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Teacher Appreciation Week: Schauer Should Apologize for Raising Out-of-Pocket Fees on Teachers, Return \$100,000 Politician Tax Break

Schauer Lined His Pockets with Education Dollars While Voting to Charge Teachers More to Simply Enter the Classroom

LANSING, May 8, 2014 – In commemoration of Teacher Appreciation Week this week, the Michigan Freedom Fund today demanded that Mark Schauer put his money where his mouth is when it comes to supporting teachers and to return the \$100,000 in tax dollars he pilfered from Michigan classrooms via a special politician-only tax break while he voted to cut per pupil funding and raise direct, out-of-pocket certification fees on public school teachers.

During his time in the state legislature, Schauer voted to cut funding for students by \$390 million and voted to raise direct, out-of-pocket costs for teachers and other public school staff members by \$2 million, forcing them to pony up the cash before they were allowed to even enter the classroom:

- In 2007, Schauer voted to **raise certification fees by \$1.7 million on public school teachers, school counselors and school psychologists**. Schauer's vote required that public school teachers fork over the fee before being allowed to even enter our students' classroom (*HB 4591*);
- In 2005, Schauer voted to charge public school counselors \$125 each before allowing them inside our school buildings (*SB 674*);
- In 2008, Schauer voted to charge speech pathologists \$75 annual out-of-pocket fees before allowing them to work with some of our public school students most in need of assistance (*SB 493*); and
- Schauer voted for per pupil cuts, technology funding cuts and scholarship cuts that took \$390 million out of Michigan public schools.

“Look up hypocrite in the dictionary and you’ll find a picture of Mark Schauer claiming he supports teachers,” said Michigan Freedom Fund President Greg McNeilly. “It takes some kind of nerve to force teachers to dig into their own pockets to pay millions of dollars in new fees while lining

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your own pocket with \$10,000 a year in tax rebates reserved for politicians that should have gone into the classroom, but that's exactly what Schauer did."

Schauer voted to gouge teachers and to cut funding for students while taking advantage of an annual, gold-plated tax break reserved exclusively for politicians, that saved him—and cost educators—roughly \$10,000 per year.

The special Schauer tax credit—which allowed him and other politicians who commuted to the state Capitol to write off \$150 a day for every day of every week the legislature was in session—was in addition to his nearly \$80,000 annual salary.

By law, Schauer was not even required to submit receipts to receive the tax break and was permitted to count weekends and non-session days during weeks the Legislature is in session. Schauer has admitted publicly to accepting the \$10,000 a year politician tax break every year he was in the state legislature, syphoning well over \$100,000 out of Michigan public schools and putting it directly into his own pocket.

"This state has thousands of fantastic teachers who already sacrifice so much to make a difference in Michigan kids' lives," said McNeilly. "Mark Schauer owes them more than an apology for raiding their personal bank accounts—he should return the \$100,000 he slipped into his own bank account at their expense."

Teacher Appreciation Week runs from May 5-9.

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