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Good morning Chairman Lyons and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to speak today. My name is Chris Wigent, and I am the Executive Director of the Michigan Association of School Administrators.

I am here this morning representing the public school superintendents and first-line administrators from around the state of Michigan in our opposition to HB ~~5129~~⁵²¹⁹. While we appreciate that attempts are being made to fix some of the issues that exist within PA 269, we do not feel that this bill goes far enough and we still have some major concerns with this legislation that is critical to the future of public school districts around the state of Michigan.

We appreciate the fact that these amendments would allow for districts to communicate information on the exact language of the ballot initiative, as well as the date of that election. We also agree that a ballot issue should be discussed (in a factual manner) during a meeting of a public body. However, we are still concerned that within 60 days of the election, school districts and their officials would not be able to share factual information through mass communication, which would include:

- the polling location
- the time of the election
- amount of the tax increase/decrease and the cost to a taxpayer or
- the factual details of a consolidation of school districts issue if that what was on the ballot
- the terms and detailed information of the ballot language
- a factual explanation of how the funds would be used

We understand and fully support that the law that currently exists strictly prohibits the use of public funds to advocate for a school district ballot proposal. In fact, we support the consequences that were faced by the three school districts that violated that law over the past four years. However, we feel very strongly that taxpayers have the right, and that school district officials have the responsibility, to provide the facts (and only the facts) related to a ballot proposal that will have an impact (one way or another) on the children, the families, and of course, the taxpayers in the district.

Again, I thank you for this opportunity and I appreciate your attention to this important matter.

Chris Wigent
MASA Executive Director