teacher myself, I know that students need high-quality educators who are paid a living wage; they also need access to counselors, enrichment opportunities, and school buildings that are safe and welcoming. All of this is the bare minimum, yet it is out of reach for thousands of students in our state. PA's system of unfair funding persists because local wealth plays too large of a role in the quality of schools. The state's job is to equalize this to give all students a fair and equal chance. Step 1 in fixing the problem: determine how much money every school district would need to adequately educate students. We are counting on you.

Name: Priyanka R. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 22, 2023 10:22 PM – 993

Subject: Two Important Solutions - School Counselors and the Civilian Education Corps

Message: You as the BEFC and as members of the General Assembly are fully aware that the existing system of school funding is unconstitutional. You know that the Commonwealth Court established after a lengthy court case that the existing system of school funding deprives students in low-wealth school districts of equal protection of law. You had the choice to appeal the decision but wisely decided not to do so. School counselors - as well as other student services professionals like school psychologists, school social workers, and school nurses - were specifically highlighted in the Commonwealth Court decision as effective services that help students in high-wealth districts overcome adversity and achieve success. Services that students in low-wealth districts are unconstitutionally deprived of by no other reason than the zip code they were born into and reside. It is crystal clear how to guarantee access to school counseling services, and Representative Sturla said it himself in the 9/14/23 BEFC hearing - create a funding stream that provides funds to school districts based on enrollment to guarantee all student-to-school counselor ratios in each school building is 250 to 1 or better. That is best practice. That is easy to identify - we can see right now today which districts would receive funding through a formula like this. If a district does not need additional school counselors, then that money would not be distributed to them. Student services aren't an unfunded mandate - they're a mandate that must be funded. Funding to hire additional student services staff like school counselors was the number one response from school districts when asked how to best improve the mental health supports they can provide to students. Investing in school counselors now will improve so many student outcomes that currently result in costly negative consequences when students don't have access to school counseling services - better career planning so students avoid costly college debt and our workforce gets the next generation of labor we desperately need, meaningful academic planning so students get a more meaningful school experience than they currently get, and access to mental health support that our students need at an urgent/crisis/epidemic level. You won't find a better return on investment than a school counselor. Fixing the educator workforce issue needs to be tackled head on right now - create a "civilian education corps" where Pennsylvania "enlists" people to complete the education and training required to become an educator (or student services professional), which is all expenses paid up front in exchange for a commitment of service after completing their education and training. If individuals fail to complete their service, then they would be legally required to pay back what they owe. Engage in a legitimate public relations/communications strategy to promote and celebrate the civilian education corps so people want to join and stay engaged. Help restore the dignity and pride to the profession of education that has been so torn down over the last several years. No more nonsense nickel and diming people with promises of some kind of loan forgiveness or tax credits or lowering the standards to become an educator - just remove the biggest barrier people experience to getting into education - the upfront cost and the years of debt that follow! Without four years of college debt to worry about, the pressure on local school districts to continually raise salaries won't be as intense since the next generation of employees will have more financial freedom, which may lead to less pressure on local school boards to continually raise taxes and cut programs. Write the bill, allocate money, and get this year's graduating high school seniors enlisted right away. You have the power to change the entire narrative and direction of the educator workforce issue and allow Pennsylvania to become a model for the rest of the United States. We don't need to mobilize the National Guard to staff our schools - we need to mobilize the next generation of educators who are choosing not to go to college because it's too expensive. This is a solution that would absolutely work - we just need to be bold enough to act.

Name: Adam O. **City:** Carlisle, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 23, 2023 8:49 AM – 994

Subject: Education

Message: School choice. Let's start teaching kids to achieve their potential not crt, dei crap.

Name: Andrew S. **City:** Spring Grove, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 23, 2023 11:45 AM – 995

Subject: Need for public education funding reform

Message: It is vital to the future economic success of Pennsylvanians that all of our students receive the education they need. Small and underfunded districts need funding to equalize the education that students in wealthier districts receive. It is unfair to expect property taxes to carry that burden to the extent that the current system requires. Please recommend a fair and equitable distribution of state funds to keep our communities attractive to businesses.

Name: Carol L. **City:** York, PA

Sent: Friday, November 24, 2023 9:14 AM – 996

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: I live in the Pittsburgh Public School District. This issue is important to me because our public schools need assistance, more social workers and guidance counselors. And some schools need building repairs. Our schools face the same challenges that many urban schools face. Without this support, young people will move out of the city when their children reach school age. The money is siphoned off with state vouchers rather than invested in our schools. I am requesting that the members of the BEFC issue a report that contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much money each school district needs in order for the state to meet its constitutional obligation to our students. Some might say Pittsburgh already gets its fair share, but an inordinate amount of real estate in Pittsburgh is owned by non-profit organizations which pay no property tax; hospitals, universities, colleges, churches and cemeteries. just to name a few of the largest. I'd like to see a reasonable timeline for the state to meet its share of funding for those targets. This is too important to postpone. Education is a critical component for PA to establish a competitive edge and enable everyone to find decent paying jobs.

Name: Marcia B. **City:** Pittsburgh, PA

Sent: Friday, November 24, 2023 2:20 PM – 997

Subject: Equitable School Funding

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: I am a parent of a North Penn School District graduate. My daughter got an excellent education as a gifted student and earned her bachelor's degree in Music Education at Penn State where she was well-prepared for her college courses. I can't imagine that all the students in our neighboring Philadelphia Public Schools have the same preparation for college success! Communities around the state face challenges caused by decades of failing to adequately and equitably fund our schools in low-wealth communities. Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. We want all our children to attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers, and resources for them to learn and thrive. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lay out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligation to all of our children.

Name: Rich D. **City:** Lansdale, PA

Sent: Friday, November 24, 2023 3:45 PM – 998

Subject: Increased equitable funding for education in Pennsylvania

Message: My wife Teresa and myself pay school district taxes in the Souderton school district. We are supporters of Power Interfaith. As both of us are providers of design services to public education throughout many states, I the CEO and her the CFO of a large licensed design firm having responsible charge in over \$800 million of completed construction - with our providing design and engineering in educational technology support - we have seen firsthand the dichotomy of funding between well taxed suburban school sites and underfunded urban educational infrastructure blight. While New Jersey has spent over \$20 billion in the last decade, Pennsylvania can barely fund over \$100 million in capital expenditures. Instead providing \$50 million in renovation funding. Leaving districts in a bond tight market with inflexible interest rates alarmingly high for educational expenditures with the public that is tax averse. A stark reminder of the difference between the two states. And, the legislature of New Jersey has in late 2022 increased funding by over \$1.5 billion. Where is Pennsylvania? Take Central High School in Philadelphia as an inequitable example. The school has not been renovated in decades. My brother went there and graduated in the 1960s. Little has been done since then. The only reason the computer lab and auditorium were renovated is because alumni donated millions of dollars, and they still haven't been able to fund the entire \$25 million. This is one of the

few Pennsylvania projects we're actually on. Because technology is not at the forefront in Pennsylvania. Where we shine - and have done so for 38 years. Here are some stark examples of complementary educational funding just next door, in New Jersey. We are finishing the technologies for the largest high school being built in America, \$283 million in construction - just 7 miles west of New York City. And that's after providing the technology design for a K through 8, for a beautiful school campus complex for \$185 million. And that's just two of many projects that we're involved with in New Jersey. But Pennsylvania. Practically zero. Maybe a charter school here or there. In fact we are more like Delaware, than a top tier educational state. According to Michael Marmot, for every dollar spent in education, that funding will offset delinquency, justice, incarceration, and state funding for services to that individual to the tune of an almost 7 dollars offset.* On October 5th I visited the Youth Detention Center in Baltimore, MD just around the corner from the historic 1804 Baltimore Penitentiary, helping close it in 2000. I was greeted by the Facility Administrator, the Commissioner for Youth Detention, and two Deputy Secretaries with Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services. I've been a justice consultant for decades. This Youth Detention Center houses the only secure high school in America, self-contained within a detention center, accredited by the ACA and led by a principal from the local high school with graduates receiving diplomas from their high school; not a GED or jail certificate. Graduating from the high school of their attribution is a paradigm shift in early restorative justice. I implore you to start a pilot program in a high school in Philadelphia, one in Pittsburgh, and one in Scranton to provide high school diplomas from the high school during detention, meeting all the requirements of the state. This is a great program and should be promoted through funding for equitable solutions. Thank you. *"For every dollar spent on early child development you save seven dollars over the life course because children with better early child development are less likely to end up delinquent, involved in crime, unemployed, and so on."

Name: Gerald F. **City:** Harleysville, PA

Sent: Saturday, November 25, 2023 9:29 AM – 999

Subject: Adequacy of School Funding

Message: Broad, effective, and efficient education is essential to economic prosperity. Help ensure that Pennsylvania prospers; issue a report that contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much money each school district needs. Public education is the foundation for all that we hold dear in America. It must work across the board, not just for those who live in prosperous school districts.

Name: Richmond S. **City:** Newtown, PA

Sent: Sunday, November 26, 2023 2:13 PM – 1000

Subject: basic education

Message: Access to public education for every child in the Commonwealth is essential to strengthening democracy. Not only for the child who achieves voting age, but for the child's parents and caregivers.

Name: Mary S. **City:** Easton, PA

Sent: Sunday, November 26, 2023 5:04 PM – 1001

Subject: Equitable Public School Funding

Message: I live in the Cheltenham School District and I am a supporter of POWER Interfaith. I believe that Children in underfunded schools are entitled to receive the same educational opportunities as students in other districts. Equitable investment in schools across the Commonwealth is not only a recognition of the innate value of each child, but is imperative for the success of our democracy. Every parent wants and deserves to have their children attend clean and safe schools with enough books, teachers and resources for them to learn and thrive. POWER demands full and adequate Public School funding from the General Assembly. Adequate funding means a substantial increase in the Basic Education Funding, starting with the 2024-25 school year and a plan to reach a fact-based adequacy target within 4 years. Our public education system must provide a world-class education to every child no matter their zip code, their family income or color of their skin. Our children must have access to excellent Pre-K, Special Education and School Facilities. Equitable funding distribution across the Commonwealth is necessary to correct decades of racial bias and eliminate the racial disparities in the distribution of PA school funding. Chronic disinvestment in low wealth schools sends a message to children that they are less worthy than their peers in affluent areas, and this is unacceptable. Thank you for your attention.

Name: Sandy L. **City:** Elkins Park, PA

Sent: Sunday, November 26, 2023 6:39 PM – 1002

Subject: Public school funding

Message: Please explain to me why it is so hard for the commission to follow the order a judge made. Why do you continue to push school vouchers? Why hand pick individuals to go to private schools and leave behind entire school districts? Do the job you're paid to do!

Name: Roxanne K. **City:** Lancaster, PA

Sent: Sunday, November 26, 2023 9:39 PM – 1003

Subject: Property taxes

Message: I am 70 years old. My husband died when I was two months pregnant. I decided to stay at home for 8 years and raise my son. He is now a productive citizen - Emergency Services Director. Then, I worked Part time while he was in grade school. I went to work full time when he was 13. Since my high "35" isn't the best in terms of dollars, I only receive \$27k in Social Security. My son is currently paying my mortgage. I cannot afford the property taxes on my 2 bedroom condo. Please help our Seniors. I beg you.

Name: Veronica M. **City:** Coatesville, PA

Sent: Monday, November 27, 2023 10:06 AM – 1004

Subject: Equal Opportunity for all Pennsylvania Young People

Message: I am writing in hopes of offering the best quality education possible for all of our young people. The future of our state and the quality of life for all of our citizens depends of allowing all of our children to have access to the best opportunities. I would strongly recommend that all of the members of this committee read the research on this subject. If you have not looked at the correlation between education levels and projected income levels, it is very important. If we want all students to be productive members of our society, we need to give them the tools to fulfill that hope. Traditionally underfunded schools, unfortunately, are unable to provide the quality of instruction, or the facilities they need. This report by a professor at Penn State, provides statistics and information that may help clarify the situation.

