

FAMILY FOCUS '16



STATE SENATOR

JOHN PROOS

SENATE DISTRICT 21

TOLL FREE 866.305.2121

E-MAIL senjproos@senate.michigan.gov

VISIT www.SenatorJohnProos.com



March is Reading Month is always a great time to share a love of reading with hundreds of enthusiastic young people throughout Southwest Michigan. Reading lays the foundation for a rewarding future. I am always happy to take part in this great event to help promote the importance of reading.

DEAR NEIGHBOR:

With summer coming to a close, there's an air of anticipation as families look forward to the start of school. There are old friends to see, new friends to make and much to learn and do!

We all want to see our children achieve so they have a great chance at a bright future. That is why we are committed to helping ensure our schools are able to prepare students for the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century.

I am pleased to share this Back to School report with you. From a special section on increased school funding to legislative news and more, I hope you find it informative and useful.

Best wishes to all those beginning a new school year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in red ink that reads "John Proos".



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STATE K-12 FUNDING AT RECORD LEVEL

Michigan students are first in line when it comes to the state budget!

The Legislature again increased support for our schools, providing more than \$260 million above last year. Along with an increase in the foundation allowance, we set aside funds to improve early literacy, as well as an increase for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) related activities.

In addition, \$4.5 million was allotted for voluntary statewide school water testing for school health and safety.

We directed more than \$1 billion to help pay down school retirement costs and put more resources into the classroom.

Funding for community colleges and higher education also received a boost.

All told, more than 46 cents of every state tax dollar goes to education!

'LAUREN'S LAW' WOULD HELP INCREASE ORGAN DONATIONS

According to Donate Life America, every 10 minutes another name is added to the national organ transplant waiting list and an average of 21 people die each day waiting for an available organ.

In Michigan, there are more than 3,500 people currently awaiting a transplant. In many cases, the transplant has the potential to save the recipient's life.

I sponsored legislation—passed unanimously by the Senate—to help increase the number of registered organ donors in the state. Senate Bill 541 would require that the secretary of state's office inquire whether someone wishes to be added to the Michigan anatomical gift donor registry when the individual applies for a driver's license.

The bill is named "Lauren's Law" after Lauren Shields, who at age 9 was placed on life support while waiting for a heart transplant, which she eventually received.

Becoming an organ donor is easy to do. For more information or to sign up to become a donor, visit the Gift of Life Michigan website at www.GiftofLifeMichigan.org.



K-12 EDUCATION FUNDING STATE FUNDING FROM STATE RESOURCES



Non-partisan Senate Fiscal Agency analysis data



GRADUATION RATES CONTINUE TO IMPROVE

Michigan's four-year high school graduation rate increased to nearly 80 percent for the 2014-15 school year. The upward trend continued for five-year and six-year graduation rates as well. Graduation rates are calculated by following individual students from the time they first enroll as ninth-graders and are a good way to measure school accountability.

Dropout rates also declined, continuing a positive four-year trend. Find graduation and dropout rates for schools and districts at www.mischooldata.org in the Kindergarten – 12th Grade section.

BILL CRACKS DOWN ON SELLING TOBACCO TO KIDS

Tobacco use in our children is unsafe in any form, yet nearly 9 out of 10 cigarette smokers first tried smoking before they turned 18.

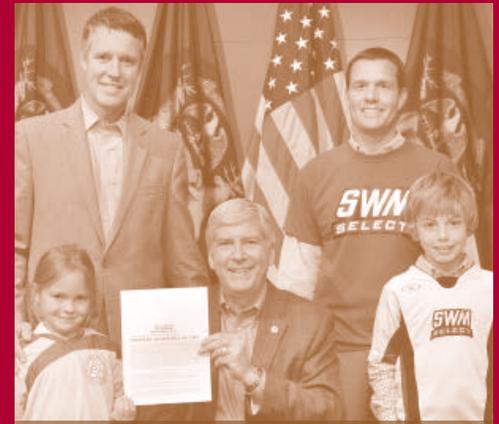
I supported legislation to crack down on people who provide tobacco to minors and for minors who use tobacco. Senate Bill 340 would increase the fine from \$50 to \$100 for the misdemeanor offense of selling, giving or furnishing a tobacco product to a minor. The bill also adds a fine of up to \$500 for subsequent violations. The bill would apply the same increase in fines for minors who buy, possess or attempt to purchase tobacco products.

Each day in the U.S., more than 3,800 children age 18 or younger smoke their first cigarette and an additional 2,100 youth and young adults become daily smokers. The current rate of youth smoking will result in nearly 6 million of today's children dying early from a smoking-related illness. We must do all we can to protect our children and keep tobacco products out of their hands.

CONCUSSION DATA RELEASED FOR FIRST TIME

Late last year, The Michigan High School Athletic Association (MHSAA) released concussion data for the fall sports season.

According to the data, roughly 2 percent of more than 100,000 Michigan high school athletes experienced a concussion in the fall. The average number of concussions per school was 3.2, yet more than half of the 744 schools reported two or fewer concussions. Football accounts for 39 percent of all fall participants, yet accounted for nearly 80 percent of all concussions reported for the season.



Sen. John Proos attends bill signing ceremony as his concussion bill is signed into law.

As a father with children involved in multiple sports and physical activities, I am proud to have led the effort to protect the health of our young athletes. Legislation I sponsored was signed in 2012 to require the creation of a concussion awareness program that includes training and distribution of educational materials for coaches, parents and athletes. A youth suspected of sustaining a concussion must be immediately removed from activity and cannot return until he/she has been evaluated by a health professional and has received written clearance to play.

While my initiative was designed to help inform parents, coaches and athletes about concussions in youth sports, we must also remember that concussions happen off the playing field. For example, bicycling and playground accidents rank in the top five in the number of brain injury ER visits.

To learn more about concussions, from basic information and prevention tips to symptoms to look for, visit www.cdc.gov/headsup.

RAISING AWARENESS OF MEN'S HEALTH ISSUES

Although men have a 50-50 chance of developing some form of cancer during their lifetime, more than half of all premature deaths among American men are preventable. In fact, almost three out of every four men are overweight and heart disease is the leading cause of death for American men, yet most men do not put a high priority on their own health.

Earlier this year, I sponsored a measure to recognize June 13-19, 2016 as Men's Health Week. Senate Resolution 192 raises awareness of the preventable health issues facing men and encourages all men to get regular exercise and medical checkups in order to improve their health.

I also participated in the month-long *November is Movember* event to bring attention to men's health issues, such as prostate and testicular cancer, and to remind men of just how important early detection can be in saving lives. Unfortunately, we all

know of a friend or family member who has been affected by cancer. Growing out a beard during November is about growing awareness of cancer risks in men and stressing the importance of overall good health.

I encourage all Southwest Michigan men to stop the excuses and talk to a doctor about their health. We cannot ignore our health problems forever. The sooner we recognize our health risks and discuss them with a doctor, the healthier we can be and the longer we can enjoy life with our families!



Watch my Movember PSA at <http://www.senatorjohnproos.com/sen-proos-growing-beard-to-raise-awareness-of-mens-health/>