

Dear Rep./Sen. _____,

I am writing to express my deep concern about school funding in Illinois. Our state constitution set as a "fundamental goal" the "educational development of all persons to the limits of their capacities," but only a select group of Illinois' students have the opportunity to achieve that goal.

Although one can lay blame on a multitude of problems, it's clear that, at the root, Illinois' method of funding public education is inequitable, discriminatory, and unsustainable. While students in wealthy suburban districts have wide networks of support, endless opportunities for enrichment, and ready access to college, those in property-poor districts are expected to jump higher hurdles with far fewer resources to assist them and no nets to catch them. The fallout affects all of us.

[Here, you may choose to insert one of more of the following statistics:

- *Depending on a child's zip code in Illinois, the instructional expenses devoted to her education range from \$13,000 to \$3,150 (Dr. Max McGee's presentation, Evanston, IL. 9/16/10)*
- *Illinois ranks 49th in state funding (Dr. Max McGee's presentation, Evanston, IL. 9/16/10)*
- *Illinois cut public education funding by \$241 million in its FY 2011 budget. Cuts include . . . the elimination of a grant program intended to improve the reading and study skills of at-risk students from K - 6. (Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2010)*
- *Although the Illinois Constitution maintains that "the state has the primary responsibility for financing the system of public education" (Section 1 of Article 10), Illinois currently contributes less than 30% of public education funds—10% less than it used to finance. (Dr. Max McGee's presentation, Evanston, IL. 9/16/10)*

This matter cannot wait. The future of our children and of the state itself rests on developing every student's mind, skills, and talent -- and that requires funding: for great teachers, for adequate resources, for safe environments, and for human services.

Reforming the funding of schools should be a top priority this fall. Given the dire state of affairs in Illinois – the failing school report cards, the number of high school drop-outs, and the violent crime among teens – there is, as Dr. Martin Luther King coined it, "a fierce urgency of now." As a voter, I will be watching closely to see where candidates stand on school funding reform in this election cycle.

I ask you to join me in supporting a high quality public education for all Illinois children, granting them the education they deserve.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and for the work you do on behalf of the people of Illinois.

Sincerely,