<http://npr.brightspotcdn.com/73/26/7a266fb44f53bbf50146c92a82bf/ceepa-research-brief-2023-14-consequences-of-inequitable-funding-on-fiscal-and-human-resources.pdf> Please help our young people to achieve their potential by particularly focusing on the school districts that need to remediate their facilities and faculties to offer the education all of our citizens deserve. Thank you for your attention to this vital issue.

Name: Elizabeth D. **City:** Doylestown, PA

Sent: Monday, November 27, 2023 11:44 AM – 1005

Subject: school property tax

Message: I am sending this again. The school property tax must be eliminated now for seniors. We pay almost \$10,000 per year on property & school tax. If something happens to my husband I will not be able to stay in my home. Pennsylvania MUST make this fair to all. Raise the sales tax, totally legalize cannabis, FIGURE IT OUT. LOTS OF TAX PAYING CITIZENS WILL LEAVE THIS STATE IF THIS IS NOT TAKEN CARE OF. MAKE PENNSYLVANIA A STATE WHERE PEOPLE WANT TO MOVE TO IN RETIREMENT AND DO NOT TOUCH THE NO TAX ON RETIREMENT INCOME. THANK YOU

Name: Yvonne O. **City:** Hanover, PA

Sent: Monday, November 27, 2023 5:46 PM – 1006

Subject: School Funding

Message: I'm a retired teacher from the Downingtown (Chester County) School District. In my retirement I'm enjoying my volunteering in the School District of Reading, and I've worked as a substitute teacher in both Pottstown and Reading. I've seen for myself the differences between under-funded districts and my own wealthy district. I wish that the beautiful children in my school in Reading could have every resource and every opportunity that Downingtown kids have. Reading SD has committed and creative teachers, doing the best they can, but they're "making bricks without straw", underfunded when in fact their schools are overloaded with problems common in urban schools. I wish the members of the BEFC would issue a report that contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much money each school district needs (adequacy targets) in order for the state to meet its constitutional obligation to our students. I wish BEFC would include a reasonable timeline for the state to meet its share of funding for those targets.

Name: Jeffrey S. **City:** Glenmoore, PA

Sent: Monday, November 27, 2023 7:03 PM – 1007

Subject: Educational Equity

Message: Hello BEFC, I hope you are doing well. I am a student at Lower Merion High School. I am part of the 17% of Pennsylvania public school students who go to a school in an adequately funded school district. I go to school in a district that is able to provide 22 AP courses, modern facilities, extracurricular activities, a broad range of departments and electives, student supports, and other programs. However, most students are not able to say the same. Pennsylvania public schools are collectively underfunded by \$6,258,438,239, and of the 500 school districts in Pennsylvania, 412 do not have adequate funding and 286 are underfunded by \$2,000 per student or more. This does not even include costs like transportation, rebuilding facilities, or special education. The taxpayers in the poorest districts have the highest tax effort and yet still do not have adequate funding in their public schools. The school funding system was recently declared unconstitutional, and there is now a historic opportunity to ensure that every school district has the resources necessary to provide their students with an adequate education. I stand with the education advocacy coalitions and students of Pennsylvania to urge the state to do the following: Establish evidence-based funding adequacy targets for every district as part of the Basic Education Funding Formula to determine how much money each district needs to provide the modern education that the constitution promises Determine funding adequacy targets for costs that are not covered by the Basic Education Fund and were determined to be crucial by the courts; this includes special education, pre-K, and funding for school facilities Set an equitable standard for the portion of education funding that the state will provide Make a timeline for when the state will complete the above Pennsylvania must establish evidence-based funding adequacy targets for every district. This is critical for ensuring that schools have enough money to provide educational opportunity and supports for their students. I am lucky enough to know that there are social workers at my school if I need to talk to one. I have access to ample materials and educational resources that are paid for by the school district. My school is able to recruit and retain an abundance of qualified teachers and staff. However, many other students cannot say the same. Many districts, including many that are near Lower Merion geographically, cannot afford paper. Their students have no access to sports teams and learn in classes far above the optimal size. The students there may go without social workers, counselors, or librarians. Every student deserves the investment needed to give them a modern education. Along with establishing adequacy targets for every school district, the state also needs to take into consideration costs such as special education, facilities, and pre-k. My district has the funding to frequently rebuild and repair its facilities. I get to go to school in a district that provides modern facilities, air conditioning, and plenty of space for students. However, in many districts, this could not be further from the reality. Not only are many schools lacking facilities as basic as libraries and cafeterias, but many are literally crumbling or even dangerous. An inspection of Philadelphia public schools from 2015-2016 found that 80% of the schools had damaged asbestos. In fact, in 2020, the Philadelphia school district spent \$850,000 to settle a lawsuit with a teacher who said that she got mesothelioma from teaching in a school in South Philly. Philly schools and other underfunded schools also have to cancel school when it gets too hot because they do not have air conditioning. Additionally, many schools cannot expand their facilities, leaving students to learn in environments such as moldy, leaking basements. Due to state policy, which has left school construction reimbursement programs without funding, school districts are forced to defer crucial school repairs or go into debt. At the end of 2013, the average school construction debt per student in Pennsylvania was \$15,638, which is more than twice the national average and the second highest of any state in the nation. It is absolutely crucial that lawmakers do not neglect these needs of school districts. I know that my school won't give me cancer or be blazing hot due to lacking air conditioning and every student should be able to say the same. Pennsylvania must address not only funding adequacy, but also funding equity by determining an appropriate share of state funding to be provided by the state. The state of Pennsylvania provides a lower percentage of education funding than all but six other states, providing only 37.6% of total school funding. This leads to major gaps between wealthy and poor school districts, despite the poorest school districts paying the highest tax effort and the wealthiest districts paying the lowest. An overreliance on local funding means that districts with high property values will have the most resources, and the districts with low property values will have the fewest. This leads to Pennsylvania having unacceptable racial and economic education spending gaps, with 43% of Black and Hispanic students going to school in a district in the bottom 20% of the local wealth distribution and the poorest 20% of districts spending \$6,230 less weighted per student than the wealthiest 20% of districts. The quality of your education should not be determined by your zip code, and the state must ensure funding equity by establishing an equitable percentage of school funding to be provided at the state level. Although providing adequate funding to every school district will take time, the state must determine a timeline on which to get it done. They must understand that the current situation is the result of decades of deliberate and neglectful policy decisions, such as when Governor Corbett cut \$1,000,000,000 from the education budget in 2011. Now, the state must create a plan to ensuring that every schools district has adequate funding. With the unthinkable challenges that school districts are facing, Pennsylvania must seize this historic opportunity to finally ensure that every student in Pennsylvania can have access to the high-quality education that is guaranteed by the state constitution.

Name: Athen S.

City: Merion Station, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 9:40 AM – 1008

Subject: Education Equity Across Pennsylvania

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: I am a ...• taxpayer who supports redistribution of tax money for equitable school funding across Pennsylvania; • parent who moved from the William Penn School District to the Haverford School District because of the limited educational opportunities for my children; • former employee of William Penn (10 years); I saw the yearly struggle to provide what William Penn students need with the extremely limited. Richer school districts have enough, more than enough. It's time for our state government to reallocate state money to help the students in chronically underfunded districts. It's practically criminal that some children sit in ancient buildings with inadequate heating (or any air conditioning at all) and unsafe conditions. It's truly sad that some don't have the supplies, books, computers (a necessity in 2023) and support services to learn and thrive. Although I donate supplies to Philadelphia and Chester schools whenever there is a drive, individuals cannot give enough to adequately help these children. The state government can. William Penn never had enough money and, therefore, as many resources and educational opportunities for my children. We are extremely lucky that we were able to move to a school district that had more for our children. I know many families cannot. I worked in the William Penn School District for 10 years and saw, first-hand, the drastic and detrimental cuts that William Penn's school board had to make each year just to stay afloat. Property taxes in the six boroughs of William Penn were then and continue to be disproportionately high. We still own property in William Penn. Equal is not equitable; Pennsylvania's school funding system must strive for equitable education for all our children. Pennsylvania's constitution requires our legislature to meet the needs of all children with a thorough – and I would say effective - system of public education. A well-educated population benefits us all – all people, all businesses, all areas of our state. Find the money!

Name: Lillian M. **City:** Havertown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, November 28, 2023 2:34 PM – 1009

Subject: ACT 1 Limit

Message: Dear Esteemed Members of the BEFC, I am writing to express concern if not disbelief regarding the recent decision to raise the ACT1 limit to 5.3%. This directly disregards the underlying directive aimed at rectifying the inequitable funding issue highlighted in the court order pertaining to Pennsylvania's reliance on property taxes for school funding. As outlined in the IFO report, the certification of the base index for FY 2024-25 at 5.3% represents the highest rate observed since the enactment of Act 1. The aforementioned court order distinctly emphasizes the disproportionate reliance on property taxes and stresses the need for a more equitable approach to school funding. I urge the General Assembly to take the necessary steps to reduce the ACT1 limit to historical norms if not suspend any increases in the spirit of the meeting the intent of the court order. I understand inflationary pressures but the state must begin the process of reducing reliance on property taxes. For your reference, the specific details can be found in the provided IFO report link. Please note that I did not consult other team PTEWG members prior to sending but surely, they would agree in principle. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Your commitment to addressing these critical issues is deeply appreciated. Respectfully, Robert K., Member PTEWG (Property Tax Elimination Working Group). http://www.ifo.state.pa.us/Resources/Documents/Act_1_Index_Update_Nov_2023.pdf

Name: Robert K. **City:** Lehigh, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 29, 2023 6:26 PM – 1010

Subject: Educational Equity

Message: Hello BEFC, I hope you are doing well. I am a student at Lower Merion High School. I am part of the 17% of Pennsylvania public school students who go to a school in an adequately funded school district. I go to school in a district that is able to provide 22 AP courses, modern facilities, extracurricular activities, a broad range of departments and electives, student supports, and other programs. However, most students are not able to say the same. Pennsylvania public schools are collectively underfunded by \$6,258,438,239, and of the 500 school districts in Pennsylvania, 412 do not have adequate funding and 286 are underfunded by \$2,000 per student or more. This does not even include costs like transportation, rebuilding facilities, or special education. The taxpayers in the poorest districts have the highest tax effort and yet still do not have adequate funding in their public schools. The school funding system was recently declared unconstitutional, and there is now a historic opportunity to ensure that every school district has the resources necessary to provide their students with an adequate education. I stand with the education advocacy coalitions and students of Pennsylvania to urge the the state to do the following: Establish evidence-based funding adequacy targets for every district as part of the Basic Education Funding Formula to determine how much money each district needs to provide the modern education that the constitution promises Determine funding adequacy targets for costs that are not covered by the Basic Education Fund and were determined to be crucial by the courts; this includes special education, pre-K, and funding for school facilities Set an equitable standard for the portion of education funding that the state will provide Make a timeline for when the state will complete the above

