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## **Coalition Launches Bold "Invest in MI Kids" Ballot Initiative to Transform Michigan's Public Schools**

*Signature Collection Officially Underway*

This morning, leaders, education advocates, and community members gathered for the press in support of the ballot initiative [Invest in MI Kids](#). This bold constitutional amendment would ensure the wealthiest Michiganders pay their fair share, generating nearly **\$1.7 billion annually** in new, dedicated funding for public K-12 schools across the state.

Michigan's education funding growth has been alarmingly slow, ranking **49th out of 50 states** since 2012. Overcrowded classrooms, sky-high student-to-counselor ratios, and crumbling school buildings fail our students. The **Invest in MI Kids** initiative would add a **5% surcharge** on income above \$500,000 for individuals and \$1 million for couples — correcting a system where billionaires currently pay the same tax rate as teachers. These new funds would be **constitutionally protected** and explicitly directed toward:

- Reducing class size
- Retaining and recruiting educators
- Career and technical education

"Just imagine what our schools could do with adequate funding. Smaller class sizes, more individualized attention, state of the art equipment, improved teacher pay to retain and attract talented educators, and genuine investment in career and technical education. Our districts are already stretched thin, our teachers are underpaid and overworked, but it doesn't have to be this way. We need to invest in our students and their education. We must invest in Michigan Kids."

- Dr. Tonya Whitehead, Michigan PTA President.

"The most damaging is the lack of supports and resources directed towards our most vulnerable students, our ELL students, and our students with special needs. The federal cuts are impacting us daily. In fact, even with our proactive budget reductions, it just hasn't been enough. We need to really look to opportunities like the one that's presented here to create a more equitable and accessible playing field for all students, but in particular those that have been marginalized and underrepresented for a very long time.

-Holland School Board Member **Tim Marroquín**

"When you talk about the impact of divesting from the education system in the city of Detroit, the impact has just been horrendous. I know that a lot of this could be changed if we would just return to making the proper investment in our kids' education. We need to make the proper investments so that they can receive the proper education that they deserve, not just that they need, but that they deserve."

-Bishop Daryl Harris, Total Life Christian Ministries

“Our schools do not have all the resources that they need. The Invest in MI Kids initiative means investing in Michigan public schools. It means my son, who has an IEP, can actually have an on-site social worker and not have a lapse in services because of a vacant position. It means my sons will have a sense of security and belonging because there is a paid and funded position for a mental health worker who routinely checks the student's mental health and well-being. Because the truth of the matter is, when schools are underfunded, our communities are faced with more challenges. Our children and families deserve more. Our teachers deserve more. And our schools deserve more. Please, Invest in MI Kids.”

-Fredericka Brown, Grand Rapids Parent

“I want to be very clear. This surcharge will only apply to the wealthiest business owners, and they are people that can afford it. This is not a burden on small business owners, this is an investment in the very system that is allowing businesses and communities to thrive here together. By strengthening our schools, we're going to strengthen our economy and ensure a stable and prosperous future for our children.”

-Adriana Cerulla, Business Owner, Councilwoman

[Press Conference recording here](#)