

FYI R. Johnson

218 262 1698

May 18, 1991

Dear Representative,

The 1991 Education Conference Committee Report was finalized by House and Senate conferees. It is ironic that a bill which contains key MEA legislative priorities such as elementary prep time, K-3 class-size reduction revenue, extension of AFDC and T & E formula factors and continued support for cooperation and combination of school districts also contains a number of objectionable provisions which require us to oppose it.

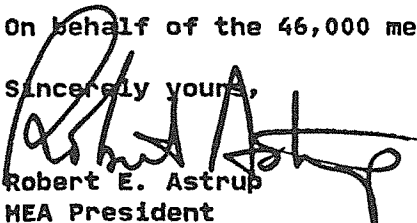
We urge you to vote against the Education Conference Committee Report for the following reasons:

- o Formula allowance funding at 2% over the biennium is simply inadequate and will likely result in 1,500 teacher lay-offs, program cuts and a reduction in quality. More lay-offs are even more likely in the second year.
- o Levy referendum restrictions and required subtractions from supplementary revenue further unfairly limit school district ability to address shortfalls resulting from inadequacies in the funding formula.
- o T & E caps at Masters plus 30 create a disincentive to districts and teachers to enhance their qualifications through advanced training.
- o Deleted from the bill the levy authority for the early retirement incentive ... pre-paid health insurance.
- o Teacher center funding has been completely eliminated.
- o Charter schools are repugnant to public school teachers and will drain scarce resources from an already diminished school funding situation. In addition, they are unnecessary given the ability to accomplish innovation within the present public school setting.
- o The diversion of public monies to private schools is bad public policy and an anathema to Minnesotans.
- o Debt service and referendum equalization is a concept which MEA supports philosophically, however, it should not be implemented in the context of such severe state funding shortfall.

The students, teachers, parents and citizens of Minnesota deserve better than this. While it is not often that we urge opposition to a Conference Committee Report, for these and other reasons, we do so now. We strongly urge you to vote to correct these serious deficiencies and include elementary prep time, K-3 class-size reduction revenue, extension of AFDC and T & E formula factors and continued support for cooperation and combination of school districts in the final bill.

On behalf of the 46,000 members of the Minnesota Education Association,

Sincerely yours,


Robert E. Astrup
MEA President