Pennsylvania must establish evidence-based funding adequacy targets for every district. This is critical for ensuring that schools have enough money to provide educational opportunity and supports for their students. I am lucky enough to know that there are social workers at my school if I need to talk to one. I have access to ample materials and educational resources that are paid for by the school district. My school is able to recruit and retain an abundance of qualified teachers and staff. However, many other students cannot say the same. Many districts, including many that are near Lower Merion geographically, cannot afford paper. Their students have no access to sports teams and learn in classes far above the optimal size. The students there may go without social workers, counselors, or librarians. Every student deserves the investment needed to give them a modern education. Along with establishing adequacy targets for every school district, the state also needs to take into consideration costs such as special education, facilities, and pre-k. My district has the funding to frequently rebuild and repair its facilities. I get to go to school in a district that provides modern facilities, air conditioning, and plenty of space for students. However, in many districts, this could not be further from the reality. Not only are many schools lacking facilities as basic as libraries and cafeterias, but many are literally crumbling or even dangerous. An inspection of Philadelphia public schools from 2015-2016 found that 80% of the schools had damaged asbestos. In fact, in 2020, the Philadelphia school district spent \$850,000 to settle a lawsuit with a teacher who said that she got mesothelioma from teaching in a school in South Philly. Philly schools and other underfunded schools also have to cancel school when it gets too hot because they do not have air conditioning. Additionally, many schools cannot expand their facilities, leaving students to learn in environments such as moldy, leaking basements. Due to state policy, which has left school construction reimbursement programs without funding, school districts are forced to defer crucial school repairs or go into debt. At the end of 2013, the average school construction debt per student in Pennsylvania was \$15,638, which is more than twice the national average and the second highest of any state in the nation. It is absolutely crucial that lawmakers do not neglect these needs of school districts. I know that my school won't give me cancer or be blazing hot due to lacking air conditioning and every student should be able to say the same. Pennsylvania must address not only funding adequacy, but also funding equity by determining an appropriate share of state funding to be provided by the state. The state of Pennsylvania provides a lower percentage of education funding than all but six other states, providing only 37.6% of total school funding. This leads to major gaps between wealthy and poor school districts, despite the poorest school districts paying the highest tax effort and the wealthiest districts paying the lowest. An overreliance on local funding means that districts with high property values will have the most resources, and the districts with low property values will have the fewest. This leads to Pennsylvania having unacceptable racial and economic education spending gaps, with 43% of Black and Hispanic students going to school in a district in the bottom 20% of the local wealth distribution and the poorest 20% of districts spending \$6,230 less weighted per student than the wealthiest 20% of districts. The quality of your education should not be determined by your zip code, and the state must ensure funding equity by establishing an equitable percentage of school funding to be provided at the state level. Although providing adequate funding to every school district will take time, the state must determine a timeline on which to get it done. They must understand that the current situation is the result of decades of deliberate and neglectful policy decisions, such as when Governor Corbett cut \$1,000,000,000 from the education budget in 2011. Now, the state must create a plan to ensuring that every schools district has adequate funding. With the unthinkable challenges that school districts are facing, Pennsylvania must seize this historic opportunity to finally ensure that every student in Pennsylvania can have access to the high-quality education that is guaranteed by the state constitution.

Name: Anja S. **City:** Merion Station, PA

Sent: Wednesday, November 29, 2023 7:58 PM – 1011

Subject: School Tax

Message: I'm on fixed income an 76 years old. I'm \$3,600 behind on my school tax. I own my home but not according to my school district. They will sheriff sale my home if I can't get the money. I don't have it! Why can't this be fixed. There are hundreds of thousands Pennsylvania in the same boat. Please help to pass HB13.

Name: John L. **City:** Gibsonia, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 30, 2023 7:31 PM – 1012

Subject: Rural students need a good education too

Message: I would like to speak to the needs of kids in rural districts. They deserve just as good an education, and exposure to the same range of extracurricular activities, as any other group of kids in PA. I grew up in a rural district in the 60s and 70s, and my small school was proud to provide access to music, art, languages, science, industrial arts, home-economics, an excellent school library and after school clubs and sports. These resources gave me and my fellow students important experiences and gave us tools that we could use in our later lives. They channeled our teen-age energy into healthy and productive activities. Give the local schools some robust resources and they will create good things for their students. Years of cost cutting and

austerity budgets have had a horrible impact on what is offered to our rural kids. I do not like the idea of farming out the education of our kids to charter and private schools. Such schools are often non-profit in name only, or upfront for profit. Why should we give money to a bunch of business owners instead of spending it on our kids? Charter and private schools select their own students and drain resources from our public schools. They are heavy on administration and light on providing services, especially to disabled students. They promise a lot but with money on the line skimp on kids' education. Some far-away person will decide what is "OK" for our kids, not local people. Unless better guidelines and controls for charter and private schools are put in place in PA, (and the legislature has shown no desire to do that), they will continue to channel funds to executive's pockets and away from the kids. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: Melissa E. **City:** Ambler, PA

Sent: Thursday, November 30, 2023 7:33 PM – 1013

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: According to research conducted by Vanderbilt University, since 2001, the highest achieving U.S. public school system is the federal Department of Defense Education Activity. One of the main factors to the high achievement scores in this system, that has the smallest gaps between ethnic and racial groups, is that all 160 schools are equally provided facilities, funding, personnel and materials. Each school does not receive the same monetary amount, but rather the amount necessary to provide quality education at the same level. The Vanderbilt report uses the NAEP scores from states throughout the country. In determining how to bring Pennsylvania public schools up to equitable standards throughout, the most successful systems need to be closely looked at to see how Pennsylvania can implement equitable funding to raise the achievement levels for all schools in all districts.

Name: Jacqueline R. **City:** Doylestown, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 10:29 AM – 1014

Subject: School Property Taxes

Message: Back in October I contacted my state representative and my state senator to ask why schools were permitted to increase school property taxes for the 2023 school year when earlier this year the Commonwealth Court ruled that it is unconstitutional how our public schools are funded. All property tax increases should have been put on hold until a new funding system has been established. I never received a response from my state rep, but my senator instructed me to ask my question on this website. I feel the increases that were placed on property owners for the 2023 school year should be refunded. School property tax is an unfair tax for those who receive no service for this tax. And no one should have to lose their home to a sheriff's sale because they cannot afford to pay this expensive tax for someone else's children's K-12 education. Funding of K-12 education should be the responsibility of the parents and not property owners. Any sheriff's sales currently in progress for unpaid school taxes should be placed on hold indefinitely as well.

Name: Cheryl B. **City:** McDonald, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 12:50 PM – 1015

Subject: Fundamental Funding Flaw

Message: Dear Esteemed Members of the BEFC, I wanted to draw your attention to the recent developments in New Hampshire regarding school funding, as highlighted in the linked article. The judge's declaration regarding the state's aid to school funding and the disparity caused by property tax policies echoes concerns similar to those raised in the Pennsylvania lawsuit. Based on the panel discussions held during the Pennsylvania BEFC meetings, there's a pressing concern. The discussions are heavily focused on a solution that aims to provide schools additional funding to meet adequacy goals, while neglecting the over-reliance on local property taxes, as outlined in the court order. A balance must be part of any solution. The over dependence on local property taxes, combined with considerable local economic variability, appears to be a foundational flaw in school funding models, as highlighted by the New Hampshire decision. Addressing this issue is equally, if not more, crucial than meeting adequacy goals. Without addressing the underlying causes of inequity, any enhancements to adequacy funding are destined to falter in the long run. As a reminder, our PTEWG panel was the only panel to provide a robust plan that actually addressed the major concerns of the court order. Thank you for your attention to this matter. Your dedication to tackling these difficult critical issues is truly commendable and greatly appreciated. Robert K., Member PTEWG (Property Tax Elimination Working Group). <https://shorturl.at/ejzQ>

Name: Robert K. **City:** Lehigh, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 4:41 PM – 1016

Subject: School Tax

Message: Every time I turn around my school tax is going up. When will this madness stop and this archaic system eliminated. On another note School choice must be seriously looked at and invoked like yesterday. Frustrated tax payer and school parent

Name: Stephen Y. **City:** Robeson, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 4:42 PM – 1017

Subject: Cyber

Message: Dear Committee, House Bill 1422 is now in the Senate. Passing this bill would bring a huge relief for all school districts in PA. Ferndale Area SD in Johnstown, PA is paying over \$700,000 per year in cyber tuition. Ferndale Area brings in about \$27K per mill and we have the highest millage rate in Cambria county. We are in the mid 90's in mills. Proactive steps like passing HB 1422 would help in your search for a new formula that brings balance and equity for all the students in this great state. Thank you!

Name: Jeffrey B. **City:** Johnstown, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 4:58 PM – 1018

Subject: School Property Tax

Message: I'm retired and this is my biggest concern. How do other states fund their schools? A lot of states don't have school property taxes....it's so antiquated....they need to go!!!! Raise the retail taxes so everyone contributes not just homeowners!!!

Name: Lou M. **City:** Schuylkill Haven, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 5:10 PM – 1019

Subject: Funding Public Schools.

Message: I believe adding 1% to sales tax to go from 6% to 7% would be fair and would capture money from anyone living, visiting, or even traveling through PA. This would then go to the state to fund schools in a per capita manner and not put the burden on smaller townships.

Name: Karen B. **City:** Coaldale, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 5:14 PM – 1020

Subject: Public School Funding

Message: The public school funding crisis in Pennsylvania impacts everyone including residents like me and my husband who don't have children and returned to Pennsylvania 10 years ago. In the 10 years we've lived here, we've paid ~\$50,000 to our local Lehigh Area School District and have received no benefit. While we can afford the exorbitant tax, most residents are on a fixed income and are struggling just to put food on the table. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania must provide funds for schools that don't penalize fixed and lower income residents. Options to increase the revenue that can then be distributed to schools include: - graduated property tax at the time of sale for all properties priced above the median amount in each county - a tax levied on specific types of stock sales - graduated inheritance and gift taxes Please make the right changes to ensure that all schools in the Commonwealth get the funding they deserve without punishing residents with fixed or lower incomes.

Name: Carol E. **City:** Lehigh, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 5:15 PM – 1021

Subject: School taxes

Message: School taxes should not be a burden on the home or land owner especially the retired everyone should pay their fair share.

Name: Joseph L. **City:** Trescow, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 5:51 PM – 1022

Subject: Schools

Message: Paying taxes is a privilege. It's not a privilege I want to be part of anymore. Our children are aren't being taught math they can't use. There not being taught history. Writing. They are being taught anything they can use to get a good job when they graduate. Why would anyone want to throw their money away like that.

Name: Linda T. **City:** Mahogany City, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 6:02 PM – 1023

Subject: School Taxes

Message: School Taxes are unfair to property owners. You are unfairly placing all the burden on people who struggle to pay a mortgage and letting everyone else off the hook. You need to come up with a more fair system such as a flat tax for everyone or upping the sales tax so everyone can pay their fair share. People are losing their homes because of this ridiculous system in place in Pennsylvania. And how much money do the schools need? They have 10 times the technology when I was in school. How much is enough? You are breaking the backs of the working man and retired people who can barely hold onto their homes.

Name: Marcus A. **City:** Ashland, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 6:05 PM – 1024

Subject: Property Tax

Message: Please execute a thorough evaluation of how school districts are spending their tax revenues. As we do in the private sector, eliminate unnecessary spending, base revenues on performance results and consider a use tax that would be based on consumption rather than assessments of real estate.

Name: Steve Z. **City:** Orwigsburg, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 6:31 PM – 1025

Subject: Property tax

Message: I hope the elected legislature will do more than talk about eliminating property tax. All that has been done so far has been talk. The most talk comes right before election time and then it seems the elected officials forget about property tax relief until the next election rolls around. Why should a senior citizen pay more to send children to school than people that have kids in school? This happens every day. The schools should be funded by income tax and sales tax. Everyone buying things in Pa would help fund the schools. Seniors would also still help but if they don't buy a lot it wouldn't cost them a lot. Also, you cannot allow the school districts to raise taxes whenever they want. This is a failed process. I'm 71 years old and I would wager this system of funding the schools will not change for me to see.

