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Protecting Predators in the Classroom? Proposal Threatens Student Safety, could Overturn Valuable Education Reforms

*Parents Misled by Organizers about Deceptive Ballot Proposal's Far-
Reaching Effects*

Lansing, MI, September 6, 2012— As parents across Michigan this week send their children back to school, Citizens Protecting Michigan's Constitution today warned parents about the "Protect Our Jobs" ballot proposal's dangerous, far-reaching effects and unintended consequences threatening student safety and education in Michigan. Under the proposal, numerous invaluable education laws currently on the books would likely be overturned, stripping Michigan parents and children irrevocably of the protections, safety and quality assurances on which they currently rely.

Among the laws that could be overturned upon passage of the deceptive proposal are protections for students that require the suspension of teachers accused of having sex with students and a law enabling school districts to fire teachers who lied about their criminal history during the hiring process.

"Parents across Michigan should be outraged at the union bosses' attempts to strip away protections that keep our kids safe from sexual predators and other criminals in the classroom," said Nick De Leeuw, Spokesman for Citizens Protecting Michigan's Constitution. "This deceptive and dangerous attempt to hijack Michigan's Constitution would undo dozens of laws that Michigan parents rely on to keep their kids safe at school and to ensure their children receive the best possible public school education."

The Michigan Education Association, the state's largest teachers union, recently circulated a memo (*SEE ATTACHMENT*) to its members **admitting** that a dozen or more student, parent and taxpayer protections, **including laws that cover teacher discipline and placement**, would likely be revoked should the proposal be approved in November.

"The MEA actually has it right when they admit to the sweeping scope of dangerous changes this proposal would have on protections students and parents deserve," De Leeuw said.

According to the internal memo, "Upon certification of the Ballot victory, the following would immediately occur: Prohibited bargaining topics...included in (the Public Employee Relations Act)

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would no longer exist. This law currently prohibits bargaining over... the placement of teachers; teacher evaluation systems, including the format, timing or number of classroom observations... (and) Teacher discipline policies...”

The memo states that other currently prohibited bargaining topics that would no longer exist upon certification of POJ include “the starting day for the school year (post Labor Day)... (and) the use of volunteers in providing services at its schools.”

Laws that would likely be overturned upon passage of the deceptive proposal include but are not limited to:

- **OVERTURNED:** Protections for students that require the suspension of teachers accused of having sex with students;
- **OVERTURNED:** A law enabling school districts to fire teachers who lied about their criminal history during the hiring process;
- **OVERTURNED:** A law requiring school bus drivers to take part in safety training;
- **OVERTURNED:** The law requiring public schools to start after Labor Day;
- **OVERTURNED:** The law prohibiting schools from hiding the unprofessional conduct of teachers from students’ parents;
- **OVERTURNED:** Law prohibiting schools from using “First in, last out” policy to protect bad teachers from removal based solely on seniority;
- **PREVENTED:** A Democrat sponsored bill to ensures students have the best possible teachers by requiring tenure decisions to be based on teacher effectiveness, not solely time on the job;
- **FORBIDDEN:** Job performance may be forbidden from factoring into pay increases for educators;
- **FORBIDDEN:** The current law permitting districts to fire teachers who rate “ineffective” on three consecutive performance reviews may be forbidden;
- **FORBIDDEN:** Parents may be forbidden from volunteering in schools; and many more.

(SEE ATTACHMENT FOR SUMMARIES OF THE LAWS MENTIONED ABOVE)

The attorney behind the proposal, Andrew Nickelhoff, has also repeatedly admitted his own proposal is intentionally confusing and would have far-reaching and potentially unforeseen consequences, telling reporters: “We can guess at how (the proposal) might affect existing legislation and we could spend all day doing that, but in the end, it's just going to have to be decided (in the courts) on a case-by-case basis.”

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