

Dear Senator _____:

I am a (resident, parent, etc.) of the _____ School District. As the 2016-17 State Budget is in final negotiations, I am writing to express my strong support for the Senate's plan to fully and immediately end the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA); and for you to strongly encourage Senate leadership to maintain this stance as the budget is hammered out.

Further, the long history of gross inequity that has plagued the Foundation Aid distribution formula has never fully served the needs of our impoverished and less wealthy districts as they rely more heavily on this funding source. Therefore, it is vital that the Senate more fully support these impoverished and less wealthy districts by helping to create a more equitable distribution formula for Foundation Aid than has been the case in the past.

As important, new Foundation Aid funding proposed by the Governor (1.7% increase of \$266 million) is grossly insufficient to meet the needs of the schools in your district and across the state. Research done by all of the state's major public education advocacy groups, as well as the Regents, agree that minimally \$900 million in new Foundation Aid must be included in this year's state budget.

It is also vital for the Senate to include \$400 million in the total aid package to address significant revenue losses schools will incur as a result of the dangerously meager property tax cap level this year, something that negatively impacts all districts regardless of wealth.

(BRIEFLY, feel free to add specifics of how GEA eradication will help your district, and how the lack of a predictable and equitable aid formula has disadvantaged your students. Example: "Our district is no longer able to offer AP programs.")

This year's state budget is critical for the students in my school district, as well as for my entire community. We need you to keep fighting hard for the concerns of your constituents.

Thank you.