Name: Brent K. **City:** Palmerton, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 6:45 PM – 1026

Subject: Funding schools

Message: Make Pennsylvania one school district for the entire state. Or at least consolidate down to three districts. This would save enormous amounts of money on redundancy in administration. Next use proceeds from expanded sales tax and gambling tax.

Name: George L. **City:** Frackville, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 7:00 PM – 1027

Subject: Funding Public Schools

Message: We need a better system than funding through property taxes. Numerous home owners are elderly and/or retired, and forced to support schools when their child-educating years are long past. I am retired and on a pension, but I home schooled my youngest until I moved her into the diocesan Catholic school system just to avoid the liberal ideology prevalent in many public schools. So in addition to paying school tax, I have to pay tuition as well-- a double whammy.

Name: Susan B. **City:** Albrightsville, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 7:17 PM – 1028

Subject: tax

Message: Obviously there should be some minimal tax on real estate. Why because those who own real estate (as opposed to those who rent or do not own) enjoy a benefit of appreciation, depreciation allowance and tangible asset to pass on. The process will be ever changing and built into the system must be a provision that every 10 years a formula devised to reassess real estate value. Additionally, purchases and sales will be done when the transactions occur. The minimal tax on Real Estate should be from (one) dollar, to \$50,000 A minimum Tax, and each incremental assessed value in \$50,000 increments ad infinitum be increased minimally with perhaps a cap at \$100,000,000. The rate should be minimal and fair to provide some modest tax revenue to the state. However the fair tax is a sales tax on purchased items, because this is a tax on everyone. Whether you buy a used Chevrolet volt, or a new Maserati the purchaser determines his/her purchase depending on their means and their willingness to pay tax. Purchases made in other states should be considered made in Pennsylvania, or a tax

credit given. Thus renters with multiple children and senior homeowners with no children will be paying toward the cost of education. Necessary accommodations for wealthy school districts and school districts in poverty struck areas must be made in order to ensure education for all. Not an easy task, but property taxation is a grossly unfair and oppressive taxing system and will get worse as homes will become less affordable, desirable and available.

Name: Louis S. **City:** Palmerton, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 7:32 PM – 1029

Subject: School property tax

Message: As a senior property owner go over 55 years is it not time for our highly educated representatives to clean up the outdated school tax situation. Perhaps a realistic look at how the burden is being placed on a person who has borne the brunt of education to educators who misuse or do not use these funds. Don't know the answers but the overreach by government could get back to conservative values and improve our education system and stop 🙅‍♂️ wasting taxpayer funds. Regards, a father, grandfather and highly frustrated taxpayer who has been promised for over 50 years for property tax relief!

Name: David K. **City:** Pitman, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 7:53 PM – 1030

Subject: School Property Tax

Message: Pennsylvania must change how school taxes are paid. The elderly cannot keep affording these constant raises in the taxes every year. You are making them choose between medicine and taxes, fixing a drainpipe on their home or taxes. You know we work our whole life paying taxes and then when we no longer can afford our house it is sold for taxes. Where is the empathy for our seniors? We pay our legislators in Pennsylvania a good salary. Why can't they stop kicking the can down the road and fix this? An increase in our sales tax would make it more equitable and stop the cottage industry we currently have in buying a house for taxes (peanuts for them). You know in the economically depressed areas, we have to pay so much more to supplement the Section 8 housing, home buyers, who write off their taxes and we pay for it in another area. We must have change and government officials to make hard decisions. That's what they get paid for. GIVE SENIORS A BREAK.

Name: Stephen M. **City:** Pottsville, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 9:13 PM – 1031

Subject: Funding education

Message: The present system of funding for education unfairly burdens senior citizens. Our seniors have worked very hard to have a home. They would like to live their last few remaining days in that home. Taxing the value of their home shifts a greater burden at a time when we can least afford it.

Name: John D. **City:** Barnesville, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 9:18 PM – 1032

Subject: School tax

Message: It feels like we are getting robbed with this school tax system We are a married couple who have no children but we have to pay for other people's children to go to school? Why should we be paying for their education? Don't get me wrong and I know some people need help and are in public housing, and that is a good thing to help them but they pay no school tax and it's not fair. WHT not put the sales tax up to 7% and tax everything? At least everyone will be paying not just homeowners. Older retired people are getting taxed out of their home and the politicians in Harrisburg don't give a damn because they are influenced by the teacher unions. It's sickening.

Name: Frank C. **City:** Pottsville, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 9:21 PM – 1033

Subject: school tax

Message: Not only is the system unfair in how school funds are distributed but placing all of the tax burden on home owners is just as unfair. It is time to repair the system. No one should lose their primary residence over school taxes.

Name: Robert D. **City:** Nesquehoning, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 10:22 PM – 1034

Subject: School property tax

Message: I do not think it is fair for us seniors to lose our houses because of property taxes. It is hard enough on our income to buy food. And it is not fair if we do not have children in school to pay property taxes. I am not against helping out but let us make it fair. I worked hard all my life to get the house and property I have. As I was working, I gave my share of property taxes. Why can't it be an income tax or extra sales tax. That would be the fair thing to do! Then I could keep my house and property and still help the school system. Thank you for the opportunity to voice my opinion. I am a concerned citizen and voter.

Name: Joseph M. **City:** Schuylkill Haven, PA

Sent: Friday, December 1, 2023 11:09 PM – 1035

Subject: Education Funding

Message: I agree that the current method of funding education is not equitable for the children of the Commonwealth with districts Rasing funding based on the property valuation, which is often inaccurate. Property taxation is not fair to those who own property either. I feel that a per-capita tax would be the fairest wat to raise funds for the School systems in the Commonwealth. the cost would be shared evenly to all the citizens of the Commonwealth and then disbursed to the districts based on their population of school students. This amount should be based on what is needed to provide a quality education for the children in the districts.

Name: Herbert K. **City:** White Haven, PA

Sent: Saturday, December 2, 2023 8:00 AM – 1036

Subject: Property taxes

Message: Hello, As a property owner I am opposed to taxing my home for any purpose. Under current law, if I become unable to pay the property taxes the government will force me from my home. My home belongs to my family, not the government. Other states have found successful ways of funding our schools that don't include taxing a person's home. Explore other options and remove property taxes at once. Thank you.

Name: Ted S. **City:** Schuylkill Haven, PA

Sent: Saturday, December 2, 2023 8:57 AM – 1037

Subject: School funding.

Message: Stop using taxpayer money to fund private schools.

Name: Albert G. **City:** Delano, PA

Sent: Saturday, December 2, 2023 11:47 AM – 1038

Subject: Education Funding

Message: I believe education has become way too politicized. Today, compared to years ago, education has become a federal function which is 100% opposite of what is used to be. According to our constitutions it is primarily a state function, but with local control. Today local jurisdictions have ceded their authority to the larger state. Education has become a huge bureaucracy with many school districts have become so large, that this creates more problems that just being more efficient. But in many ways, larger is not better because they are harder to manage with little competition. I believe progress in restoring our education system must include returning decision back to local communities is best, because it creates more competition and I believe that will go a long way to improving education for our children. I don't believe funding is a problem. I know we have an issue with how it is funded but I don't believe this is because our education today lacks funds. We have plenty of money now going to school districts. What is needed is a better way to distribute that funding and control spending. And this highlights the size problem I believe we have. The bigger and more bureaucratic a school system becomes is problematic and leads to more tax money going to pay for administration and a myriad of programs that are really not helpful to the actual learning responsibility we have to our students. I also believe that school choice should be the Number 1 action taken to improve our educational system. Citizens should have a choice to where their children are educated. We cannot forget that educating our kids is a serious family decision and should not be left to the state or any other bureaucracy or government officials. Therefore I believe that School Choice, reducing the size of many school districts and more oversight of spending by local citizens will go a long way to improve our educational system.

Name: Gerald N. **City:** Kelayres, PA

Sent: Saturday, December 2, 2023 12:25 PM – 1039

Subject: Fair Funding

Message: One way to stop property tax increases is to pair charter funding reform with fair funding for schools. I am a board member at Minersville Area School District and we are on a pace to spend \$1.9 million dollars on charter school tuition this school year. We could save over \$1 million dollars if funding reform was instituted. We could do a lot with that money and eliminate the need to raise taxes.

Name: Al M. **City:** Minersville, PA

Sent: Saturday, December 2, 2023 12:26 PM – 1040

Subject: School Tax

Message: To The Basic Education Funding Commission: Senior citizens, with no dependent school age children, should not have to pay school taxes. Thank you for your time and consideration. GOD Bless.

Name: Terrence K. **City:** New Ringgold, PA

Sent: Saturday, December 2, 2023 2:48 PM – 1041

Subject: How to fund out schools

Message: Increase sales tax rate to 8% from the 8% you deducts 2% to go directly to schools. This way education is not falling on the backs of property owners. illegals have to pay sales tax when they purchase items this way they would be contributing to the education of their children that have flooded our school districts.

Name: Patricia M. **City:** Frackville, PA

Sent: Saturday, December 2, 2023 8:33 PM – 1042

Subject: School funding

Message: I believe proper tax to fund schools should be eliminated. An income tax should be used instead to pay for funding of schools. This would help seniors with fixed incomes stay in homes. With costs of electricity, heating and basic necessities increases, seniors need a break from paying for school funding when they have already paid their fair share as a property owner.

Name: Carol W. **City:** Ringtown, PA

Sent: Sunday, December 3, 2023 9:41 AM – 1043

Subject: PA school funding

Message: I am a tax payer in Upper Dublin Montgomery County. I am a parent of four grown children who had excellent education opportunities as a result of an unfair system of funding distribution in the state of PA. Sadly many in our state are not as fortunate and receive subpar education in crumbling schools with lack of support services and infrastructure to enable optimal learning. It's time for PA to establish an equitable funding distribution to correct decades of racial bias and eliminate racial disparities in distribution of school funding. Thank you.

Name: Rachelle L. **City:** Dresher, PA

Sent: Sunday, December 3, 2023 11:51 AM – 1044

Subject: Educational Equity and Property Taxes

Message: I am a 62 year old, life long resident of PA from a family of teachers. As I have always lived in privileged communities with a high tax base, my experience with the public school system has usually been positive. However, my teacher family members have described the disparity in other districts where books are outdated or unavailable, classroom conditions are crowded, buildings are unsafe, teachers are underpaid and where children must struggle to learn against a whole host of obstacles. I favor a solution to redeploy our state education funds in a manner that restores a balance between our districts. Undoubtedly, that would mean redirecting MORE state funds to these poorly funded districts compared to affluent districts. I would propose this needs-based allocation between districts be reassessed annually to ensure all of our schools are rising and improving together, equitably. And private schools are private. I respect their right to operate but private schools should NOT be using public funds. Thank you for giving priority to this important issue.

Name: Skip S. **City:** Media, PA

Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 11:02 AM – 1045

Subject: School Property Taxes

Message: My opinion is that school taxes should be generated based on gross income primarily and distributed throughout the state based on student needs. Private schools should not receive funding unless they demonstrate public school standards and testing outcome requirements. Public cyber and Charter schools should receive a much reduced proportion of the funding and their funding should be a maximum of 50% public tax funded on an income based scale, and the rest private funded. Public schools should have the priority for funding and alternate schools should be encouraged (up to 50% funding) only when they are full to minimize costly expansions. Taxable incomes and age should determine the tax requirement with 18 to 25 year old's and 65 and older tax payers having substantial discounts. Eliminate all taxes based on property values.

