



THE EARLY CHILDHOOD INVESTMENT CORPORATION

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## STATE UPDATE

Friday, July 17, 2009

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The Legislature returned to Lansing this week with limited formal activity as closed-door negotiations continue on the budget. Legislative leaders and administration officials resumed target-setting meetings in an effort to reach agreement on the level of cuts to be made in the fiscal year 2010 budgets. An agreement was reached on the School Aid budget with a targeted cut of \$412 million from current year funding levels agreed to. As of late Thursday, the target-setting negotiations continued on the General Fund budget, but progress was reportedly being made. With all of the budgets now having been referred to Conference committees, details of individual budgets are unlikely to emerge until Conference reports are prepared and ready to be voted upon. Negotiations will soon commence on the School Aid bill, but the individual General fund budget negotiations can not begin until the target numbers have been established for these budgets.

Although other options clearly exist, the Legislature and Governor at this point appear intent on solving the budget deficit primarily through cuts. The fact that the target agreement for the School Aid budget was \$412 million below current year funding levels indicates a clear lack of will to seriously explore revenue options at this time. The agreed upon number is nearly identical to the level of cuts contained in the Senate passed version from late June. At this point Senator Jelinek, Representative Brown, and the State Budget Office will begin negotiations on where to cut. This level of cuts will require significant reductions in virtually all areas of spending in the School Aid budget. It is more imperative than ever for us to continue our advocacy efforts and let our elected officials know that we will not tolerate this budget being balanced on the backs of young children and their families.

Our advocacy efforts have been working. Legislators are hearing loud and clear that funding for early childhood activities is important to their constituents. Our efforts need to continue and escalate. Every single legislator needs to be bombarded with contacts from constituents urging their support of early childhood funding. The committee chairs and others who are negotiating these



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budgets will be primarily influenced by their colleagues as far as establishing priorities to preserve funding for. In addition, I encourage

everyone to contact House Speaker Andy Dillon, Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop, and Governor Jennifer Granholm to urge their support for minimizing cuts to critical early childhood services. These three leaders will have the biggest influence on whether or not the young children of Michigan receive the opportunities they need and deserve to be successful.



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