



**TESTIMONY ON FINANCIAL AID GRANTS FOR ADULT LEARNERS  
House and Senate Appropriations Subcommittees for Community  
Colleges**

**Gilda Z. Jacobs, President and CEO**

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Good afternoon, Chairmen Booher and Muxlow and members of the Community Colleges Appropriations Subcommittees. My name is Gilda Jacobs and I am President and CEO of the Michigan League for Public Policy. We advocate for state policies that help low-income individuals and families in Michigan become economically self-sufficient. Thank you for providing the opportunity to speak here today.

We are very pleased that the governor's budget has provided \$6 million to reinstate the Part-Time Independent Student Grant to help students who have been out of high school for several years or more to attend a public community college. We urge the members of these two appropriations subcommittees to support this line item in the appropriations bills.

As the report we have distributed to you explains, in 2010, the Legislature eliminated a number of state financial aid grants that helped adult learners attend community colleges. None of Michigan's three remaining grants are available to these students: the Tuition Grant can only be used at private colleges and universities, and the Tuition Incentive Program and the Competitive Scholarship are not available to adults who have been out of high school for more than 10 years.

It is important that the Part-Time Independent Student Grant be reinstated. There are many parents who are out of work or in low-paying jobs, and need to acquire occupational skills and postsecondary credentials to earn the wages they need to support their families. These parents often make the decision to go back to school more than 10 years after they graduated from high school, and reinstating the grant will make a difference for them.

Helping older workers attain new skills leading to in-demand jobs is good for Michigan. With the layoffs in manufacturing and other sectors, many workers with families are unemployed, underemployed or earning less than what they used to. This results in less tax revenue for the state and less economic stability for the families. Providing grants that enable working parents to get skilled jobs is good workforce development.

We urge these committees to include the governor's recommendation to reinstate the Part-Time Independent Student Grant. I will be happy to answer any questions.