Name: Michael H. **City:** Pottsville, PA

Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 11:25 AM – 1046

Subject: Basic Education Funding in PA

Message: The court has spoken about the lack of funding in our PA school districts. Anyone working or studying in our urban and rural public schools do not need courts or studies to prove the lack of priority our poorer areas of the state experience. While our poor districts have struggled from decades of disinvestment, our legislature has exacerbated the, problem by creating multi-tiered publicly funded alternative schools; this includes the proliferation of brick-and-mortar charter schools, the expansion of the cyber charter schools (with money just pouring down the drain in full sight of all), and the growth of educational tax credits (PA's form of vouchers). None of these "choices" are subject to any meaningful accountability. All of the choice proponents have advocated strongly against reform even when blatantly needed. Our budgets are moral documents. The emphasis on continued criticism and disinvestment in traditional public schools (the cornerstone of our Democracy) while furthering unproven and unaccountable tax payer funded alternatives speaks to why there is a problem. FUND OUR TRADITIONAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS! REFORM THE TAX PAYER SUBSIDIZED GRAVY TRAIN OF ALTERNATIVE PUBLIC SCHOOLS!

Name: Diane P. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 11:40 AM – 1047

Subject: More support for public schools

Message: Dear Members of the Commission, I do not have children, but I know that our future depends on our kids. In particular, our economic future depends on providing ALL of the state's children with a high quality education. For too long, this state has left the quality of education up to one's zip code, and burdened low income communities with tax levels that were still insufficient to the need. I urge you to recommend a funding formula that corrects this injustice and puts us on the path to a brighter future. Thanks.

Name: Rose J. **City:** Philadelphia, PA

Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 2:53 PM – 1048

Subject: Limits on school spending

Message: There needs to be more limits on what schools can spend their money and get the schools to focus on actual education. There should be stronger limits to the amount of debt a school can take on and better oversight over loans. Also, if a school takes on any debt, their rainy day must be depleted first. Schools should not be allowed to spend their funding on any athletic facilities that can be used for sports. Many schools are quickly becoming athletic institutions first and education last. Finally, if a school is academically failing, the principal & superintendent should be fired and all athletic and extracurricular activities that are not academic in nature programs suspended.

Name: Tyler C. **City:** Hershey, PA

Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 3:14 PM – 1049

Subject: Mandated Funding Changes

Message: Education is costly whether it's private or public. The lack of quality education costs all of us in courts, prisons, rehabs, crime, not enough educated workers to complete important jobs, health care deficiencies, and a population of people who can't afford to care or themselves adequately. The State of Pennsylvania has finally passed an Equality Funding of Schools Bill and it has stood the test of review. It is time to develop a plan that resolves the inequality of school funding. The bill does not diminish the budget of the well-funded schools but it increases the available resources to those where student success is limited and scores are lower. If funding were equal, many a charter school would not need to exist because the local school

would be able to meet standards of expanded curriculums and exploration. This is the law and it needs to be respected and followed. Let's let the next generation of lower-income families look forward to their children being competitive in school, work, and life!

Name: Lydia and Gary W. **City:** Doylestown, PA

Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 3:38 PM – 1050

Subject: School Taxes

Message: My belief is we have an answer, HB76. This is the fairest bill to all of Pa's taxpayers. The responsibility for our school's funding goes to all even people who visit or vacation here. The Pa. citizens who need this are the low income and seniors on fixed income.

Name: Martin R. **City:** Levittown, PA

Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 3:56 PM – 1051

Subject: PA

Message: As a resident of the Commonwealth of PA, I urge you to take seriously our unequal funding of public education in our state. The PA Supreme Court deems this unconstitutional and I stand with them. How can students, just because of their zip code, do their best if their school doesn't have equal resources. Now is the time, with our budget surplus, to make all of PA proud. The more educated our citizens become, our state will grow with innovation, jobs and a strong tax base. Please acknowledge and work hard for all students.

Name: Joanna D. **City:** Chalfont, PA

Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 5:30 PM – 1052

Subject: A student's call for equitable funding for PA public schools

Message: Dear members of the BEFC: I am a student at Lower Merion High School. I am included in the 17% of PA public school students who attend school in an adequately funded district, and I recognize that privilege. 412 of 500 school districts in Pennsylvania are underfunded, and 286 are underfunded by \$2,000 per student or more. We need to use the recent ruling declaring the PA school funding system unconstitutional to correct this pervasive underfunding. I call on the BEFC to: establish a meaningful adequacy target for each school district in order to determine the total cost to meet the constitutional standard; to calculate funding targets that also address unmet needs beyond K-12 basic education funding; to ensure that the state meets its constitutional obligation by establishing a fair and equitable "state share" for those targets; and to create a plan, with a reasonable timeline, for the state to meet its share of those targets. It is my firm belief that if the BEFC does not return a final report with a plan for each of the 4 priorities detailed above, it will fail in its constitutional responsibility. Thank you. - member of the Funding Real Educational Equity Club at Lower Merion.

Name: Toby P. **City:** Wynnewood, PA

Sent: Monday, December 4, 2023 8:39 PM – 1053

Subject: Funding of public schools

Message: Hereby requesting the Commission to recognize the urgent need for equal funding for all public schools, regardless of where they are located. It is only fair to have equal school funding for low income communities, so the children have equal access to a good education.

Name: Karen D. **City:** Doylestown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 5:40 AM – 1054

Subject: Eliminate School Property Tax

Message: Please fund the schools in a different manner - not with property taxes. I would love to own more of my home, especially being retired. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: Eugene B. **City:** Cranberry Township, PA

Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 5:56 AM – 1055

Subject: School property tax

Message: It takes 3 of my social security checks to pay my taxes, I am a veteran drafted 1965, I believe something has to be done on this issue. Powerful people in this state don't want to deal with it.

Name: Steve T. **City:** Schnecksville, PA

Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 8:34 AM – 1056

Subject: School Funding

Message: As a retired teacher of 33 years, in an urban district, I feel compelled to speak about increased funding of underserved schools. I urge Pennsylvania to increase spending in these schools to widen the curriculum to include music, art, two recess per day supervised by someone other than the classroom teacher, choir and band (with band instruments.) In addition, a free breakfast and lunch program with edible food should be in place. I feel strongly that this change will raise test scores by empowering the students to care about learning and to give them a chance to excel in areas other than academics. Also, I feel that added funds to hire one or two on staff, permanent substitutes would benefit the entire school community. Academic mandates are fine, but on the ground level have done little to improve conditions in underserved schools.

Name: Kirsten F. **City:** Newtown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 9:50 AM – 1057

Subject: School Taxes

Message: How about giving seniors relief on school taxes. I am tired of paying forever rent to the school district. This archaic tax system has been in place since the 1830's. It's time to move into the 21st century and Eliminate school taxes on seniors now.

Name: Charles S. **City:** Milford, PA

Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 2:29 PM – 1058

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: HB 13 Eliminate school property taxes and shift funding to a combination of income and sales tax.

Name: Edward K. **City:** Quakertown, PA

Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 2:32 PM – 1059

Subject: Gifted Education Funding

Message: I am writing today on behalf of the more than 60,000 children in Pennsylvania who are identified as gifted learners. In particular, I wanted to draw your attention to the fact that Gifted Education in Pennsylvania is an unfunded mandate. Chapter 16 of the PA School Code dictates how schools and districts are required to support gifted learners, however, there is no money allocated to support these students in the State budget. With little support and little oversight, many districts, especially in more impoverished areas, are likely to provide minimal, if any, support for these students. Sadly, many people incorrectly assume that gifted students will be "just fine" because they are good students and like school. The reality is that gifted students need specialized education, just as students with learning disabilities do. I am writing to ask you to consider adding \$73 million as a line item for Gifted Education in your next proposed State Education budget. Funding at this level could go towards improving equity by funding teaching positions as well as providing greater levels of administrative support and oversight to ensure that students across the State of Pennsylvania are getting the educational support that they need to grow and thrive. Thank you for your consideration.

Name: Colleen G. **City:** Brookhaven, PA

Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 3:06 PM – 1060

Subject: Equitable funding would benefit everyone

Message: Property taxes are an imperfect, at best, way to fund schools. Not only do they penalize older adults in wealthier districts, but they bake in poor funding for both city and rural schools. Let's re-imagine how to fund education so that students everywhere have similar academic opportunities.

Name: Kathleen B. **City:** Warrington, PA

Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 4:07 PM – 1061

Subject: Equitable education is a human right

Message: Every child deserves an equitable education regardless of the wealth of their zip code. Using real estate taxes to fund education is rooted in inequality and perpetuates unequal outcomes. It also penalizes older homeowners requiring the use of inflationary dollars well beyond their earning years. Education funding should be federally funded and state funded since an educated society enriches the state and the nation.

Name: Arleen H. **City:** Warrington, PA

Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 5:00 PM – 1062

Subject: Student Recommendations to the BEFC

Message: Dear Basic Education Funding Commission, We are the Student Representatives to the State Board of Education (Pennsylvania Department of Education). We are writing to share student feedback gauged from Students for Education in Pennsylvania (SEPA), a state-wide program that helps bring student voices from across the Commonwealth to the State Board of Education. As SEPA's Co-Directors, we are proud to have over 160 students representing more than 65 school districts in SEPA. With the support of the State Board of Education and the Department of Education, we hear from students in every geographic region and of all socioeconomic statuses. From Philadelphia to Pottstown, SEPA uplifts diverse perspectives while discussing relevant education topics in schools. In our October 2023 SEPA meetings, we facilitated meaningful discussions about specific, relevant topics regarding our education system. We had three main topics discussed in our previous SEPA meeting. First, we talked about the importance of having more mental health support in schools. Some recommendations for areas of improvement are having more counselors and certified psychologists at schools while making mental health resources more accessible to all students, particularly those in rural and/or low-income districts. We also recommend exploring the possibility of statewide telehealth services for student mental health, which has been widely successful in states including Maryland (i.e. Montgomery County). Second, we discussed strategies to combat the issue of student absenteeism in Pennsylvania. One recommendation is to have more enforced penalties for missing school without a reasonable excuse. Third, we discussed the need for more academic support in schools, especially in rural areas. We recommend allocating resources to creating or expanding student-run tutoring programs in schools, which provide accessible academic support while cultivating students' leadership and interpersonal skills. Based on the board's discussion in the November meetings, we will include the topics of teacher/educator career development and personal finance curricula in our discussions for our next SEPA meeting. Thank you for your consideration and this opportunity to share student voices across Pennsylvania.

Name: Claire C. and Aarushi D.

City: State College, PA

Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 7:33 PM – 1063

Subject: Basic education funding

Message: As others have said, property taxes are an imperfect, at best, way to fund schools. Not only do they penalize older adults in wealthier districts, but they bake in poor funding for both city and rural schools. Let's re-imagine how we fund education so that students everywhere get the opportunity for academic success.

Name: Michael G.

City: Warrington, PA

Sent: Tuesday, December 5, 2023 9:31 PM – 1064

Subject: Fair and adequately funded system of public education

Message: As a resident of the Johnstown area, I live in a place where almost all school districts are drastically underfunded. As a member of the American Association of University Women, I strongly believe in the importance of giving the best educational opportunities to all of our children. It is the only way to make a difference in their futures. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. Personally, I believe that there will never be equal rights and opportunities without equity in education. Please do not let this important issue be ignored.

Name: Kathy H.

City: Johnstown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 6:54 AM – 1065

Subject: BEFC RESULTS

Message: The Basic Education Funding Commission is very much beginning to look like simply one more carrot on a stick. Current funding has been ruled unconstitutional and multiple hearings have been held but hearings in the Pennsylvania Legislature seldom seem to result in true benefit to the taxpayer. The gist of my comment is simply, enough face time for our legislators in hearings. Let's, at long last, see some results!

Name: Richard M.

City: Douglassville, PA

Sent: Wednesday, December 6, 2023 7:40 AM – 1066

Subject: Equitable school funding

Message: If we truly want to be a country where anyone from any background can succeed in life, it is crucial that all schools receive the same level of funding!

Name: Nancy W.

