



Michigan Association
of Community and
Adult Education



April 15, 2015

The Honorable Chris Afendoulis
Michigan House of Representatives
P.O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Representative Afendoulis:

We are writing to urge you as a member of the Appropriations Committee to reject the School Aid Subcommittee's recommendation to eliminate adult education funding and to adopt the Senate Subcommittee's proposal to increase adult education funding by \$7 million to \$29 million.

The governor and Legislature have both emphasized the importance of increasing the skill level of Michigan's workforce to strengthen families and the economy. An important component of this is to increase the number of people getting GEDs and/or acquiring basic skills in order to prepare them for occupational skills training leading to employment, and this will require an increase in adult education funding.

Michigan has seen a large reduction in state funding for adult education during the past 20 years, from \$185 million in 1996 to \$22 million today. As a result, fewer people enroll in and complete adult education programs. Michigan is currently not reaching anywhere near enough of the working-age adults who need these programs:

- Over 221,500 Michigan adults age 25-44 lack a high school diploma or GED, but fewer than 7% are enrolled in adult education.
- More than 225,000 Michigan adults speak English less than "very well," but fewer than 5% enroll in English as a Second Language adult education programs.
- 60% of Michigan community college students need to take remedial education classes because they have not mastered skills needed for postsecondary education.

The Senate Subcommittee proposal to increase funding by \$7 million is a step in the right direction. We urge you to support increasing the Section 107 adult education appropriation that will help more Michigan adults prepare for training in skilled occupations and to oppose attempts to reduce or eliminate it.

Sincerely,

Michigan Association of Community and Adult Education
Michigan League for Public Policy
Michigan's Children