

February 2, 2010

The Honorable Bob McDonnell
Governor's Office
Third Floor, Patrick Henry Building
111 East Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23218

Governor McDonnell:

As Chairs of eleven northern Virginia School Boards, we are writing to express our strong and unified opposition to Governor Kaine's proposal to delay the biennial adjustment of the Local Composite Index (LCI).

For forty years, the LCI has been used to distribute state funding resources for school districts across Virginia. While the LCI formula is flawed and is by no means a perfect measurement of wealth or of ability to pay, it has at least been consistently implemented, and local governments and school divisions rely upon this consistency every two years in planning their budgets. The LCI's use of objective data including real property values, taxable retail sales and income prevented the polluting effect of political power, special interests and regional influence.

This year, our communities are pressed with the one-two punch of decreased local revenues and increased K-12 enrollment. Suspending the LCI rebenchmarking would be an additional blow to our ability to provide consistent educational programs in the public schools.

As the Roanoke Times wrote in its editorial "Honor the School Funding Formula" on January 17th:

"The formula for years has been a compact between economically diverse parts of the state. Suspending it when Northern Virginia stands to benefit would be unfair and dishonorable."

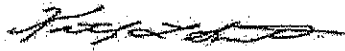
Freezing the LCI is more than a short-term financial adjustment; it is a major policy change with long-term consequences. It will lead to annual uncertainty and the politicization of state education funding in future budget years, ultimately calling into question the very purpose of this method of distributing funds to communities across the state.

We respectfully request that you oppose this proposal by supporting budget amendments to overturn it.

Yvonne A. Folkerts
Alexandria City

Sally Baird
Arlington County

Robina Rich-Bouffault
Clarke County



Kathy L. Smith
Fairfax County

Sheryl Wolfe
Fauquier County

John B. Stevens
Loudoun County

Ron Peppe
Falls Church City

Arthur P. Bushnell
Manassas City

Milton C. Johns
Prince William County

Roy K. Boyles
Warren County

Linda Miller
Winchester City