City: Wilmington, DE

Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 10:00 AM – 1067

Subject: K-12 School Funding - BEFC Report

Message: I am a member of the Johnstown Branch AAUW. The PA Constitution places the responsibility to provide a fair and effective education for every child on the state. A child's zip code should not determine the quality of a child's education. The courts have mandated that the state increases its share of school funding and that the schools with the most need get the most money. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the state's obligation and lays out a timeline for the state to meet the funding obligations to our children.

Name: Deanna H. **City:** Johnstown, PA

Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 10:02 AM – 1068

Subject: ACLAMO: Non-Profit Organization Comment

Message: Dear Members of the BEFC: My name is Nelly and I am the Executive Director and CEO of ACLAMO, a full-service non-profit organization serving Montgomery County and surrounding areas. Our mission is to provide educational programs, social services, and access to health and wellness programs to Latinos and other community members to empower them to fully achieve their life potential. We have been serving the community for 46 years. In our mentorship program, we serve students who attend public schools in the Norristown Area School District (NASD). The NASD contains 12 schools and 7,771 students. The district's minority enrollment is 88.9%. In the district, 73.9% of students are economically disadvantaged. 19.2% of students are enrolled in Special Education programs and 18.8% of students are enrolled in English Language Learning courses. This is the snapshot of one of the school districts we serve, and the adequate and equitable education of each of these students is the priority of their families and of utmost value to their communities. In ACLAMO's Pottstown office location, we serve students who attend public schools in the Pottstown Area School District (PASD). The PASD contains 6 schools and 3,200 students. The district's minority enrollment is 70%. In this district, 68.8% of students are economically disadvantaged. We need to provide more resources and support for these students to reach acceptable levels of proficiency in their school subjects in order to give them the chance to succeed in school and in life. Across Montgomery County, adequate, equitable and constitutional state funding would mean increased quality of life at school for each student. It is also an investment in the future of each student and in the vitality of their community. Our students deserve the opportunity for growth through clubs and activities that interest them. They desperately need qualified mental health counselors and health curricula that foster their development. Our students deserve to be taught by certified teachers who are honored for their commitment to this supremely valuable profession. Our students need up-to-date learning materials that engage their minds and inspire them to live productive lives that give back to society. I call on the members of the BEFC to deliver a clear and thorough calculation of how much money each school district needs in order for the state to meet its constitutional obligation to students across Montgomery County. I insist that the BEFC members lay out a reasonable timeline for the state to fully fund a constitutionally compliant school funding system. Across Pennsylvania, citizens are waiting to see a plan that will ensure that public education is adequately, equitably and constitutionally funded in Pennsylvania, in accordance with the recent Commonwealth Court decision. We are following the work of the BEFC and waiting for you to do what is right for students across the state. Thank you.

Name: Nelly J. **City:** Norristown, PA

Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 11:49 AM – 1069

Subject: Property Tax Elimination

Message: I am writing to submit my support for current efforts being made by the BEFC to eliminate school property taxes statewide. I believe it is unfair and unconstitutional. Thank you to this commission to provide well thought out alternatives and solutions to replace the current funding for Pennsylvania's schools, not including private or charter schools. I also want to bring attention to the commission the current happenings in the North Penn School District in Montgomery County. The NP school board voted to have a special election to be held a mere few weeks away on January 16th, 2024, to vote Yes or No vote to authorize a debt in the sum of \$97,318,376 for the purpose of new construction to the existing North Penn High School. I would like to know why the urgency to have a special election, we the residents barely have any time to process this horrendous (and unaffordable to many) proposal. Even though there was a school board meeting held on Tuesday December 5th that entailed a presentation by school board members and a time for Questions, many attendees of the meeting had their hands raised for questions and were not given the opportunity to ask...as it seemed as though they purposely assigned questions being asked to a panel of experts (architects, engineers, financial experts, etc.) and then brought the meeting to a close because of time constraints. Personally, I felt like a sheep being led to a slaughter. Can this special election be postponed

and again why are they pushing it through so quickly? Why can't this be a question put on the primary ballots? Many of all bipartisan constituents in PA are looking to right a wrong, and I believe the BEFC is on the right track to help.

Name: Judith M. **City:** Hatfield, PA

Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 11:57 AM – 1070

Subject: Taxes

Message: It is unconstitutional to our homeowners' taxes, please eliminate them

Name: Larry L. **City:** Hatfield, PA

Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 8:43 PM – 1071

Subject: Tax increase

Message: 2023 My taxes increased 8.3% From \$9,193. to \$9,961 Inflation, pandemic, increase homeowners' insurance, increase car insurance. Makes no sense. You are driving a family out of PA.

Name: Kim M. **City:** Hanover, PA

Sent: Thursday, December 7, 2023 10:45 PM – 1072

Subject: Fair Funding for Education

Message: It is time to act on the mandate and work for fair and equal funding for all public schools in the state. This law does not take away funding from the highly successful schools in comfortable neighborhoods. What it does is that it demands that legislators come up with a plan that creates equality for low-income communities so those students can receive equal education under the law, regardless of the incomes of their parents and the current funding of their school districts. The time is now to treat all children in our state the same and offer equal educational opportunity for all.

Name: Maria E. **City:** Pipersville, PA

Sent: Friday, December 8, 2023 10:58 AM – 1073

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: As we all know, public education plays a key role in our society by providing knowledge and skills, regardless of socio-economic background. Our democracy, and our country, is shaped by the quality of education our kids receive. I am the Academic Program Manager of a mentoring program that serves around 100 students daily who attend schools in the Norristown Area Public School District. Every day, we give guidance, support, and skill development activities to our students. We provide our kids with academic support, expose them to different career paths, and steam activities. We see the need in founding our public schools, some of my students don't have access to the basics like math teachers, and good infrastructure. We as taxpayers believe that our kids deserve to have access to an equitable and quality education no matter the zip code. The founding of public school is crucial for the future of our country, and our society. I need to give my students hope about how their school experience will improve in years to come. I am calling on the BEFC and Governor Shapiro to invest in our public schools and commit to maintaining this public service to all youth in our community.

Name: Katherine J. **City:** Hatboro, PA

Sent: Sunday, December 10, 2023 8:51 AM – 1074

Subject: Basic Education Funding

Message: I am a member of the Johnstown Branch of the American Association of University Women (AAUW) and a taxpayer in the Westmont Hilltop School District. My community needs your help. Many school districts throughout the state are facing challenges caused by decades of underfunding. All students deserve the same opportunities and as a community we are hopeful that a solution is coming. It is critical that the Basic Education Funding Commission's final report contains a clear and thorough calculation of how much each school district needs to meet the constitutional obligation to our students and lays out a timeline for the state to meet its funding obligations to our children. The time to act is now and you have the power to act to improve the lives of the underserved student. We appreciate your efforts and know that you will make a difference.

Name: Theresa H. **City:** Johnstown, PA

Sent: Sunday, December 10, 2023 10:07 AM – 1075

Subject: Public Education

Message: I support fair and equitable funding of PA public school. public education is a cornerstone of our Democracy.

Name: Amy M. **City:** Doylestown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, December 13, 2023 5:01 PM – 1076

Subject: Why should we stay?

Message: According to them, as of mid-November, the states seeing the largest increase in prices are clustered in the Northeast and mid-Atlantic states. Pennsylvania: 8.2% Vermont: 7% Maryland: 7% West Virginia: 6.9% New Jersey: 6.8% Pennsylvania is top of the list by more than a full percentage point, the report shows. Along with an increase of 8.4% increase in property taxes, we are struggling. You work for the people, all of us! Do what is best for the middle class, middle age not just seniors. Eliminate school taxes and replace them with HB13 Frank Ryan's suggestion. Not one other person than Frank Ryan that came to that table had a reasonable solution that made sense. **Name:** Kim M. **City:** Hanover, PA

Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2023 7:48 AM – 1077

Subject: Adequate funding of low-income areas helps society become safer and more productive.

Message: Underfunded schools have an impact on all areas of society. Earning a high school diploma helps individuals find employment, decrease involvement in crime and be less likely to depend on many government services, and more likely to have a higher income, which results in fueling the economy and generating more taxes. Socially and economically, providing an excellent education to people living in low-income areas can interrupt the poverty cycle and move society collectively forward. The state should pay the higher percentage of Education costs in low wealth SD-areas, and a lower percentage in high wealth areas, in order to provide an equal education opportunity/resource to all kids.

Name: Bridget M. **City:** Doylestown, PA

Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2023 11:48 AM – 1078

Subject: Basic Ed Fair Funding

Message: Good Afternoon: I am the superintendent of Northwest Area School District and I am writing to support fair funding. We are a rural school district in Northwest Pa. We currently have been recognized as a district under funded by approximately 1068 dollars per student. That would be a game changer for us of over 1 million dollars in increased revenues. We operate each year at a shortage of 600,000 dollars and have had to dip into our fund balance each year after raising taxes to the index. We do not have industry so this increase is squarely placed on our local tax dollars. We have 52 kids on outside cyber and that takes over 500,000 dollars of local tax monies out of our coffers. We have done our part, ten years ago we had 102 full time teachers, we now have 81. We are in the midst of a feasibility study to close a building and do an addition. This we will be looking for R-Cap money and funding from the USDA. By doing this we will save approximately 400,000 dollars of which 230,000 would be used to pay USDA loan each year. It is time to make the investment in the future of our state by properly funding education. Please develop a fair system for all to succeed.

Name: Joe L. **City:** Shickshinny, PA

Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2023 11:58 AM - 1079

Subject: Need for fair funding

Message: Currently our district (Northwest Area School District) is underfunded by \$1068 per student. This would equate to over 1 million dollars. In addition, we pay out over \$500,000 of local tax dollars to cyber charter schools. There needs to be a better solution.

Name: Barry S. **City:** Shickshinny, PA

Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2023 12:00 PM – 1080

Subject: underfunded school

Message: Hello, I work as a teacher in the Northwest Area School District. According to our administration, each student in our district is underfunded \$1,068.00 per student. In addition over \$500,000 of our local tax dollars are being paid out to cyber charter schools. This is unacceptable. Just thinking about how much our students are losing out in supplies, curriculum, and manpower is just terrible. Our kids deserve better. Please help resolve this issue. I love my students!

Name: Alyssa A. **City:** Wapwallopen, PA

Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2023 12:10 PM – 1081

Subject: Northwest Area School District Funding

Message: Northwest Area School District is currently underfunded by \$1,068 per student. This would equate to over 1 million dollars. In addition, the school pays out over \$500,000 of local tax dollars to cyber charter schools. Additional school funding and/or legislation to limit the cost of cyber charter schools would help alleviate the financial outlook for the district.

Name: William L. **City:** Exeter, PA

Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2023 12:20 PM – 1082

Subject: Reform school funding

Message: Cyber schools cannot continue to be funded at the level that they are currently being funded. When students at these cyber schools are given computers, printers and Internet along without monthly field trips, this not only unfair but immoral. Why should parents who choose to send their students to these private cyber charter schools be awarded for things that my own children and students. In all of my years of I have never received an annual bonus. My future sister-in-law has received over \$5000 in bonuses in the past year of her hiring. Although I am happy for her but I am frustrated for the rest of Pennsylvania public educators. Sincerely, a parent and educator.

Name: James M. **City:** Dallas, PA

Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2023 1:33 PM – 1083

Subject: Cyber Reform and Fair Funding

Message: Our small rural district continues to be underfunded by nearly \$1000 per student. With 900 students in the district, you can see how that comes out to \$900,000 per year. If this has happened over a period of 5 years, you can see how grossly underfunded the district is. Our students suffer from the dropping of programs, loss of teaching staff, and the constant concern for budget cuts. When you also add in the exorbitant cost of cyber charter schooling which falls on the shoulders of our taxpayers, something needs to change.

