

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR – QEO REPEAL & ARBITRATION CHANGES

Dear Editor,

The members of the (insert name of school district here) school board are very disappointed Gov. Doyle's proposed 2007-09 state budget calls for repealing the qualified economic offer (QEO).

The QEO allows school boards to avoid costly arbitration by offering at least a 3.8 percent increase in teacher compensation. The QEO is a cost-control mechanism. It needs to remain in place as long as there are revenue limits on school districts.

Even with the QEO, revenue limits are forcing many school districts to cut staff, eliminate programs, and forgo school-improvements. Without the QEO, many more districts will face financial crisis.

Other budget provisions that would change the way arbitrators select final offers will make this situation worse. Under Gov. Doyle's proposal, arbitrators would no longer be required to give greatest weight to revenue limits or to give greater weight criteria to local economic conditions.

Here is what is so bad about these changes: Under current law, arbitrators can't order school boards to spend money they don't have. These changes would deny school boards that protection. Under the governor's proposal arbitrators would **not** have to reject a union offer that would force the (insert name of school district here) school board to cut educational programs and staff. Our school district will be forced to pay teachers whatever the arbitrator decides and then balance budgets by cutting programs and laying off staff.

An arbitrator-- not the (insert name of school district here) school board--would effectively determine the educational opportunities our children will have.

Tell our lawmakers to maintain the QEO and reject the governor's arbitration changes.

Sincerely,