

STATE OF MINNESOTA

Office of Governor Tim Pawlenty

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

May 16, 2008

The Honorable Margaret Anderson Kelliher
Speaker of the House of Representatives
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
463 State Office Building
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Speaker Anderson Kelliher:

I have vetoed and am returning Chapter 332, House File 6, the Omnibus K-12 Education Finance Bill.

At the start of the session, I proposed a solution that held education harmless from cuts and made a modest investment in education reform initiatives. Unfortunately, rather than seizing an opportunity to pass legislation that would provide students with greater access to rigorous coursework and create new pathways to recruit and retain high quality teachers, the Legislature passed this bill that contains no education reform and, in fact, moves backward on existing education reform and accountability initiatives.

I am disappointed that the Legislature chose to freeze school district participation in the Q Comp program, which promotes performance based compensation for teachers. Q Comp has demonstrated great success in the districts and schools that have implemented the program. Approximately 30 additional districts and schools are in the process of applying for the Q Comp program for the 2008-2009 school year. This bill will essentially eliminate the possibility for new districts and schools to join the program.

This bill also reflects misplaced priorities as it reduces or eliminates other important programs that measure student progress and help ensure that students can prepare for post-secondary academic and career success. The funding reductions in Fiscal Years 2008 and 2009 – and elimination of all future funding – for the College Level Examination Program (CLEP) and the Educational Planning and Assessment Systems (EPAS) programs are examples of misplaced priorities that will stifle the state's ability to provide preparation opportunities and support to students as they

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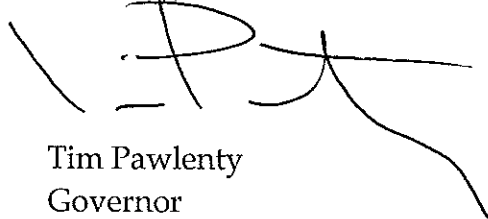
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transition to higher education. In addition, the permanent reductions to the statewide testing program would make it extremely difficult to meet state and federal testing requirements to assess student and school performance.

In addition to taking funding away from important reform, assessment, and post-secondary preparation priorities, this bill increases overall state spending without paying for that spending within the context of our state budget challenges. Until there is a global agreement reached on how the state will balance the state budget, I am not approving any additional bills that significantly increase overall state spending. Passing this bill outside of an agreement solving the budget shortfall is irresponsible.

In the future, I hope the Legislature will join me in working to ensure that we have a strong education accountability system, policies to recruit the best and brightest into the teaching profession, and a shared priority of maximizing the significant investment Minnesota already makes in K-12 education. It is my hope that we can work together collaboratively in future legislative sessions to create opportunities that improve student performance and achievement and lead to real educational reform.

Sincerely,



Tim Pawlenty
Governor

Cc: Senator Lawrence J. Pogemiller, Majority Leader
Senator David Senjem, Minority Leader
Senator LeRoy Stumpf
Representative Margaret Anderson Kelliher, Speaker of the House
Representative Marty Seifert, Minority Leader
Representative Mindy Greiling
Mr. Patrick E. Flahaven, Secretary of the Senate
Mr. Al Mathiowetz, Chief Clerk of the House of Representatives
Mr. Mark Ritchie, Secretary of State