Name: Ryan M. **City:** Shickshinny, PA

Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2023 3:53 PM – 1084

Subject: School Funding

Message: It has been brought to my attention that the Northwest Area School District is struggling financially. It is a very small school district, composed of many students who receive free, or reduced, breakfast and lunches. Our schools are in need of repair, and teachers lack basic educational supplies. 1) The district is underfunded by \$1,068/student. This amounts to over a million dollars a year. 2) The district is paying over \$500,000/year for students enrolled in Cyber Schools. (I would like to know why districts are responsible to provide cyber schooling for students. Every student is entitled to a "free and public" education, and that is exactly what public schools offer. If a parent/guardian would prefer their student not attend their local public school, that is their right. But, they should have to pay for their choice, just as those parents/guardians who elect to send their child to a private school pays tuition.) Please correct the problems associated with #1 and #2. Our district needs the additional resources. Thank you.

Name: Donna S. **City:** Shickshinny, PA

Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2023 4:07 PM – 1085

Subject: Overcrowded Classrooms

Message: I taught 5th grade in Williamsport for three years and experienced first-hand the impact a lack of funding has on students' success. Class sizes were too large to be effective. My class of 27-30 students did not receive the individualized time and feedback I so desperately wanted to give. I was a teacher who took work home every day and on weekends, and would put in an average of 20 extra hours of work each week. Still, I could not adequately meet the needs of all of my students. This was in stark contrast to the three years I spent teaching in New Jersey where I had a class size of 16-20. I intricately knew the strengths and needs of each of my students, and had time to meet with each child individually at least once a week. My highest hope for the new funding plan is smaller class sizes. This has a direct impact on the quality of every child's education as well as the ability of each teacher to fulfill their responsibilities without sacrificing most of their personal time.

Name: Laura M. **City:** Blossburg, PA

Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2023 5:29 PM – 1086

Subject: Rural school

Message: Hi. I am a teacher at a rural district in Luzerne County. We need fair funding for our rural schools. Need more oversight and true rules to stop our cyber schools from taking more tax payer dollars than we have. Fair funding and cyber reform are necessary for without them, we shall cease to exist as a school.

Name: Vito M. **City:** Hanover Township, PA

Sent: Thursday, December 14, 2023 6:24 PM – 1087

Subject: Youth courts and the BEFC

Message: I am writing on behalf of the Pittsburgh Contingency which is starting ten youth courts in four Pittsburgh schools this year. We petition the BEFC to include the cost of school discipline as a key factor (along with ESL, poverty and local property taxes in calculating a fair funding formula. Resource poor schools lack the funds and personnel to adequately process students with behavioral problems caused by trauma. It is estimated that 2/3 of all youth in the juvenile justice system have been victims of trauma. Trauma often lasts a lifetime hampering the capacity of students to cope with conflict in a socially acceptable way. Lacking sufficient help such students often fall behind and become a threat to others and themselves. Resource poor schools have high levels of school suspension because schools lack the adequate programming and staff to assist students with behavioral problems. Many of these behavioral problems are relatively low level but they consume enormous amounts of time and school resources. Youth court can greatly reduce the number of disciplinary cases a school must face annually. Students are more than capable of handling low level offenses. In fact we believe they do a better job than adults in many cases because they can relate to the situation the behaviorally challenged student found themselves in. Prior to the pandemic there were about 75 in schools-primarily in Philadelphia, Delaware and Montgomery counties. Some of these youth courts handled 100 disciplinary cases per year and showed potential to dramatically reduce school suspension rates. In one middle school one youth court reduced the suspension rate by 1/3. In one high school one youth court averted 20 suspensions over a three year period. Youth courts are a diversionary, student run, program operating in Pennsylvania middle and high schools. Most youth courts are integrated into social studies or language arts classes, although some schools create stand-alone elective youth court classes. Students learn about trauma, restorative justice, positive peer pressure and the legal system-both procedures and concepts. Youth courts benefit both the respondent (the student who broke a school rule or norm) and the student members of the youth court. The respondent has a chance to explain his behavior to a jury of their peers and receive a restorative disposition intended to fix the harm but not punish the respondent. All youth court respondents receive consequences for their behavior, but the goal is not to punish but to rehabilitate. Youth court respondents stay in school but are held accountable. Youth court helps to block the process (referred to as the school-to-prison pipeline) that unfortunately results in the disparate impact of school discipline on black and brown students. The benefits to the student members of the court are almost impossible to list in a brief narrative. In the process of being trained to run a youth court they acquire academic, socialization, and civic engagement skills. They learn how to think critically and problem solve. They enhance the student voice, gain confidence in their ability to contribute to a better school climate, and learn respect for the rule of law. They learn the duties of citizenship and civic engagement. They become empowered and learn teamwork and how to exercise judgment. Students who learn youth court skills become "youth as resources". The most valuable resource a school district has is its students, and youth court brings out the best in those students. The Basic Education Funding Formula is flawed if it does not take into account the need that resource--poor schools have to better deal with disciplinary problems at school. We used to talk about the educational 3 Rs (Reading, (w)riting, and (a)rithmetic). For many youth and the communities they grow up in today, the old 3 Rs will never be taught effectively until the new 3 Rs are implemented. The new 3 Rs are an appreciation for rules, respect and responsibility. Youth court teaches the new 3 Rs. Not taking into account the enormous need for better disciplinary programs will not achieve school equity. PA youth need disciplinary programs that are scientifically supported by research, improve character, and build conflict resolution skills in youth.. Youth courts do that. We hope the new BEF formula factors in the need for trauma-informed both youth courts. The motto of the first youth court in the Chester-Upland School District was: Students Helping Students Make Better Decisions. Youth courts in every county (as called for by a PA Bar Association Resolution UNANIMOUSLY adopted in 2011) can be achieved by funding new youth courts in the new funding formula for PA schools.

Name: Gregg V. **City:** Lenni, PA

Sent: Friday, December 15, 2023 8:45 AM – 1088

Subject: Taxing People

Message: It is not fair that you're making the districts pay for all these expenses. We have no industry here and our tax base isn't great. I know everyone has the right to be educated where they choose but it's not fair to make us pay for all the expenses.

Name: Leopold M. **City:** Dallas, PA

Sent: Friday, December 15, 2023 10:15 AM – 1089

Subject: Fair Funding for Northwest Area School District

Message: I believe parents have the right to chose if they would like to send their children to a public school, private school, cyber, charter, or catholic school. I do not agree that cyber and charter schools are allowed to charge unrealistic tuition that our taxpayers have to pay for. I am asking for fair funding. Please. All school districts In Pennsylvania are feeling the burden of this unfair cost.

Name: Tara B. **City:** Hunlock Creek, PA

Sent: Friday, December 15, 2023 10:19 AM – 1090

Subject: Funding for all schools

Message: To Whom It May Concern: My four children live in the Wellsboro Area School District. The district does not have enough teachers or school counselors. Up until this year, the middle school had asbestos in it. In our high schools, many students do not have access to enough public school classes to fully fill all of their four years. Wealthier students have the option of paying for college classes from the local university, but that leaves poorer students behind. A fair distribution of wealth would afford rural students (like my children) the opportunity to be competitive when they reach college, and eventually the workforce. Resources and education should be equally available for all kids in our state. Thank you for working on this important mission.

Name: Duterte S. **City:** Wellsboro, PA

Sent: Friday, December 15, 2023 10:38 AM – 1091

Subject: Funding

Message: Northwest Area School District is underfunded \$1068 per student. This would equate to over 1 million dollars. We pay over \$500,000 of local tax dollars to cyber charter schools. These two areas would go a long way to helping our schools. Marvin L., President of Northwest Area School Board.

Name: Marvin L. **City:** Shickshinny, PA

Sent: Sunday, December 17, 2023 10:15 AM – 1092

Subject: School tax

Message: The school tax total of \$4,000 is due again an I can't pay it.

Name: John L. **City:** Gibsonia, PA

Sent: Monday, December 18, 2023 4:43 PM – 1093

Subject: English

Message: Currently, our district is underfunded by \$1068 per student. This would equate to over 1 million dollars. In addition, we pay out over \$500,000 of local tax dollars to cyber charter schools. These two areas would go a long way in improving the financial outlook for the district.

Name: Desiree M. **City:** Shickshinny, PA

Sent: Wednesday, December 20, 2023 12:59 PM – 1094

Subject: Unfair property taxes

Message: Posted by Byron S. 12/11, "We are paying our Legislators to cause our destitution". Mike F. post comment, "To late for me. House was taken. I was homeless for a while. They kicked a handicapped man out of his home that was paid for long ago. For one year of taxes. Nearly killed me. Thanks..."

Name: Jul B. **City:** Collegeville, PA

Sent: Friday, December 22, 2023 10:41 AM – 1095

Subject: Unfair Funding

Message: To Whom It May Concern, I am both a teacher, parent, and taxpayer in the Northwest Area School District. Our district is currently underfunded by \$1,068 per student. We are a small, rural district, but nonetheless, this equates to over one million dollars. What's even more devastating is the fact that over \$500,000 of local tax dollars are paid to cyber charter schools. How can one justify a beautiful small district and community struggling to get by with limited funding and resources, while cyber charters are thriving with excess funding? The tax dollars should stay in the community in brick and mortar schools. Educational establishments should not have such gross discrepancies between student needs and lack of funding. Change that supports our school is a dire must.

Name: Jillian C. **City:** Shickshinny, PA

Sent: Friday, December 22, 2023 4:00 PM – 1096

Subject: BANNED BOOKS

Message: are we going back to the witch trials----lest evil become on us

Name: Ric H. **City:** Doylestown, PA

Sent: Friday, December 22, 2023 4:11 PM – 1097

Subject: BANNED BOOKS

Message: there is evil every especially in books--- REALLY----THE MORAL POLICE ARE ON THE MOVE----lets become the great education country instead of falling more behind in education the way it is now with book censorship.

