



THE EARLY CHILDHOOD INVESTMENT CORPORATION

CAPITOL

CORNER

STATE UPDATE

Friday, September 11, 2009

Matt Gillard

mgillard@ecic4kids.org

With the potential shut down of state government looming less than three weeks away, pressure is definitely starting to build in Lansing. The Legislature returned to Lansing from the Labor Day holiday weekend with only two days of session. Once again, official legislative activity was relatively light, and the focus remains squarely on the developing negotiations surrounding the budget. The week was highlighted by the widely publicized dispute between the state's top two Democratic leaders. Governor Granholm and Speaker Dillon publicly sparred after the Governor released her budget proposal and indicated that the House would immediately begin moving parts of the package.

Governor Granholm's budget proposal mirrored much of what has been reported earlier; including a myriad of revenue enhancements totaling \$685 million, an additional \$464 million in cuts from the General Fund budgets and an additional \$290 million cut from the School Aid fund. The Governor did not identify specific programs to be cut, but cuts of this magnitude would undoubtedly impact early childhood programs in all areas of the budget. Speaker Dillon and his House Democratic colleagues have yet to signal any type of formal endorsement of the Governor's proposal.

Senate Majority Leader Bishop and his Senate Republican colleagues have essentially dug in their heels and are waiting for the Democrats to agree on a budget proposal and/or the House to pass a budget plan of its own. Bishop's position is that the Senate has passed their budget proposal and until the Democrats agree upon a counter and/or the House passes its own proposal, negotiations can not continue. The Senate plan was passed back in late June and contained over \$1.2 billion in cuts from current year funding levels, including devastating cuts to many early childhood programs.

Unfortunately, this entire situation remains extremely fluid at this point. The pressure will continue to build, particularly on the House. These next three weeks will surely be an incredibly interesting and eventful time in Lansing. All of the legislators face critical decisions as to what direction they believe Michigan should take in order to emerge from this recession. The decisions made in the next three weeks will have a lasting impact on this state for years to come. It is



powered by the
Early Childhood
Investment Corporation
and Michigan's Great Start Collaboratives

517.371.9000 phone

517.371.9080 fax

221 N. Pine - Lansing, MI 48933

www.ecic4kids.org

more imperative than ever for us to continue our advocacy efforts and let our elected officials know that we will not tolerate this budget being balanced on the backs of young children and their families.

Our advocacy efforts have been working. Just this week, Governor Granholm, Speaker Dillon and Senate Minority Leader Mike Prusi all independently referenced early childhood funding as critical to moving Michigan forward. Legislators are hearing loud and clear that funding for early childhood activities is important to their constituents. Our efforts need to continue and escalate. Every single legislator needs to be bombarded with contacts from constituents urging their support of early childhood funding. The legislative leaders and others who are negotiating these budgets will be primarily influenced by their colleagues as far as establishing priorities to preserve funding for.

In addition, we are encouraging groups to visit Lansing on session days between now and Oct.1st. If you are able and willing to organize a group of advocates, regardless of size, from your local community to visit Lansing on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday between now and the end of September please contact your Great Start Collaborative to arrange details through the ECIC.



517.371.9000 phone

517.371.9080 fax

221 N. Pine - Lansing, MI 48933
www.ecic4kids.org