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Dear Friends and Neighbors,

We have been East Lansing residents for nearly 25 years, and all four of our children have been educated in East Lansing Public Schools, with our youngest set to graduate this June! Raf is an area physician; Rima is a busy mom, school volunteer and 9 year veteran of the East Lansing School Board, where she served 3 terms as Board President, concluding her service in 2012. We love East Lansing and care deeply about our schools.

We are contacting you regarding the upcoming East Lansing School Bond Vote on May 2nd. There are many serious concerns regarding the current Bond proposal that warrant your prompt attention. While we fully recognize the needs of our schools, this is NOT the only, nor the last, opportunity to raise Bond funds, and it is definitely the WRONG Bond.

The many significant problems with this Bond include its cost to residents:

\$171 million total proposed cost

(Nearly 94 million in principal, and 77.5 million in interest - see Fig 1 on back for details.)

- This is nearly equal to the **\$197 million total current debt of the City of East Lansing**, (eastlansinginfo.org, 1/4/17), already considered 'a municipality in dire financial straits' (The State News, 2/15/17).
- That will increase the debt burden on East Lansing residents to **OVER \$368 MILLION**.
- This is **well over a third of a billion dollars**, for a city of just 48,000 residents.

You likely have received a glossy, colorful brochure in this weekend's mail asking you to vote for the Bond on May 2nd. Note that they failed to disclose the cost of the Bond anywhere in that document. Even the School District's Official "Bond Facts" sheet **does not state the cost of the Bond**. You are being asked to vote yes on the Bond without even being notified of the \$171 million dollar price tag!

The School Board is not confident in this Bond proposal, as evidenced by School Board member Nichole Martin's March 5th, 2017 letter to hundreds of East Lansing faculty, staff, Board Members, and the Superintendent, which noted, regarding Red Cedar School (RC):

"The feedback I continue to get in the community is why would the district pay to completely renovate RC to use as a swing school, when we are not clear what RC would be used for after all the other schools are built. I don't know how to communicate plans to the community. I don't know that the Bond committee is working cohesively as a group however I do know I am extremely uncomfortable in using this earmarked money (according to the PQ) all up front.... Over time decisions have been made that have made it such that this community does not trust us..."

(obtained via FOIA)

This is NOT an appropriate foundation for a \$171 Million dollar expense!

In addition to the **\$171 Million dollar expense**, the Bond's flaws include:

- The need to redistrict some neighborhood schools, forcing over 200 children to leave their current schools.
- A \$400,000 ongoing annual increase in the district's general operating budget to re-open Red Cedar School, with no clear academic purpose or sufficient student population (see Fig. 2). To patch this budget gap, the district may be forced to consider:
 - Removing 7 current teachers.
 - Increasing class size and removing grade level sections.
 - Increasing School of Choice students by 52.
(Current SOC population already exceeds 25% - LSJ 2/15/17)
- Increasing the number of school buildings at a time when "statewide enrollment numbers are in decline", and a 600 student Charter School is coming to East Lansing (LSJ 2/15/17, and 3/2/17).
- Nearly **\$11 Million Dollars in principal alone** to re-open Red Cedar School (per Michigan Dept. of Treasury Bond Qualification Application).

The School Board's own Elementary School Community Bond Committee's report (11/28/16) notes many significant downsides to the current 6 School Bond Proposal, and only a single upside-- that "smaller schools may feel more homey," (see the committee's Summary Chart - Fig. 2).

- Is it worth \$171 million dollars of new debt for schools that "may feel more homey", when there are so many negatives, including higher operating costs and too many school buildings?
- Is this Bond fiscally responsible when it is nearly 80% more expensive than a Bond for 5 new schools presented just 5 years ago?
- Is it responsible to increase the cumulative city/school district Residents' debt to **OVER A THIRD OF A BILLION DOLLARS** for a questionable plan?

We recognize the need for Elementary School improvements, but this is far too much money, for too many school buildings. Join us in asking the East Lansing School Board to present the community with an affordable plan for the right number of schools, that does not unnecessarily increase the operating budget.

Please, **VOTE NO!** on the School Bond Proposal on May 2, 2017.

Raphael and Rima Addiego

This letter was solely written and distributed by Raphael and Rima Addiego.

B. Proposed Bond Issue: List each ballot proposal separately.

Proposal	Amount	Bond Term	Avg Int Rate	Bond Interest	SLRF Interest	Total Interest	Avg Millage	Millage Year 1
Proposal 1	93,770,000	25 yrs., 0 mos.	4.59%	66,929,916	10,565,989	77,495,906	4.45	2.11
Proposal 2								
Proposal 3								
Proposal 4								
Combined Issue	93,770,000			66,929,916	10,565,989	77,495,906		

(Totals may not foot due to differences in the financial structure of individual proposals and a combined bond issue.)

Fig. 1 - Financial Summary, Application for Preliminary Qualification of Bonds, School Board Qualification and Loan Program for School District of the City of East Lansing, Michigan Department of Treasury (1/4/17).

	6 Schools
Weaknesses/ Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Larger operating costs than currently being spent-approximately \$400,000 ● Some schools may only have one section per grade <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Less flexibility in classroom assignments ○ Less ability for teachers to collaborate with their peers ● Itinerant teachers would have to travel during the day ● Boundaries would change ● Construction/renovation costs will be higher ● Community response may be negative (based on previous experience)
Strengths/ Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Smaller schools may feel more homey

Fig. 2 - Excerpt from East Lansing Public Schools Elementary Schools Community Bond Committee, Report to the Board of Education, November 28, 2016, Appendix 4 - Number of K-5 Buildings SWOT

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