Name: Ric H. **City:** Doylestown, PA

Sent: Thursday, December 28, 2023 2:09 PM – 1098

Subject: The Only Fair Local Share

Message: Dear BEFC, I am a student at Lower Merion High School. Educational equity is deeply important to me and I am the founder and president of the Funding Real Educational Equity (FREE) Club at Lower Merion. While listening and reading about the accounts of students and teachers in other districts, I hear about the devastating conditions in which they are expected to learn every day. The neglect that these people must endure is absolutely unacceptable. Various researchers have been able to quantify the extent to which the current system is inadequate. You probably have heard these statistics before from various reports and BEFC testimonies, but in case you haven't, Pennsylvania's underfunded school districts are collectively underfunded by \$6,258,438,239, and of the 500 school districts in Pennsylvania, 412 do not have adequate funding and 286 are underfunded by \$2,000 per student or more. This leads to Pennsylvania having unacceptable racial and economic education spending gaps, with 43% of Black and Hispanic students going to school in a district in the bottom 20% of the local wealth distribution and the poorest 20% of districts spending \$6,230 less weighted per student than the wealthiest 20% of districts. The conditions in which the school funding system has put many districts should be seen as a statewide embarrassment and absolute failure. Consider that 80% of schools in Philadelphia contained damaged asbestos as of a 2015-16 inspection. Consider that many Philadelphia students miss school when it gets hot due to the absence of an air conditioned building. Consider that the School District of Philadelphia paid \$850,000 to settle a lawsuit with a teacher who suffered from mesothelioma due to teaching in Philly public schools. These are all examples of the results of deliberate, systemic neglect of the state's most marginalized people. The systemic nature of these emergencies becomes palpable when looking at the history of state policy regarding education. The Planning and Construction Workbook (PlanCon) program has existed since 1973, specifically for the purpose of funding projects related to educational facilities, but there has been an on-and-off moratorium on new projects since 2012. The state must acknowledge that the current situation is the result of decades of deliberate and neglectful policy decisions, such as when Governor Corbett cut \$1,000,000,000 from the education budget in 2011. In addition to the inadequacy of the system, the state must understand that the inequitable state of education funding will require a complete overhaul of the education funding system in order to truly achieve equity. Simply putting more state funding into a system that still allows for any local funding at all may be able to bring districts to adequacy, but it will not result in an equitable system. One of the goals of the statewide educational advocacy coalition, PA Schools Work, for the BEFC is to determine what is a fair share of education funding to be provided by the state. The only fair way to split the cost of education between federal, state, and local funding sources is to prohibit any funding from local sources. When politicians claim that they support equity, but do not explicitly advocate for prohibiting any local school funding in order to reallocate funds from the wealthiest districts, they are being dishonest to their listeners. The adequacy targets established by the Matthew Kelly report that found the total shortfall in school funding to be over \$6.2 Billion were calculated by analyzing the spending in the school districts that are meeting state standards. However, districts with spending outside of the first standard deviation, including Lower Merion, were excluded from the analysis. This strategy makes sense for the purpose of statistical analysis. However, it also means that without restricting the amount of money that the wealthiest districts can spend, they will inherently have disproportionate resources because their level of spending was not considered when calculating adequacy targets for everyone else. This means that the standard of funding that the state is obligated to provide to all districts will not match up to the spending of the highest spending outliers, creating a system that is still built on the allowance of inequity. To achieve true equity, the state needs to restrict the amount of funding that the wealthiest districts have. What this misallocation of funds leads to is a gross misprioritization of education spending uses. Consider that the Lower Merion School District recently spent \$90 Million to build a new middle school. This middle school was built in order to relieve overcrowding in some of the district's other schools, but the Lower Merion School District did not have to resort to holding classes in supply closets or basements as a result of the limited space. On the other hand, the memorandum of the lawsuit found that many underfunded districts had to manage their overcrowded facilities by resorting to setting up, "makeshift classrooms set up in hallways, closets, and

basements.” For example, the Former Superintendent of the William Penn School District testified that inadequate space led to some classes being, “held in a basement room that has an opening to a sump pump, a large drainage pipe running through it, and thick bundles of wires snaking across the walls.” It is clear that the consequences of overcrowding were much more dire at underfunded schools than they were in the Lower Merion School District, so it would have made the most sense if the money spent to relieve overcrowding was spent in those districts, rather than in Lower Merion, in order to relieve the most severe overcrowding situations. However, because the funding was concentrated in Lower Merion, the money that could have provided this urgently necessary relief instead went to the less urgent and less important needs of Lower Merion. In addition to the misallocation of funds for facilities-related projects, warped spending priorities caused by the allowance of local revenue also impact curricular opportunities. The Educational Opportunity Dashboard by Research for Action shows that more than 1 in 10 Pennsylvania public school students of color go to a school that does not offer physics, and more than 1 in 20 students of color go to a school that does not offer chemistry. On the other hand, ProPublica reports that the Lower Merion School District offers an average of 22 AP classes per school, more than twice the state average of 9.8 AP classes per school. The concentration of wealth in wealthy districts caused by the allowance of locally sourced revenue means that education dollars that could be spent to give students access to classes as basic as Chemistry and Physics are instead being used to provide a disproportionate amount of AP classes to one of the most affluent school districts in the state. If that same money was instead collected and distributed on the state level, the funding could be spent on more basic needs in other districts rather than on excess resources in the richest districts. Simply putting more state money into a broken system will not result in school funding equity because the system was deliberately designed to allow for disproportionate resources in the wealthiest districts. The court memorandum details the 1873 constitutional convention, at which delegates argued over whether the education clause should include a requirement that opportunities be “uniform” across school districts. The inclusion of uniformity was ultimately rejected. Those who opposed uniformity argued their position by justifying wealthier schools providing more opportunities than poorer schools, saying that, “We do not want to have a ‘uniform’ system... this word would operate even as against the introduction of chemical or philosophical apparatus into one school because in another school they could not afford to have it. Let those of us who prefer the plan of giving our children the benefits of the higher studies in their own district, and near their own homes, be allowed to do so.” The argument against uniformity rests on the idea that it is okay for wealthy districts to provide opportunities that poorer districts cannot, which directly contradicts educational equity. Since the system was deliberately designed, from its conception, to allow for inequity, creating an equitable system requires that it be entirely restructured, rather than simply having more state money poured into it. The stakes of educational inequity are deprivation in the poorest districts. Wealthy districts can and do use their disproportionate money to hoard finite resources, therefore taking away from the poorest school districts. For example, the Superintendent of the Upper Darby School District states how they are outcompeted for potential employees by wealthier districts that offer to pay them more, admitting that, “We’ve had somebody say they’re gonna take [the job], and then literally the next day someone offers them \$4,000 or \$5,000 more and we can’t match it...We thought we had the job filled and it gets taken away from us.” This is just one example of how the allowance of disproportionate resources through local revenue benefits the wealthy districts at the expense of the poorer districts. The only way to effectively execute the necessary redistribution of school funding is to prohibit local school funding and require that all schools be funded exclusively by state and federal revenue sources. PA Schools Work, the statewide education advocacy coalition, argues that redistributing school funding is impractical because “the funds that push some wealthy districts to the top are not state funds but their own locally-raised revenues.” This is exactly why the approach to reallocating money must be the complete elimination of the local share of school funding. The money lost from eliminating local school funding could be raised by additional taxes at the state level. The state could systematically raise taxes on those with the highest incomes, creating a progressive taxing system and resulting in tax relief from the elimination of school taxes in the poorest districts and getting more of a contribution into the funding of education from the wealthiest districts from the increased state tax, since the poorest districts have the highest tax effort and vice versa under the current system. A tax targeting the income above a certain threshold could systematically collect more resources from the wealthiest districts, who currently get the most money with the least tax effort. For example, Census data shows that the median household income in Lower Merion Township is \$160,572. In contrast, on a statewide level, having an income of \$108,600 or more would put a household in the 80th percentile. This means that if the state were to tax income above \$108,600 at an increased rate, only the highest-earning quintile of households on the statewide level would see their taxes go up, but the majority of people in Lower Merion and other wealthy districts would contribute more into state education funding, with the idea being that the additional money that they would pay in state taxes would be more than they contribute in the form of local school taxes in

the current system. This solution would not require the state to redistribute locally generated school funding, but still, in effect, would lead to a system in which the wealthy districts would contribute more and the poor districts would receive more. The BEFC must acknowledge the scope of the systemic changes that must be made in order to achieve a truly equitable school funding system, and politicians need to be honest about if they support true school funding equity, or if they just support simply increasing the state contribution to education. Creating an equitable system must include reallocating money from the poorest districts to the wealthiest, and the most effective way to do this to the extent that is necessary is to prohibit all local school funding sources. Many advocates acknowledge the need for the state to determine an equitable share of school funding to be provided by the state, and I hope that I have convinced you that the state must eliminate all sources of local funding in order to bring about a truly equitable system. The only fair local share is 0%. Thank you for your time.

Name: Gwen S. **City:** Wynnewood, PA

Sent: Tuesday, January 2, 2024 10:37 AM – 1099

Subject: School Discipline and youth courts

Message: I am a public interest lawyer and my work over the past 16 years has been developing school-based youth courts as an alternative to punitive school discipline. Underfunded schools lack resources to humanely process students with behavioral problems. Lacking these resources such schools use punitive means to discipline children and further traumatize these youth. In 2019 the PA Joint State Government Commission released an extensive examination of youth courts and that report serves as a foundation for policy changes incorporating youth courts as a new and effective way to help students with behavioral problems. I suggest the BEFC review that state-sanctioned report. Youth courts not only are a more restorative way to handle youthful indiscretions but they provide a rich academic experience for the students who are taught to run the courts. These students learn academic, socialization and civic engagement skills and demonstrate the philosophy of John Dewey that human beings learn best by doing acts as opposed to being lectured to. PA now has school-based youth courts in Philadelphia, Montgomery and Delaware Counties (Upper Darby School District has 15 youth courts). There are also youth courts in Dauphin County, Lancaster County and York County. Pittsburgh Public Schools recently allocated \$525,000 to develop ten youth courts in four schools. Two Delaware County state senators have announced they plan to introduce legislation to create a pilot youth court program for PA. Resource-poor schools need sufficient resources to help students with behavioral problems before a pattern of misbehavior develops. Youth courts are very affordable and can be integrated into the school curriculum. The board of the PA Bar Association unanimously adopted a youth court resolution in 2011 calling for youth courts in ALL PA counties. It is time we gave schools the resources to help our children deal with behavioral problems. Reforming the Basic Education Formula to factor in school discipline is a first step in doing that.

Name: Gregg V. **City:** Chester, PA

Sent: Tuesday, January 2, 2024 10:38 AM – 1100

Subject: Property Tax

Message: Good Morning, I respectfully request strong consideration be given to an alternate source of taxation to fund the schools in order to eliminate property tax. I realize you are in receipt of several communications concerning this topic and have many other issues to consider as well, so I will not take your time going over the reasons why I am in favor of property tax elimination, but will just state that when instituted I believe it was a very fair way to fund schools, however time has changed that and today it is very unfair in many ways and shifting that tax burden to an increase in sales and/or personal income tax would be considerably more viable for a number of reasons, as laid forth in HB13. I also realize this issue is not critical in some parts of PA but in my area is very much so and many of us need this modification greatly. Thank you for your time.

Name: Dan M. **City:** Collegeville, PA

Sent: Wednesday, January 3, 2024 9:30 AM – 1101

Subject: Funding

Message: Northwest Area School District is underfunded \$1068 per student. This would equate to over 1 million dollars. We pay over \$500,000 of local tax dollars to cyber charter schools. These two areas would go a long way to helping our schools. Marvin L., President of Northwest Area School Board.

Name: Marvin L. **City:** Shickshinny, PA

Sent: Wednesday, January 3, 2024 11:16 AM – 1102

Subject: The need for an innovative tax structure to fund schools

Message: On behalf of the League of Women Voters of Bucks County, we urge the Basic Education Funding Commission to ensure that all students in Pennsylvania, no matter where they live, receive a quality education. The League has a long-standing position supporting “equal access to quality public education, to be achieved by participation of government and citizens at all levels and by adequate financing based on an equitable and flexible tax system”. The current funding system in Pennsylvania, based primarily on property taxes, is clearly inequitable and cannot be made equitable. It is time for Pennsylvania to look to innovative ways to ensure that all students receive a quality education which will benefit the entire state in the long run. Jean W., President, LWV of Bucks County

Name: Jean W. **City:** Doylestown, PA

Sent: Wednesday, January 3, 2024 11:52 AM – 1103

Subject: Basic Education Formula - Don't forget the forgotten.

Message: With just under a week to go, I implore you to remember that even a 95% applicability of any formula still leaves out 25 schools and thousands of students from a proper, adequate education. There must be some system that accounts for every child in every corner of this commonwealth. It must be accounted for immediately as for too long and too wide, children of this system have been left far far far behind compared to their peers. No pre-existing beliefs, or pre-conceptions of any particular district or community should come into play. A generalized overview of what a school district should provide as a baseline and the cost should be the precedent and then fund every district in that regard. I wish you the best of luck.

Name: Robert N. **City:** Old Forge, PA

Sent: Wednesday, January 3, 2024 7:25 PM – 1104

Subject: Property Tax

Message: I respectfully request your consideration in making the elimination of property tax a working part of the pending decision concerning school funding. While a viable revenue source when instituted, it is now quite the opposite in a good part of PA and is a considerable hardship to many. In shifting this revenue stream to a combination of sales and personal income tax, the tax is more fairly applied and coincides more accurately with one's ability to pay/dealing with sudden hardships.

Name: Dan M. **City:** Collegeville, PA